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EI@25 Review:
LGBTI Rights
in the Global Education
Union Movement



Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación
Bildungsinternationale

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Foreword

This EI@25 Anniversary Review aims to consolidate information on EI's work to highlight and advance of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) students and teachers in and through education over the last 25 years.

In 1998, the adoption of a resolution on the *Protection of the Rights of Lesbian and Gay Personnel in Education* at the 2nd EI World Congress in Washington DC, laid the foundation for future action: EI, as the global movement of education unions, thereby recognised that discrimination based on sexual orientation (and today also on the basis of sexual identity) is a human rights violation.

The review looks back on how EI policies to recognize, defend, promote and advance LGBTI rights in the education sector emerged, and have been reflected within EI activities and events.

Important progress has been made both nationally and internationally over the last quarter of a century: United Nations (UN) agencies and national human rights institutions have spoken out against the discrimination faced by LGBTI people. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in particular, have called for action to be taken to end such discrimination in educational institutions and in workplaces, respectively.

But legal discrimination against LGBTI people remains prevalent in too many countries, and even in countries with legislation that seeks to safeguard those rights, LGBTI people continue to face disproportionately high rates of violence.

Education unions can, and must, play a key role in the struggle for equal rights and quality education for all. As we envisage the next twenty-five years, we call on all EI member organisations to take stock of our collective efforts at local, national and international levels since the inception of EI, and to re-affirm and act on our commitment to make a difference in the lives of LGBTI teachers and learners around the world.



David Edwards
EI General Secretary

Introduction

In 1993, [Education International](#) (EI) was established and the [EI Constitution](#) was adopted, which forms the policy basis for EI's work on equality and non-discrimination.¹ From early on, EI has acknowledged and denounced the discrimination experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI)² teachers, education personnel and students based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression;³ and, has worked to promote LGBTI rights both within the education union movement and within broader society at local, national, regional and global levels.

EI represents organisations of teachers and education support personnel from across the globe. It is the world's largest federation of education unions, representing 32 million teachers and education employees in almost 400 organisations in 170 countries and territories. In 2018, EI celebrated its 25-year anniversary, which provided a timely opportunity to review the policies and structures put in place, as well as the actions taken over the last quarter century, to promote and advance LGBTI rights. This review focuses primarily on the work undertaken by EI itself, as the global representative body and voice of teachers and education workers. While many of the education unions affiliated to EI (e.g. EI member unions) have also undertaken diverse and impressive work to promote LGBTI rights in education over the past two decades, compiling and commenting on these initiatives is beyond the scope of this review.

Since 2001, EI has run a survey and/or developed a report on LGBTI issues and rights in the education sector every 3–4 years; the last one was published in July 2015 for its **7th World Congress**. In lieu of a survey and report for the **8th World Congress**, which will take place in July 2019, this 25th anniversary commemorative report looks back on how LGBTI rights have emerged as a key area of policy and programming within EI since it was established in 1993. This report has been developed by an external consultant using mixed methods, including an extensive desk review of relevant EI documents and website pages (see Annex B for a full list of data sources); and, interviews with EI staff and key union officials and officers from EI member organisations from different regions, to gather their insights on EI's

¹ See Article 2(h) of the [EI Constitution](#).

² A brief overview of how EI's terminology to refer to people who are non-heterosexual and/or non-cisgender has changed over the years is presented before [Section 1](#). EI has been using the term 'LGBTI' since 2015.

³ Referred to in recent literature as 'sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC)' —see: Mendós, Lucas Ramon. 2019. *2019 Report on State-Sponsored Homophobia* (13th Edition). Geneva, Switzerland. [International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association](#) (ILGA)). However, this report uses the terms that are in EI's most recent formal policies (i.e. 'sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression').

work on LGBTI rights and how to move it forward. It is important to note that this report is not an *evaluation* of EI's work on LGBTI rights in education. It is a *review* that aims to consolidate information on what has been done and achieved over the past 25 years as a basis for celebration and reflection on what to do next. A set of recommendations to inform EI's future work on these issues is presented at the end of the report.⁴

Section 1 of the report sets the context for the review by providing an overview of LGBTI rights in the global context, and of how international legal and policy frameworks have influenced many governments to adapt or adopt laws and policies to protect LGBTI rights at the national level. It also outlines LGBTI rights in the education sector and the important role of education unions in promoting inclusive, equitable and quality education for all, including people who identify as LGBTI.

Section 2 of the report outlines some of the strategies that EI has used over the years to integrate LGBTI rights into its way of working. This includes an overview of EI's policies that support LGBTI rights, namely the *EI Constitution* and a series of resolutions, declarations and statements that have been adopted since EI's **2nd World Congress** in 1998. Following this, there is a more in-depth look at how EI has attempted to develop internal structures to connect LGBTI educators and their allies; and, an overview of some of the most relevant actions that have been undertaken to ensure that LGBTI issues and rights are reflected within EI's internal plans and processes.

Section 3 of the report focuses on EI's external work to promote and defend LGBTI rights in education at local, regional and global levels. This includes a brief overview of EI's strategic alliances, in particular its collaboration with other global trade union federations, to move forward a common agenda on LGBTI rights in education; an overview of how EI has engaged over the years with global structures, like [the United Nations](#) (UN) and its agencies, to influence policy and processes relevant to LGBTI rights; and, outlines EI's collaboration with LGBTI organisations and its participation in global conferences and events.

Section 4 of the report looks back on what has been done over the past 25 years to celebrate successes, and pulls out learning from what has worked well and what has been more challenging, as a basis for making some recommendations for EI's future work on LGBTI rights.

⁴ Much of the information in this report is descriptive rather than analytical; this is because there has not been consistent enough data collection and documentation over the years to provide a solid foundation for analysis. However, where possible, the consultant has done some analysis and drawn conclusions about key issues.

NB. A detailed timeline is included at the end of the report (see Annex A), which provides an overview of significant policies, reports, events and processes related to EI's work on LGBTI-- rights in education over the past 25 years.

a) A Note on Terminology

'LGBTI' is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex, and is the term currently used by EI to refer to people who are non-heterosexual and/or non-cisgender,⁵ and to topics pertaining to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. EI's use of terminology has evolved over the years alongside broader shifts in the global context related to these issues, and changes in how LGBTI movements have organised to define themselves.⁶ For example: in the mid-1990s, the terms 'gay' and 'lesbian' were the only terms used in EI resolutions and reports; by the early 2000s, the terms 'bisexual' and 'transgender' started to be used in reports; and by 2004, the term 'LGBT' became the official term used in EI policies and publications. The term LGBTI has been used by EI since 2015.

In this report, the term LGBTI is used when referring to EI's current and future work, but variations on the term are used when referring to historical events or reports, based on what terminology was used by EI at the time. Similarly, variations of the term are also used when referring to external processes, events or publications to reflect the preferred terminology used by other institutions.

⁵ Cisgender denotes or relates to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex (from the online Oxford Dictionary). See: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/cisgender>

⁶ Since EI adopted its first resolution on the rights of gay and lesbian teachers in 1998, the terminology referring to this group of rights holders has evolved in international human rights law and jurisprudence on issues relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. For the purposes of this report, the reflection on terminology is based on the specific evolution of EI's thinking and use of different terms over the past 25 years in formal policies and publications.

Section 1: Setting the Context

*Decent work can only exist in conditions of freedom and dignity. It means embracing inclusion and diversity. It requires us to stand up against all forms of stigma and discrimination ... and to the insidious role of homophobia and transphobia in fostering discrimination.*⁷

Since EI was established in 1993, significant advances have been made in formally recognising the rights of LGBTI people within global processes and legal and policy frameworks. For instance, since 2007, the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** has made specific reference to sexual orientation as a form of discrimination in the workplace in its global reports on equality at work. In recent years, the dialogue has expanded from a focus on issues of homophobia and sexual orientation to also include issues of gender identity and gender expression.⁸ Also, since 2013 three global resolutions have been adopted by the [UN Human Rights Council](#)⁹ that are explicitly focused on addressing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

These international processes and policies have influenced things at the national level; over the past 25 years, many governments have changed discriminatory legislation and/or have adopted new laws to protect LGBTI people from discrimination and harassment. The issues of gender identity and gender expression have also been gaining more recognition in national laws and policies by some governments. In many societies, alongside the formal global and national processes, there has also been increasing understanding about the complexities of gender identity and a shift towards acceptance and public support for the LGBTI community, including same-sex unions.

However, at the same time the increasing visibility and recognition of LGBTI rights have inspired backlash in some parts of the world — particularly in places where religion continues to strongly influence social norms, and/or where LGBTI issues can be used to align support for particular political ideologies. In this regard, despite important advances LGBTI people continue to experience discrimination,

⁷ Ryder, Guy. 2014 (May 17th). Message by Guy Ryder for *International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia*. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/ilo-director-general/statements-and-speeches/WCMS_243297/lang--en/index.htm NB. Guy Ryder is the current Director-General of the ILO.

⁸ The notion of 'gender expression' can be understood as, "each person's presentation of the person's gender through physical appearance — including dress, hairstyles, accessories, cosmetics — and mannerisms, speech, behavioural patterns, names and personal references". See: Mendós, Lucas Ramon. 2019. **Report on State-Sponsored Homophobia** (13th Edition). Geneva, Switzerland. ILGA: page 39.

⁹ Formerly the UN Commission on Human Rights (until 2006)

harassment and violence in many regions of the world on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression. This is also true for teachers, educators and students who identify as LGBTI. The intersection between LGBTI rights and the right to education thus becomes key. Global processes and frameworks that relate to rights in education have become increasingly focused on the need for safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments that are free from violence and discrimination for all students, including those who identify as LGBTI. Since 2011, the [UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization](#) (UNESCO) has become a global leader in building awareness, understanding and action on LGBTI rights in education. EI has been directly involved in some of this work.

This section looks at the intersection between LGBTI rights and the legal and policy frameworks developed and applied internationally to protect these rights, and between LGBTI rights and the right to education for all.

I. LGBTI Rights in the Global Context

Over the past 25 years, significant progress has been made in terms of recognising the legal and social rights of LGBTI people, and various global policies that aim to address discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression have been adopted. These rights are mainly recognised by UN and its agencies, such as the [International Labour Organization](#), UNESCO and the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO).¹⁰ LGBTI rights are also recognised in the *Yogyakarta Principles*, which were developed by a group of international human rights experts in 2006 and updated in 2017.

A summary of the key global principles, reports and resolutions that provide the legal and policy framework for LGBTI rights, and which have informed and influenced EI's work on the issue, is provided below. A more detailed overview of how LGBTI rights have been integrated over the years into UN processes, such as the ILO's, as well as EI's engagement in these processes, is provided in [Section 3](#).

¹⁰ Over the years, different UN agencies have released reports, guidelines, statements and appeals highlighting the vulnerability of LGBTI persons to human rights violations. For a summary of some key statements from UN agencies about tackling discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, see the following report: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Discrimination/LGBT_discrimination.pdf

Timeline of Global Principles, Reports and Resolutions Related to LGBTI Rights

2006: The [*Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*](#) (YPs) are developed, which affirm a set of binding legal standards to which all States must comply.

2007: The ILO global report [*Equality at Work: Tackling the Challenges*](#) is published, which for the first time includes sexual orientation as a form of discrimination in the workplace.

2011: The ILO global report [*Equality at Work: The Continuing Challenge*](#) is published, which includes sexual orientation as a form of discrimination.

2011: The UN resolution on [*Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*](#) is adopted. This is the first global resolution explicitly focused on discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

2014: The second UN resolution on [*Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*](#) is adopted.

2016: The third UN resolution on [*Protection Against Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*](#) is adopted, which mandates the appointment of an [*Independent Expert*](#) on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

2017: The [*Yogyakarta Principles +10*](#) (YP+10) are developed to supplement the original YPs; they add nine new Principles to the previous 29, as well as new obligations for States regarding the existing YPs.

2018: The [*International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education*](#) is published by UNESCO, which provides an evidence-informed approach and concrete guidance for schools, teachers and health educators regarding sexuality education. The needs of LGBTI students are referenced extensively. (NB. The first edition was published in 2009.)

The international processes that led to the adoption of the legal and policy frameworks outlined above — many of which spanned decades and involved intensive advocacy by multiple actors — as well as the policies themselves, have also influenced many governments to adapt or adopt laws and policies to protect

the rights of LGBTI people at the national level. As stated in [the 2019 Report on State-Sponsored Homophobia](#) "... there is an increasingly clear international norm against the criminalisation of consensual same-sex sexual conduct ... countries that do so are in a shrinking minority."¹¹

Overall, the number of **UN** member states that criminalise consensual same-sex sexual acts has almost halved over the past 50 years.¹² By the early 2000s, both North America (2003) and most countries in western Europe (2004) had completely repealed such laws. Many criminalising states were and continue to be in eastern Europe, Africa and Asia; although the percentage dropped by 25% in Africa and 31% in Asia between 1969 and 2018.¹³ As of 2018, 123 out of a total of 193 **UN** member states (approximately 65%) did not criminalise such acts. Beyond laws related to the (de)criminalisation of consensual same-sex sexual acts, since 2001 the issue of same-sex marriage has become a primary site of activism, and an increasing number of states have legally extended their definition of marriage to include same-sex couples or have legally recognised partnership for same-sex couples.¹⁴ In some societies, alongside the formal global and national processes described above, there has also been increasing understanding about the complexities of gender identity and a shift towards acceptance and public support for the LGBTI community.

However, laws by themselves are limited. There can be great global policies, and a country may have progressive legislation in place, but if prejudice continues to exist amongst large segments of a population, then legal or policy frameworks make little difference in the day-to-day lives of marginalised people. In this regard, despite the encouraging trend of decriminalisation, and the increasing acceptance and support for LGBTI people in some countries, formal legal change has not necessarily led to changes in social norms or behaviours, nor translated into improvements in the lived experiences of LGBTI people. As noted in the *2019 Report on State-Sponsored Homophobia*:

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- ¹¹ Yang, Daryl. 2019. "Global Trends on the Decriminalisation of Consensual Same-Sex Sexual Acts (1969-2015)" In: Mendós, Lucas Ramon. 2019. *2019 Report on State-Sponsored Homophobia* (13th Edition). Geneva, Switzerland. ILGA: page 175. The *Report on State-Sponsored Homophobia* is published annually by the ILGA and has become a prominent source of credible information for courts of law, governments and other organisations.
- ¹² In 1969, the number of criminalising states was 138, and as of 2018 it had dropped to 70: 33 in Africa; 22 in Asia (including the Middle East); nine in the Caribbean; and, six in Oceania. From: Mendós, Lucas Ramon. 2019. *2019 Report on State-Sponsored Homophobia* (13th Edition). Geneva, Switzerland. ILGA: page 178.
- ¹³ Yang, Daryl. 2019. "Global Trends on the Decriminalisation of Consensual Same-Sex Sexual Acts (1969-2015)" In: Mendós, Lucas Ramon. 2019. *2019 Report on State-Sponsored Homophobia* (13th Edition). Geneva, Switzerland. ILGA: page 178.
- ¹⁴ See: Mendós, Lucas Ramon. 2019. *2019 Report on State-Sponsored Homophobia* (13th Edition). Geneva, Switzerland. ILGA: pages 277-288.

Legality of same-sex sexual acts cannot be read as evidence of a safer living environment for people with diverse sexual orientations or gender identities or expressions. In many of the States listed [in the report], social stigmatization of people who are perceived as non-heterosexual or non-cisgender remains alarmingly high.¹⁵

In this context, EI believes that education unions, teachers and education personnel, have a key role to play in addressing prejudice and discrimination towards LGBTI people in schools and in society. Over the years, some EI members have been actively involved in global and national advocacy work to promote LGBTI rights in education. Others have taken action against discrimination at the local level by developing new pedagogical approaches, curricula, teaching materials and resources to strengthen a culture of respect for human rights and diversity, including sexual orientation and gender identity, in their schools. All of this work builds on global frameworks that outline rights to education, and the increasing commitment in many parts of the world to designing education systems that are safe, inclusive and supportive learning and teaching environments.

II. LGBTI Rights in the Education Sector

Education as a human right has been recognised since 1948, when the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) was adopted; Article 26 of the Declaration states “everyone has the right to education.” Since then, numerous legal instruments that obligate states to provide education for their citizens have been developed by the UN and reaffirmed in various global and regional treaty bodies. Some of the most important global instruments related to the right to education include:

- 1960: UNESCO [Convention Against Discrimination in Education](#)
- 1966: [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (Article 13)
- 1981: [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#) (CEDAW – Article 10)
- 1989: [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (Article 28)
- 2015: [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDG Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning)

These global frameworks — alongside other international human rights policies — mandate safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments that are free from violence and discrimination for all students. In recent years, there has been

15 Yang, Daryl. 2019. “Global Trends on the Decriminalisation of Consensual Same-Sex Sexual Acts (1969-2015)” In: Mendós, Lucas Ramon. 2019. 2019 Report on State-Sponsored Homophobia (13th Edition). Geneva, Switzerland. ILGA: page 179.

increasing recognition that in order to achieve this goal of 'education for all', discrimination and violence in schools based on sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression are issues that must be addressed.

Discrimination towards LGBTI students, teachers and education personnel can manifest in a myriad of ways in the educational setting. Some example of the different forms of discrimination include:¹⁶

- Psychological pressure and threats;
- Harassment and stigmatisation;
- Isolation and exclusion;
- Practical jokes and contemptuous humour;
- Physical violence, sometimes with serious consequences; and,
- The spread of negative stereotypes including via the educational process itself.

Some example of the types of discrimination that specifically affect LGBTI teachers and education personnel include:

- Promotion refused or delayed;
- Unfair transfers or job changes;
- Unequal work conditions;
- Arbitrary dismissals;
- Non-renewal of contracts for part-time staff following the revelation — voluntary or forced — of the sexual orientation of the personnel in question; and,
- Various types of aggression, sometimes of a very serious nature, against gay and lesbian teachers living with or affected by HIV and AIDS.

The offenders of the various forms of discrimination outlined above can include public authorities, education employers, colleagues/teachers, classmates/students and/or parents. Also, it is important to note that discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression often intersects with other forms of discrimination; for instance, on the grounds of race or ethnicity, socio-economic status and disability.

One of the global institutions that has been most active on LGBTI rights in the education sector over the past decade or so is **UNESCO**. In 2011, UNESCO convened the first-ever international consultation on homophobic bullying in

¹⁶ This information is taken from Article 12 of EI's 1998 [Resolution on the Protection of the Rights of Lesbian and Gay Education Personnel](#); as well as *EI's First Triennial Report on the Situation of Gay & Lesbian Teachers and Workers in the Field of Education*, published in 2001.

educational institutions; and in 2016, it organised the first international ministerial meeting on how the education sector was responding to homophobic and transphobic violence. At the 2016 meeting, Ministers expressed their political commitment to ensuring inclusive and equitable education for all learners — including LGBTI learners — through a [Call for Action](#) that to date has been supported by 56 countries. At the same meeting, UNESCO launched a report analysing the scope and impact of homophobic and transphobic violence in schools across the globe, as well as examples of successful responses by the education sector. The 2016 report — [Out in the Open: Education Sector Responses to Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression](#) — indicates that a significant portion of LGBTI students consulted or interviewed for the report had experienced violence in school due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression in all regions of the world.¹⁷ LGBTI students also reported a higher prevalence of violence in school than non-LGBTI peers. The report concludes that LGBTI students are therefore more likely to feel unsafe at school and thus more likely to miss classes or drop out. This can in turn affect students' academic results and employment prospects. It can also have adverse effects on well-being and mental health — including increased risk of anxiety, stress, low self-esteem, depression and suicide — which also affects learning.

As follow-up to the consultation, global conference and report, **UNESCO** has been supporting concrete initiatives in various regions and countries. For example, in Asia-Pacific, UNESCO recently entered into partnership with EI to build the capacity of teachers on the rights of LGBTI people and the role of the education sector in addressing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.

Indeed, the global agreements on the right to education outlined above, alongside the research and policies developed by **UNESCO** and other **UN** agencies, have provided a framework for EI and other global trade unions, such as [Public Services International](#) (PSI) and [International Trade Union Confederation](#) (ITUC) to develop their own policies and programs that aim to promote inclusive, equitable and quality education for all, including LGBTI people. The next two sections of this report are focused on highlighting some of this work.

¹⁷ This was based on data from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and the Pacific.

Section 2: Strategies for Integrating LGBTI Rights into EI's Internal Policies, Structures and Activities

The subject [of gay and lesbian teachers and workers in the field of education] is one which will continue to cause controversy and raise opposition, yet it is one which is increasingly important in schools, because is increasingly visible and present within societies.¹⁸

From early on, EI has acknowledged and denounced the fact that LGBTI teachers, education personnel and students experience discrimination in their schools and communities. For example, Article 4 of EI's first resolution on the matter — the 1998 [Resolution on the Protection of the Rights of Lesbian and Gay Education Personnel](#) — “observes and denounces the fact that lesbian and gay teachers face discrimination and harassment, including violence and abuse, as a result of their sexual orientation.” The 1998 resolution called on EI and its member organisations to “defend the human rights of all teachers and students” (Article 5), and to “clearly state that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is a violation of human rights” (Article 6).

EI has since made significant efforts to follow through on these recommendations. Over the past 20 years, EI has adopted a variety of strategies for integrating LGBTI rights into its internal policies, structures and activities. Part of this work has been to try and ensure that there is cohesion between what is written in EI policies and what is practiced internally within EI and its member unions. This has not been easy. The same trends that can be observed more generally when it comes to LGBTI issues and rights also apply to the education sector; and, the polarisation of more progressive and more conservative views on these issues is also visible amongst education unions.

In response, EI has consistently reinforced its commitment to defending LGBTI rights as part of its broader mandate to improve and protect the working conditions of *all* educators based on the fundamental principles that underlie the union movement — namely, worker's rights and social justice. For instance, in its 2015 [Resolution on LGBTI Rights](#), EI notes that “the promotion, protection and defense of human rights irrespective of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression is an important principle adopted by EI and its affiliate [member] organisations” (Article 2). EI has also been clear in stating that diversity is a strength, and more inclusive unions make for stronger organisations and ultimately a stronger education union

¹⁸ Education International. 2001. *First Triennial Report on the Situation of Gay and Lesbian Teachers and Workers in the Field of Education*. Internal publication: page 1.

movement: “[t]he inclusion of groups, such as gay and lesbian workers, which have not so far been adequately represented on the union agenda, will lead to stronger internal democracy and will contribute in a very clear way to a more complete union representation.”¹⁹

The strategies adopted by EI to ‘walk the talk’ internally have included the development of policies that provide a framework for LGBTI rights in education, and the establishment of structures focused on LGBTI issues and rights. Other strategies have included the regular use of surveys and reports to try and track progress over time; awareness-raising solidarity actions; development and dissemination of publications; information sharing amongst EI member unions; and, coordination of EI’s activities around relevant global commemorative dates. Highlights of these initiatives are presented in this section of the review.

I. EI Policies that Support LGBTI Rights in Education

EI Constitution and Policy Overview

In the **EI Constitution**, which was adopted in 1993 when EI was founded, Article 2 (specifically point h) sets out EI’s objective in relation to non-discrimination and commits “to combat all forms of racism and of bias or discrimination in education and society due to gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, religion, political opinion, social or economic status or national or ethnic origin.”

Building on the principles of equality and non-discrimination that are enshrined in the EI Constitution, over the past 20 years EI has adopted several resolutions, declarations and statements at global and regional levels that either explicitly focus on, or refer to, LGBTI rights in education. The table below provides an overview of these policies. Together, these policies serve to articulate EI’s agenda on LGBTI rights in education.

¹⁹ Ibid: page 1.

Table 1: Overview of EI Resolutions, Declarations and Statements Related to LGBTI Rights in Education

Year	Title	Overview
1998	<u>Resolution on the Protection of the Rights of Lesbian and Gay Education Personnel</u>	<p>EI's <i>Resolution on the Protection of the Rights of Lesbian and Gay Education Personnel</i> was adopted in July 1998 by EI's 2nd World Congress, held in Washington D.C., USA.</p> <p>The resolution became the foundational policy for EI's work on LGBTI rights in education.</p>
2004	EI-PSI LGBT Porto Alegre Declaration	<p>The <i>EI-PSI LGBT Porto Alegre Declaration</i> came out of the 1st EI-PSI LGBT Forum and was immediately presented at EI's 4th World Congress, held in Porto Alegre, Brazil in July 2004.</p> <p>The declaration provided a concrete platform for EI to increase its activities and resources to support LGBT rights within the union movement.</p>
2011	<u>Resolution on Respect for Diversity</u>	<p>EI's <i>Resolution on Respect for Diversity</i> was adopted in July 2011 by EI's 6th World Congress, held in Cape Town, South Africa.</p> <p>The resolution recognises that education is a basic human right and should nurture fair treatment and respect towards all people, regardless of their sexual orientation.</p>
2014	<u>Joint Statement on LGBT Violations</u>	<p>EI and PSI released a <i>Joint Statement on LGBT Violations</i> online in 2014.</p> <p>The statement calls for the global trade union movement to actively oppose homophobia and transphobia, and to organise to defend LGBT rights.</p>

Year	Title	Overview
2015	Resolution on LGBTI Rights	<p>EI's <i>Resolution on LGBTI Rights</i> was adopted in July 2015 by EI's 7th World Congress, which was held in Ottawa, Canada.</p> <p>The resolution clearly states that addressing rights violations of LGBTI people is a legitimate trade union issue, and emphasises the important role of the trade union movement in collectively championing LGBTI rights.</p>
2015	Resolution on School-Related Gender-Based Violence	<p>EI's <i>Resolution on School-Related Gender-Based Violence</i> (SRGBV) was adopted in July 2015 by EI's 7th World Congress, held in Ottawa, Canada.</p> <p>The resolution recognises that SRGBV creates a significant barrier to the delivery of quality education and acknowledges the particular vulnerability of LGBT people.</p>
2017	Resolution on Advancing LGBTI Rights (Asia-Pacific region)	<p>The regional <i>Resolution on Advancing LGBTI Rights</i> was adopted in 2017 at the 8th EI Asia-Pacific Regional Conference, held in Kathmandu, Nepal.</p> <p>This is the first regional EI resolution explicitly focused on LGBTI rights.</p>
2018	Resolution on Setting the Priorities to Develop the ETUCE Action Plan for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (European region)	<p>The resolution on <i>Setting the Priorities to Develop the ETUCE Action Plan for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion</i> was adopted in late 2018 by the European region of EI (ETUCE) during a Special Conference held in Athens, Greece.</p> <p>The resolution specifically highlights the fact that LGBTI students and education personnel continue to experience prejudice, bullying and discrimination based on their sexual orientation and gender identity; and,</p>

Year	Title	Overview
		affirms the importance of achieving equality for LGBTI teachers and students as part of creating safe, secure and inclusive learning environments.

II. An Overview of LGBTI Structures within EI

EI is an organization made up of organisations (e.g. member unions), which brings together 400 education unions and associations from 170 countries and territories. Together, EI member organisations represent 32 million female and male professionals, who are working at all levels of the education sector, from early childhood centres through to tertiary institutions.²⁰

This large and dispersed membership of EI is impressive — member unions are active in almost 88% of all countries and territories across the world! But this also brings with it much complexity. An organisation of organisations such as EI requires a structure that delineates clear lines of responsibility and accountability, while also remaining flexible to the needs and priorities of members who are working in a wide range of contexts. Mechanisms are needed to ensure that the diversity of voices within EI's membership are represented at all levels, so that common goals can be successfully achieved.

Since EI was founded in 1993, a range of initiatives have been undertaken to create spaces for LGBTI teachers, education professionals and their allies to come together at various levels, and to raise awareness about LGBTI issues and rights within the global education union movement. This section provides an overview of the main bodies that make up EI's organisational structure²¹, and outlines specific LGBTI spaces that are connected to EI structures in some way (see text highlighted in red).

EI Global Structures

The EI **World Congress** is the highest governing and decision-making body at EI, which takes place every four years in a different region of the world. Any EI member union that has paid membership dues has voting rights and can attend. This is when the President, General Secretary and members of the

²⁰ At the founding in 1993, Education International was composed of 210 member unions from 114 countries.

²¹ Article 8 of the EI Constitution provides an overview of EI's organisational structure. See: https://www.ei-ie.org/en/detail_page/4381/governance

Executive Board are elected; the EI global program and budget are agreed; and, resolutions are put forward and voted on.²²

The **EI LGBT Caucus** happens before World Congress, as a way of ensuring that there is a formally recognised space focused on LGBTI issues as part of the event. Initiated in 2007 at the **5th World Congress**, the Caucus is a dedicated space to discuss LGBTI issues. While not a decision-making space, recommendations from the LGBT Caucus are included in a report that is reviewed by the newly elected **Executive Board** after Congress.²³ More detail on the history and evolution of the EI LGBT Caucus can be found in the box below.

The EI **Executive Board** is another global structure, which has representation from all EI regions and is led by the President, who is the Chair of the Board. Board Members are elected every four years at World Congress and meet twice a year to monitor implementation of the EI global program and budget and EI resolutions, amongst other responsibilities.²⁴ EI's leadership has shown an ongoing commitment to engaging with LGBTI issues and rights in education since the organisation was founded.

EI also has four **Standing Committees** that operate at the global level, which include:

- Advisory Bodies;
- Status of Women;
- Finance and Audit; and,
- Constitution and By-Laws.

Standing Committees meet regularly in between Congress events and can make recommendations to the **Executive Board** on an ongoing basis, which if adopted provides the **EI Secretariat** with a mandate to work on a particular issue.

In 2003, EI joined forces with **PSI** to establish a joint **EI-PSI LGBT Forum**²⁵ as an advisory body to both the **EI Executive Board** and the **PSI Committee**.²⁶ The

²² Some resolutions are submitted to Congress by the EI Executive Board and others are submitted by individuals or groups of EI member unions.

²³ If the LGBTI Caucus develops a specific or urgent resolution on LGBTI rights, this will be presented to and voted on by Congress.

²⁴ See the *EI Constitution*, Article 10, for a full list of the EI Executive Board's responsibilities.

²⁵ The Forum is also sometimes referred to as the 'EI-PSI International LGBT Forum' and the 'Sexual Diversity Forum.' It is described in more detail in [Section 3](#).

²⁶ The PSI Committee is equivalent to the EI Executive Board.

Forum has met four times since 2004, every 3–4 years, alternating between EI and PSI Congress events. This Forum thus provides an opportunity for educators and unions working on LGBTI rights to make recommendations to EI's **Executive Board** on an ongoing basis, which in turn means that the **EI Secretariat's** mandate to work on specific LGBTI-related issues can also be regularly updated based on the needs and priorities expressed during the Forum events.

EI's LGBT Caucus

Prior to EI's **3rd World Congress** in 2001 held in Jomtien, Thailand, the **EI Executive Board** met to discuss how to create space within EI for groups with specific identities. The Board decided that EI members or delegates with common interests would be free to form Caucuses prior to **World Congress** events to build support for their priorities and as a means of contributing to the democratic functioning of the Congress.

As noted above, the **EI LGBT Caucus** was established to ensure that there is a formally recognised space focused on LGBT issues as part of EI's formal structure and processes. The idea for an LGBT Caucus was initially raised in 2004 during the first **EI-PSI LGBT Forum** held in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Since 2007, an LGBT Caucus event has been organised prior to each World Congress, except in years when EI has hosted the **EI-PSI LGBT Forum** (e.g. **6th World Congress** in 2011).

The first meeting of the Caucus took place just before EI's **5th World Congress** in 2007 that was held in Berlin, Germany; and the second meeting took place prior to the **7th World Congress** in 2015 as part of a broader 'Diversity Forum' held in Ottawa, Canada (more on this below). The third **EI LGBTI Caucus** event will take place in July 2019 prior to the **8th World Congress** in Bangkok, Thailand; this will be a half-day event, followed by a half-day meeting of the **EI-PSI LGBT Forum**.

The Caucus is a dedicated space to discuss LGBTI issues led by LGBTI-friendly educators and allies, but all Congress delegates and observers are welcome to attend and participate. It has become a 'safe space' for educators and union members who identify as LGBTI and has also provided an important opportunity for other union representatives to learn more about LGBTI issues and rights. Recommendations from the **LGBTI Caucus** are included in a report that is reviewed by the newly elected **Executive Board** after Congress.

Participation in the Caucus has been increasing in recent years now that pre-Congress events are better coordinated. The **LGBT Caucus**, **Indigenous Caucus**, **Women's Caucus** and **Higher Education Caucus** no longer meet at the same time, so there is no longer 'competition' for participants. During EI's last **World Congress** in 2015, which took place in Ottawa, Canada, the **LGBT Caucus** and **Indigenous Caucus** events were merged into one event focused on 'diversity.' However, some participants in the 'Diversity Forum' felt that they had less time and space to discuss their specific issues; so, the next **LGBT Caucus** event in July 2019 will once again be organised as a space that is specifically focused on LGBTI issues and rights in education.

El Regional Structures

As of mid-2019, there are four active EI regions and one cross-country regional structure, which are represented by **Regional Committees**.²⁷

- **Africa Regional Committee** represents EI member unions from across sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Arab Countries Cross-Regional Structure (ACCRS)** represents EI member unions from North Africa and the Middle East.
- **Asia-Pacific Regional Committee** represents EI member unions from Asia and the Pacific.
- Bureau of the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents EI member unions from the European region.
- **Latin America Regional Committee** represents EI member unions from Central and South America.

These committees do not have decision-making power but play an important role in terms of overseeing implementation of EI activities in their region; identifying issues relevant to their region that they want EI to act on; and, putting forward regional priorities and recommendations at Congress and to the **Executive Board**. The **Regional Committees** also organise regular regional conferences at least twice per year, and extraordinary conferences as

²⁷ All regional structures were established by Article 13 of the *EI Constitution* adopted in 1993, except for ACCRS, which was established in 2012. There is currently no active Regional Committee for North America and the Caribbean but the EI Secretariat continues to work in cooperation with the **Caribbean Union of Teachers** as the regional body for the Caribbean.

needed, to bring together EI members from different countries in the region to discuss common issues and priorities.

In recent years there have been some **regional events** organised to bring LGBTI educators together prior to EI regional conferences (i.e. replicating the **LGBT Caucus/World Congress** model); and in some instances LGBTI rights have been included in the official program of these meetings/conferences. The frequency of these types of events varies significantly across regions; the most active regions in recent years in terms of creating spaces to bring together LGBTI representatives from various countries have been Latin America and Asia-Pacific. However, unions working on these issues in the Latin American context have been facing setbacks in recent years due to the election of conservative, right-wing parties and leaders in many countries. In the case of Asia-Pacific, EI member unions have been increasing their activity on LGBTI rights since 2016 and LGBTI issues have become regularly integrated into the meeting agendas of their regional conferences; a regional policy on LGBTI rights was adopted in 2017; and most recently, the EI regional office has partnered with **UNESCO** to pilot a project on LGBTI rights in education in four different countries.

EI National Structures

Some of the most important work on LGBTI rights is done by individual EI members, since they are best placed to try and influence national policy and legal frameworks, and know best how to work within the socio-cultural context in which they are based. As stated in the the third triennial report on **The Rights of Lesbian and Gay Teachers and Education Personnel**, “the work on LGBT issues within unions and towards governments often lies in the hands of individual EI members, with the support of the EI Regional offices and the EI Secretariat.”²⁸

Some EI members are actively working to change their union’s culture so that it is more inclusive of LGBTI educators; for instance, by voluntarily appointing LGBTI representatives to join specific union committees or working groups. Many unions are also involved in advocacy, lobbying, awareness raising and solidarity efforts to bring about social and legal changes regarding LGBTI rights — both within their own countries and internationally. However, this report does not include a detailed overview of national-level LGBTI structures or activities, as it is beyond the scope of the review.

²⁸ Education International. 2018. *The Rights of Lesbian and Gay Teachers and Education Personnel*. Internal Publication: page 53.

As noted above, work on equality and non-discrimination in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity has varied over the years across regions and countries, ranging from some EI members very actively engaged and vocal about LGBTI rights, to other members actively opposed to this type of work. However, it is clear from the documentation and interviews that overall there is increasing acceptance, interest and engagement around these issues amongst EI member unions across all regions. As stated in EI's 2011 **Quadrennial Report on the Rights of Lesbian and Gay Teachers and Education Personnel**, "the number of unions involved in work on LGBT rights and gender identity has increased significantly in the last four years in Europe and Latin America and slowly in regions such as the Caribbean, Asia Pacific and Africa."²⁹

EI Secretariat and Regional Offices

The **EI Secretariat** is based in Brussels, Belgium and there are **Regional Offices** that house EI staff in Accra, Ghana; Beirut, Lebanon; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and, San José, Costa Rica. The **ETUCE** (European region) offices are located in Brussels, Belgium at the **International Trade Union House**, together with the EI Secretariat.³⁰

There is one **Equality Coordinator** based at the **EI Secretariat** in Brussels, who is mandated to work on LGBTI issues — as well as support work on gender equality, Indigenous rights, migrant rights and disability rights. The coordinator works in collaboration with the regional offices to support EI and its member unions to work on these issues at the regional, national and local levels.

III. Strategies to Integrate LGBTI Rights into EI's Activities

This section outlines additional strategies (i.e. beyond policies and formal structures) that have been undertaken over the past 25 years to integrate LGBTI rights into EI's actions. It provides a snapshot of examples, including surveys and reports; awareness raising; solidarity actions; publications; information sharing amongst member unions; and, coordination around relevant global commemorative dates. Highlights of these initiatives are presented in this section of the review.

²⁹ Education International. 2011. Quadrennial Report on the Rights of Lesbian and Gay Teachers and Education Personnel. Internal publication: page 58.

³⁰ There was also previously a Regional Office for North America and the Caribbean in St Lucia.

EI Surveys and Triennial/Quadrennial Reports

Since adoption of the first *Resolution on the Protection of the Rights of Lesbian and Gay Education Personnel* in 1998, EI has developed a report on the situation of LGBTI rights in education every 3–4 years (referred to as ‘triennial’ or ‘quadrennial’ reports). EI has produced a total of five triennial/quadrennial reports on the status of LGBTI rights in education, which are outlined in the table below. Many of these reports have been based in part on results from global surveys that have been sent out to all EI regions and members.

Table 2: EI Triennial/Quadrennial Reports on LGBTI Rights in the Education Sector (2001–2015)

Date	Report Title	Comments
2001	First Triennial Report on the Situation of Gay and Lesbian Teachers and Workers in the Field of Education	<p>The report was prepared for EI’s 3rd World Congress held in Jomtien, Thailand in July 2001.</p> <p>The report draws on questionnaire responses as well as information provided by human rights organisations working on behalf of gays and lesbians (e.g. ILGA, Amnesty International).</p> <p>Suggestions for how to reduce homophobia within unions and the broader trade union movement are included at the end of the report.</p>
2004	The Rights of Lesbian and Gay Teachers and Education Personnel 2001–2004 Triennial Report	<p>The second report was prepared for EI’s 4th World Congress held in Porto Alegre, Brazil in July 2004.</p> <p>The report draws on information from union and NGO websites, academic books and articles, and other publications.</p> <p>Some ideas for additional concrete actions that unions could take to address discrimination and to promote LGBT rights are provided on the last page.</p>
2007	<i>The Rights of Lesbian and Gay Teachers and Education</i>	The third triennial report was prepared for EI’s 5 th World Congress held in Berlin, Germany in July 2007.

Date	Report Title	Comments
	<i>Personnel Triennial Report 2004–2007</i>	<p>The report outlines a detailed set of recommendations for EI member unions, which are organized around the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and publications • Networking and alliance building • Advocacy and solidarity work • Regional work on LGBT issues • Organising LGBT work
2011	Quadrennial Report on the Rights of Lesbian and Gay Teachers and Education Personnel	<p>The report was prepared for EI's 6th World Congress held in Cape Town, South Africa in July 2011.</p> <p>It outlines progress made by EI in its work on the rights of LGBT teachers, education personnel and students; and, progress made at international and national levels on the recognition of the legal and social rights of LGBT people. The report also provides some examples of backlash in the social and/or legal sense. A detailed summary of EI's LGBT work between 2007–2010 at the global and regional levels is also provided.</p> <p>The final section of the report lays out a working plan for EI and includes specific recommendations for discussion.</p>
2015	Survey Report on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Persons (LGBT)	<p>The survey was included as part of a larger report — <i>Report on the Quadrennial Survey on Equality and Diversity 2010–2014</i> — which was prepared for EI's 7th World Congress held in Ottawa, Canada in July 2015.³¹</p> <p>The survey results provide an analysis of the level of engagement of EI member unions in relation to the following eight strategies/priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness and adopting policies and mechanisms; • Promoting active LGBT membership recruitment policies and union employment policies;

³¹ Another section of the report provides a summary of effective strategies for each of the EI regions, based on the LGBT survey (see pages 69–80).

Date	Report Title	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing LGBT advisory structures in unions; • Adopting written policy on LGBT issues and non-discrimination in education; • Carrying out training activities on LGBT persons and non-discrimination in education • Promoting the employment rights of all teachers and education personnel; • Establishing networks and alliances with other LGBT rights groups at the national level; and, • Promoting cooperation, partnerships, knowledge sharing and exchange of good practice. <p>Several priorities are articulated at the end of the report, outlining possible union activities at both the national and regional levels for the 2015–2019 period.</p>

The response rate to the EI questionnaires and surveys has fluctuated over time. It went from a total of 82 responses in 2001, down to 43 responses in 2007, and then back up to 59 responses in 2015. While it is encouraging that the numbers have increased since 2007, overall there has been a very low response rate given that there are over 400 EI member unions (e.g. the response rate for the most recent survey was approximately 15%); and in principle, all EI members should be working on LGBTI rights in some way given the global resolutions and declarations they have adopted.

Awareness Raising Amongst Union Leadership

Since the early 2000s, the EI Secretariat has responded to requests from **Regional** and **sub-Regional Committees** and offices, as well as individual member unions, to build awareness on LGBTI issues with union leadership through training workshops. This has been an important strategy to build support for work on LGBTI rights.

For example, this was the strategy used in the early 2000s in Latin America. At the request of the **Latin American Regional Committee**, EI engaged with trained leaders from nine unions from across the region to support them in developing policies and national action plans to move forward work on LGBTI

issues and rights in their contexts. Similar support was offered to member unions in Southern Africa in 2011 at the request of the sub-regional committee, because at the time union staff and representatives had limited awareness and understanding of LGBTI issues. Most recently, in 2016, at the request of one member union, EI also organised a similar training in the Caribbean.

As the **LGBTI Caucus** has gained momentum over the years, this type of awareness-raising work has become less relevant, as the Caucus space offers union leaders an opportunity to increase their knowledge and engagement on the issues as part of regular **World Congress** events and/or regional conferences.

Solidarity Actions

One of the key roles of the **EI Secretariat**, when it comes to promoting LGBTI rights in education, has been to coordinate solidarity actions amongst member unions. For example, a member union will contact the EI Secretariat about an issue related to some kind of violation of LGBTI rights and request support or action from the EI Secretariat, who then has a mandate to follow up. This could involve EI making a request for information with the relevant government and/or sending a formal complaint to the said government; or, sending a letter to leaders, legislators or other influential decision-makers and copying in the local unions. It often involves the use of social media to engage other EI unions and the broader public in expressing solidarity.

When engaging in solidarity work, the first step taken by the **EI Secretariat** is always to contact member unions in the relevant country or region (where a violation has taken place) to ask for their input and engagement in whatever action is being planned. However when it comes to LGBTI issues, at times there is not a common position amongst unions within the same country or region, which can make it challenging to come up with a joint statement. Also, in countries where same-sex relationships are still illegal, it can be difficult for unions to speak out against the violation of LGBTI rights, as it could put them in a difficult position vis-à-vis their government. In these cases, EI has to make a general statement; and in this regard, the solidarity action is not as powerful as it could be.

The [*International LGBT Solidarity: A Trade Union Charter*](#), which was developed by the UK-based **Trades Union Congress (TUC)** in 2015, provides guidance for trade unions that are seeking to protect and advance the rights of LGBT people in other countries. EI uses this Charter to inform its solidarity actions.

Publications

Since the late 1990s, EI has collaborated with PSI to produce joint publications that provide guidelines for their member organisations on how unions can take action to promote and protect the rights of LGBTI staff, members, teachers, education personnel and students.

In 1999, EI and PSI released their first joint publication — *PSI and EI Working for Lesbian and Gay Members* — to assist member unions around the world that were developing this area of their trade union's work.

A revised and updated version of the first EI-PSI joint publication was published in 2007: [Trade Unionists Together for LGBT Rights!](#) was designed to raise awareness of issues affecting LGBTI workers, and as a tool for sharing good practices around the recruitment and mobilisation of LGBTI workers within unions and schools.

In 2007, EI also published a toolkit in collaboration with WHO and [Education Development Center](#) for educators and their unions about how to create a healthy, safe environment in learning institutions. This was part of a joint program — *Education for All and HIV/AIDS Prevention in Schools* — that was implemented in 35 countries across the world over five years. The toolkit, entitled [Building a Gender Friendly School Environment: A Toolkit for Educators and Their Unions](#), aimed to challenge negative gender stereotypes and inequalities, and to promote opportunities for learners to develop a healthy gender identity as part of quality education. Following publication of the toolkit, EI was involved in organising workshops in the various countries, to support unions to develop policies and codes of conduct on HIV and AIDS, gender and other relevant issues. In many places, this created a conversation and hot debate amongst unions about issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and same-sex relationships in the broader context of promoting safe school environments.

Information Sharing and Awareness Raising Amongst EI Member Unions

In 2016, EI decided to pilot a new initiative and launched an internal newsletter focused on LGBTI rights in education and education unions, to keep members informed on EI and the work of its members to promote LGBTI rights (see the table below for a full list of publications to date). EI publishes the *EI Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Union* twice a year; so, a total of six newsletters have been published and

disseminated in the 2016–2018 period.³² The newsletter is produced in three languages (English, French, Spanish), and each edition aims to include information about activities, good practices and resources from each of the EI regions.

During the first phase of the pilot (year 1 – 2016), the newsletter was distributed only to LGBTI union activists and equality officers; during the second phase (year 2 – 2017), it was also shared with leaders who had attended different meetings focused on LGBTI rights; and during the third phase (year 3 – 2018), LGBTI unionists from other global unions were also invited to sign up to receive it. The pilot is now finished, and the newsletter will be ‘out’ and available to all member unions and the public as of mid-2019.

Table 3: List of EI Newsletters on LGBTI Rights in Education (2016–2018)

Date of Publication	Newsletter Edition and Link
June 2016	<i><u>El Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Unions: No. 1</u></i>
November 2016	<i><u>El Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Unions: No. 2</u></i>
April 2017	<i><u>El Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Unions: No. 3</u></i>
September 2017	<i><u>El Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Unions: No 4</u></i>
March 2018	<i><u>El Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Unions: No. 5</u></i>
September 2018	<i><u>El Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Unions: No. 6</u></i>

Beyond the newsletter initiative, EI has also shared key reports and information with member unions on an ad hoc basis, to raise awareness about LGBTI rights in education. For example, when the results of ILO’s [*PRIDE*](#)

³² The seventh edition of the EI Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Union will be published in April 2019.

[Project](#)³³ were published in 2016, EI disseminated the report to its members and governing body to increase their awareness of LGBT rights, and to promote diversity and equality in the world of work.

Coordinating EI Activities Around Global Annual Commemorative Dates

In May 2005, the first [International Day Against Homophobia](#)³⁴ (IDAHO) was held on May 17th to commemorate when WHO decided to remove homosexuality from the list of mental disorders in 1990. IDAHO aims to coordinate international events that raise awareness of LGBTI rights violations and stimulate interest in LGBTI rights work worldwide.

From 2005 onwards, the **EI Secretariat** has attempted to coordinate the activities of EI member unions around IDAHO, to increase awareness and keep the discussion about LGBTI rights in education going, and has regularly organised events and/or solidarity actions to commemorate the day. For instance, the EI Secretariat will publish a statement in different languages on May 17th and ask EI member unions to distribute it to their networks. Sometimes this work is done in collaboration with other global trade union federations. For instance in May 2017, EI, PSI and ITUC issued a [joint statement](#) calling on unions to take a strong stand against discriminatory laws and attitudes, and to show decisive leadership in protecting and furthering LGBTI rights.

Many UN bodies, such as ILO and UNESCO, also organise specific actions to commemorate IDAHO; and many governments have established national IDAHO days on May 17th, including Costa Rica, Croatia, Brazil, Canada, France, Mexico, Norway, Netherlands, Spain and UK. However, some countries have set different dates to celebrate LGBTI rights (e.g. LGBT history month, pink day, purple shirt day), which can pose a challenge to EI's efforts to coordinate the actions of member unions on these issues.

Other Strategies

Beyond the strategies outlined above, some EI member unions have also developed and adopted a wide range of other strategies to promote LGBTI

³³ The PRIDE Project — officially entitled, [Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation: Promoting Rights, Diversity and Equality in the World of Work](#) — was implemented from 2012 to 2016, and aimed to better understand and document how discrimination happens; the legal gaps, as well as the gap between legal and policy frameworks; and, the day-to-day reality for LGBT workers.

³⁴ Now referred to as the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOTB).

rights in education within their own organisations and contexts. This varies by region and by country, and it is beyond the scope of this review to provide a complete overview or analysis of these activities. However, some of the most recent examples, drawn from the 2015 *Survey Report on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Persons (LGBT)* include:

- Actively recruiting LGBTI teachers and education personnel and/or adopting an affirmative action employment policy;
- Reserving seats for LGBT members on union decision-making bodies;³⁵
- Setting up advisory committees, structures or networks focused on LGBTI rights in education;
- Adopting policies on the rights of LGBTI persons and non-discrimination in education;
- Engaging in awareness raising on diversity issues and how to address homophobia, bullying, cyber-bullying and transphobia;
- Producing training materials for students and professional guidance for teachers;
- Promoting sexual diversity education in school curricula;
- Ensuring diversity perspectives throughout the national curriculum;
- Making links to other forms of discrimination — for example, that faced by LGBT migrant teachers and students;
- Defending LGBT teachers and education professionals — for example, through receiving complaints and being kept informed of situations of discrimination, as well as supporting members in employment tribunals;
- Advocating for changes in government social security systems to address discriminatory practices in partner benefits;
- Negotiating clauses in collective contracts on non-discrimination in employment, promotion, pensions and survivor benefits;
- Actively engaging with civil society alliances focused on promoting LGBTI rights;
- Participating in international days of action, such as IDAHO on May 17th, pride and equality marches, and other campaign activities; and,
- Taking part in activities to mark LGBT or diversity week/month, and in solidarity actions to protect against homophobic attacks.

This range of activities being undertaken by some of EI's member unions is impressive and inspiring, and should be applauded. What is also encouraging is that more than 80% of the unions that responded to the survey in 2015 expressed an interest in promoting cooperation, knowledge sharing and exchange of good practice. These have been identified as initiatives that EI and EI regional offices can continue to strengthen and facilitate in the future.

³⁵ NB. Only two unions reported doing this, so this does not seem a common policy.

Section 3: EI's External Work to Promote and Defend LGBTI Rights in Education

The international trade union movement is strongly committed to the realization of all human rights, to promoting equality and solidarity within trade unions and in all societies. Unions play a key role in promoting the human rights and social inclusion of LGBTI people in the workplace and in society more generally.³⁶

In order to carry out much of its external work to promote LGBTI rights in education, EI has built strategic alliances with other global trade union federations. The collaboration that dates back the longest is with **PSI**, and EI has also worked for many years with **ITUC**. EI has also been an active member of the [Council of Global Unions \(CGU\)](#) since it was established in 2007.

One of the most consistent joint strategies has been the **EI-PSI LGBT Forum**, which has been organised four times since 2004, to bring together LGBTI-friendly unionists and activists from across the world to share experiences, good practices and strategies, and to build informal alliances to move forward a common agenda on LGBTI rights in education.

EI has also collaborated with **PSI** and **ITUC** since the late 1990s to carry out joint advocacy with global structures like the **ILO**, to influence policy and processes relevant to LGBTI rights.³⁷ Over the years, EI and its members have also engaged with other **UN** agencies — such as **UNESCO**, [United Nations Development Program \(UNDP\)](#) and [UN Women](#) — when it has been relevant, to engage in specific global or regional initiatives related to LGBTI rights in education.

Another important strategy for moving forward its agenda on LGBTI rights has been EI's direct collaboration with LGBTI organisations and movements, as well as its participation in various global conferences and events.

This section provides an overview of the key strategic alliances, advocacy efforts and global events that have allowed EI to advance its agenda on LGBTI rights over the years.

³⁶ From a joint statement released by EI, PSI and ITUC in May 2017 to commemorate IDAHOTB.

³⁷ ITUC was formed in 2006 when two global institutions — International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and World Labour Confederation — merged. Therefore, any work that EI carried out before 2006 was with ICFTU; and post-2006, it has been with ITUC.

I. Strategic Alliances: EI's Collaboration with other Global Trade Unions to Advance LGBTI Rights

Public Services International (PSI)

Soon after EI adopted its first *Resolution on the Protection of the Rights of Lesbian and Gay Education Personnel* in 1998, it established a collaboration with PSI. Since then, the two global union federations have done a lot of work together — for instance, to advocate for LGBTI rights at the global level with institutions such as at the UN, or to organise specific spaces for trade unionists to discuss LGBTI rights during global events and conferences.³⁸ EI and PSI have also worked together to raise awareness of LGBTI rights by organising joint events and developing joint publications. For example, as noted earlier in the report, in 1999 EI and PSI released their first joint publication — *PSI and EI Working for Lesbian and Gay Members* — to assist member unions around the world in developing this area of their trade union's work (NB. Revised and republished in 2007). As stated in the [joint statement](#) issued by EI, PSI and ITUC in 2017, in commemoration of IDAHOTB: "*PSI and EI have been at the forefront of the struggle to secure, protect and promote LGBTI rights and end workplace discrimination, harassment and violence since the release of [their] first joint publication.*"

The longest standing joint initiative between the two organisations has been the **EI-PSI LGBT Forum**, which was established in 2003 and supported for many years by the **EI-PSI LGBT Steering Committee**.

EI-PSI LGBT Forum / EI-PSI LGBT Steering Committee

In 2003, EI and PSI agreed to set up a joint **EI-PSI LGBT Forum**. Since 2004, there have been four EI-PSI LGBT Forum events. The Forum exists to this day, and is open to all interested members from EI and PSI, and to their LGBT caucuses, groups and committees. As outlined in a brochure that was published about the Forum in 2007, the aims are to:

1. Create awareness among EI and PSI member organizations, which have yet to develop policies and programs to oppose discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity;

³⁸ This joint advocacy and organising work is described in more detail in a different section of the report below.

2. Reinforce linking and learning experiences between LGBT workers and trade unions at national, regional and international level, through facilitating communications and sharing of resources and information;
3. Encourage the creation of national networks or groups to develop policies and capacity building programs designed to promote respect for the rights of LGBT workers;
4. Act as an advocacy mechanism to call for the explicit recognition of the rights of LGBT workers in international human rights instruments, including **ILO Convention 111 (Discrimination in Employment)**;
5. Seek to engage other global unions in this work and participate in advocacy coalitions with other organisations.³⁹

An **EI-PSI LGBT Steering Committee** was also established in 2003, to facilitate implementation of the Forum's aims and to act as an advisory body to both the **EI Executive Board** and **PSI Committee**. For many years, the Steering Committee involved 8–10 members drawn from the Executive Boards of each organisation, as well as the Chair of **PSI's Women's and Equality Standing Committee** and union representatives from both organisations, including those who identified as LGBTI. The committee members played a role in preparing the program for **EI-PSI LGBTI Forums**; developed surveys related to joint publications; and, represented EI/PSI in specific events. The committee mainly operated as an electronic network; members communicated online via emails and conference calls.⁴⁰ At one point membership reached almost 20 people, which made communications — particularly conference calls — a challenge. The **Steering Committee** ceased to formally operate in 2011 due to internal staffing and policy changes within both EI and PSI; however, most of the former committee members continue to be active as part of an informal global network of trade unions working to promote and defend LGBTI rights.

As noted earlier, to date there have been four **EI-PSI LGBT Forum** events, and EI and PSI have alternated as 'host' for the forum: the first was held prior to **EI's 4th World Congress** in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2004; the second was organised just before **PSI's 28th Congress** held in Vienna, Austria in 2007; the third was held prior to **EI's 6th World Congress** in Cape Town, South Africa in 2011; and, the most recent one was held before **PSI's 30th Congress** in

³⁹ Education International. 2007. *EI-PSI Sexual Diversity Forum* (Brochure). Internal Publication.

⁴⁰ Committee members also met face-to-face occasionally when some or all of them were attending the same international conferences on LGBTI issues and rights.

Geneva Switzerland in 2017. EI will host the fifth forum in July 2019 — a half-day event just before it's **8th World Congress** in Bangkok, Thailand.

International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

EI's longstanding collaboration with **ITUC** (formerly **ICFTU**) — which is now the largest global trade union federation — dates from the mid-1990s, although it has been less formal than EI's strategic alliance with **PSI**.

In 2004, some **ICFTU** members — with leadership from **TUC** in the UK — created an **International LGBTI Union Initiative** to support unionists to put pressure on the **ILO** and **UN Commission on Human Rights** to adopt positive policies on lesbian and gay equality. This informal network was formed by unions in Canada, Italy, New Zealand and South Africa, and backed by **EI** and **PSI**. The network contributed to numerous 'wins' for LGBTI rights in global policy and processes. For example, after much lobbying and advocacy work by trade unions (amongst others), **ILO** signaled its intention to work more determinedly on LGBTI rights by addressing discrimination based on sexual orientation; and, the issue was included for the first time in its 2007 global report on equality at work.

Although the **International LGBTI Union Initiative** ceased to operate in the late 2000s, **EI**, **ITUC** and **PSI** have continued to do joint advocacy work to promote LGBTI rights in education. For instance, the three trade union federations cooperated to support lobbying and advocacy efforts aimed at governments, to encourage them to adopt a [resolution](#) on sexual orientation and gender identity, which was presented jointly to the **UN Human Rights Council** in 2016 by a core group of seven Latin American countries alongside 41 additional countries. The resolution passed and mandated the appointment of an **Independent Expert** on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

EI, **ITUC** and **PSI** have also joined forces to organise spaces — within global conferences and events focused on LGBTI rights — for unionists who identify as LGBTI and their allies to discuss their specific issues and actions. For instance, the three global trade union federations joined several human rights organisations to sponsor a side event during the [UN Durban Review Conference](#)⁴¹ in 2009 held in Geneva, Switzerland, to explore the relationship between race, sexual orientation, gender identity and other aspects of

⁴¹ The 2009 UN Durban Review Conference was organised to review progress towards the goals set by the [World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance](#), which took place in Durban, South Africa in 2001.

identity that are sources of systemic discrimination. The meeting called upon governments to recognise the importance of addressing multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination; and, to include sexual orientation and gender identity as grounds that are inextricably linked to racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. Examples of other global conferences and events where EI, ITUC and PSI have collaborated are highlighted further on in the report.

Beyond these joint actions, EI has also drawn on ITUC policies to inform its own work: for instance, in 2010 the 2nd ITUC World Congress adopted a resolution, [Promoting and Defending Fundamental Workers' Rights](#), which explicitly recognises sexual orientation and gender identity, and calls on the ITUC to take all opportunities to address and eliminate discrimination. The ITUC resolution has provided EI and its members with a policy framework for working on these issues at the local level in schools and classrooms.

Council of Global Unions (CGU)

EI has been a member of the CGU since its founding in 2007. The first CGU workplan identified several areas of action, including LGBT issues and rights; and the CGU Equality Working Group, formed by equality officers from all nine global unions, includes LGBT rights as part of their advocacy, campaign and solidarity actions.

At the 11th CGU Annual Meeting, held in 2017 in Brussels, Belgium, EI and PSI tabled a proposal to establish a working group on LGBTI rights; CGU adopted the proposal and members were asked to appoint representatives to the working group. The objectives of the CGU LGBTI+ Working Group are to:

- Recognize the work done by various unions in different countries;
- Promote greater attention to LGBTI rights and work amongst the global unions;
- Develop joint strategies for combatting all forms of discrimination; and,
- Assist global unions to organise joint responses in the face of the current negative political climate in which LGBTI issues are at times used to spread division and hatred in society, thus undermining integrated human rights strategies.⁴²

⁴² This information is drawn from an article in the third [EI Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Unions](#) published in April 2017.

The working group reunites representatives from EI, PSI, UNI Global Union, IndustriALL, International Transport Workers' Federation and International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations. The first meeting of the working group took place in October 2018 in Ferney-Voltaire, France, and was focused around the theme 'Strengthening Global Union Federation Strategies for LGBTI+ Rights in the Workplace.' Members of the working group shared information on their LGBTI+ focused work; explored ways to join forces; and, started the process of drafting a common workplan.

II. Advocacy: EI's Engagement with Global Institutions and Processes to Promote LGBTI Rights in Education

United Nations (UN)

The first time that problems facing gays and lesbians in society and at work were discussed in a global forum was in 1993 during the UN [World Conference on Human Rights](#) held in Vienna, Austria; and again two years later, during the [Fourth UN World Conference on Women](#) held in 1995 in Beijing, China. While the final texts coming out of these forums did not reflect the discussion on issues affecting gay and lesbian people, it opened a new opportunity for international debate on sexual orientation and created discussion in several countries about these issues. Also, the [Beijing Platform for Action](#), which came out of the **Fourth UN World Conference on Women**, affirmed that children and adolescents have the right to receive age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health information, education and services, to enable them to engage with their sexuality in a positive and responsible way. The issue of sexuality education has become increasingly relevant in the global dialogue on LGBTI rights in education.

EI participated in both global events in the mid-1990s, alongside representatives from PSI and ICFTU, which gave trade unionists an opportunity to become acquainted with gay and lesbian issues, rights and organisations. Also, the global plan to strengthen human rights work adopted during the 1993 *World Conference on Human Rights* — [Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action](#) — informed EI's first resolution on the rights of gay and lesbian teachers (adopted by the **EI World Congress** in 1998).

A decade later in 2003, Brazil put the issue of sexual orientation on the agenda of the [UN Commission on Human Rights](#)⁴³ by tabling a draft resolution on human rights and sexual orientation. The resolution was co-sponsored by 26 countries from the European Union, as well as Canada, New Zealand and South Africa. Prior to the meeting, EI, PSI, ICFTU and their member unions lobbied various governments to adopt the resolution. While the resolution was never fully debated or adopted, its groundbreaking text helped to mainstream LGBTI rights into the work of the **UN Commission on Human Rights** and provided a foundation for future work on the issues.

In 2011, South Africa presented a resolution, which became the first global resolution adopted by the UN that explicitly focused on discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. It was entitled [Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#).

Three years later in 2014, the **UN Human Rights Council** adopted a [second resolution](#) related to sexual orientation and gender identity, which passed with the majority of its members in favour (25 votes in favour, 14 against and 7 abstentions). A third resolution was jointly presented to the Council in 2016 by a core group of seven Latin American countries alongside 41 additional countries, and was subsequently adopted with 23 votes in favour, 18 against and 6 abstentions. The resolution, entitled [Protection Against Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#), mandated the appointment of an [Independent Expert](#) on these issues. EI cooperated with PSI and ITUC to support actions related to the adoption of each of these resolutions.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

In 1996, at the 83rd Session of the [International Labour Conference](#) (ILC), the [Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations](#) examined discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation (amongst other issues). The discussion was based on a [Special Survey on Equality in Employment and Occupation](#) regarding application of the [ILO Convention 111 on Discrimination \(Employment and Occupation\) \(1958\)](#) (C111).⁴⁴ The survey results highlighted sexual orientation as an emerging form of discrimination in the workplace. Committee members agree to extend the scope of C111 to include new criteria regarding prohibited forms of discrimination.

⁴³ The UN Commission on Human Rights was replaced by the UN Human Rights Council in 2006.

⁴⁴ An ILO Convention is a legally binding international treaty once a member state ratifies it; and ILO *recommendations* are guidelines for member states that they can integrate into their own national legislation and policies.

Two years later in 1998, ILO adopted [a Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work](#), which commits member states to respect and promote fundamental principles and rights in four categories, one of which is the elimination of discrimination with respect to employment and occupation (later referred to as 'equality at work'). While the 1998 declaration did not explicitly mention sexual orientation as a form of discrimination, it provided a basis for EI and other global trade union federations to lobby ILO to directly and publicly take up the issue.

The first global report focused on issues of equality at work ([Time for Equality at Work](#)) was published in 2003. ILO released a second global report on equality issues in 2007 called [Equality at Work: Tackling the Challenges](#), which explicitly included sexual orientation as a form of discrimination at the workplace for the first time. EI worked with the ILO Standards & Fundamental Principles office to input into the preparation of the report. In 2011, a third global report that included sexual orientation as a form of discrimination was published by ILO— [Equality at Work: The Continuing Challenge](#). These global reports have provided a policy framework on LGBTI rights for all global unions, including EI. Current ILO discussions on violence and harassment in the workplace acknowledge that LGBTI workers are disproportionately affected.

III. Collaboration and Networking with LGBTI Rights Organisations and Other NGOs

EI's Collaboration with LGBTI Rights Organisations

As noted earlier, another of EI's strategies for moving its agenda forward on LGBTI rights has been direct collaboration with LGBTI organisations and movements, as well as participation in various global conferences and events. For example, EI has at times collaborated with the [International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association](#) (ILGA), which is a global federation of national and local organisations working on LGBTI rights. In March 2006, representatives from EI and PSI (amongst others) participated in a panel on 'Fundamental Rights, Discrimination and Equality Principles' organised by ILGA, as part of an event focused on discrimination in the workplace, held prior to the annual meeting of the UN Human Rights Council. The meeting was attended by 50 unionists, employers and representatives from LGBTI organisations.

El's Participation in Global LGBTI Events

Over the years, EI has participated in a number of global events focused on LGBTI rights, often to ensure that there has been a specific space for trade unionists to come together as part of these conferences; and, to make the link between LGBTI rights and the global education movement.⁴⁵

For instance, in 1998 EI participated in the first **International Conference on Homosexuality, Unions and Work**, which was organised by PSI members and reunited trade union representatives from 30 countries, including LGBT unionists. The conference resulted in a clear call for coordinated action by the international trade union movement on the rights of lesbian and gay workers. In response, **PSI's Steering Committee** established a Lesbian and Gay Working Group to oversee implementation of the Conference's recommendations.

Several years later in February 2006, the **EI General Secretary** participated at the first **International LGBT Conference** organised by the [Trade Union Congress](#) (TUC), which focused on the theme 'Stamping Out Homophobia: All Over the World'. The meeting was attended by 160 participants, including delegates from some EI member unions. One of the working groups on 'Labour Standards and Corporate Social Responsibility' discussed strategies and actions on ways to ensure that LGBT concerns get raised during **ILO** conferences and reflected in labour standards.

That same year, EI participated in another international conference focused on human rights, sport and culture — referred to as the **First World Outgames**. The theme of the conference was 'The Right to be Different'. EI, PSI and ITCU members mobilised resources to create a space for LGBTI unionists to discuss their specific issues and actions. This trade union space was called the **Workers Out! Conference**. Representatives from EI, PSI and ITUC organised a workshop within this space on 'The Role of Public Sector Trade Unions in Promoting LGBT Rights at the Workplace'.

In July 2009, EI participated actively in the process leading up to the [Second World Outgames](#) conference as Chair of the **International Advisory Board**, alongside a representative from PSI. A total of 780 people from 80 different countries participated in the event, including EI member affiliates working on

⁴⁵ EI has also participated in a number of national and local events focused on LGBTI issues and rights, but these are not covered in this report. Also, the examples provided about global-level conferences in which EI has participated is not exhaustive; they simply aim to provide a snapshot of the types of events EI has engaged in over the years.

LGBTI issues in education. Once again, EI worked with other global union federations to develop a 'Workers Out' event (i.e. the trade union part of the program), which reunited almost 100 participants. The conference resulted in a [catalogue](#) of good practices from around the world, produced by the [Danish Institute for Human Rights](#), which highlighted joint trade union efforts including the EI-PSI LGBT Forum initiative.

Section 4: Learning from the Past and Looking to the Future

In the current socio-political landscape, where LGBTI rights are embattled in so many countries, trade unions must continue to show clear and decisive leadership on protecting and furthering LGBTI rights.⁴⁶

This review has provided a glimpse into some of the efforts undertaken by EI and its member unions over the past 25 years to promote LGBTI issues and rights *internally* — within EI and education unions — as well as *externally*, in terms of promoting and defending LGBTI rights in education at local, national, regional and global levels. This section summarises examples of EI's successes and learning, and offers a set of recommendations to inform EI's future priorities for its work on LGBTI rights in education.⁴⁷

I. Looking Back: Celebrating Successes

There are some key successes to celebrate — EI and its members who have been active on LGBTI rights should be proud of their accomplishments. This section highlights the following seven key successes, each of which is described in more detail below:

- EI's steadfast commitment to LGBTI rights as a union issue
- EI resolutions relevant to LGBTI rights in education: A rights-based framework
- EI's **LGBT Caucus** and the **EI-PSI LGBT Forum**: Formal spaces for unionists to discuss LGBTI issues
- EI surveys and reports: Taking stock of LGBTI rights in education
- The EI newsletter on LGBTI rights in education and education unions: A pilot initiative
- EI's support to member unions on LGBTI issues and rights: A bottom-up approach
- Strategic alliances and advocacy to promote and defend LGBTI rights in education

⁴⁶ From a [joint statement](#) released by EI, PSI and ITUC in May 2017 to commemorate the **International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia**

⁴⁷ The information and analysis in this section is drawn from interviews that were carried out with key union officials and officers from member unions from different regions who are active on LGBTI rights within the union movement; from exchanges with staff at the EI Secretariat who coordinate work on LGBTI issues; and, from the authors' own observations.

El's Steadfast Commitment to LGBTI Rights as a Union Issue

Getting this issue [of LGBTI rights] on the agenda is a huge accomplishment, given the forces we are fighting against ... El has been working really hard to get this on the global agenda ... El is going where others are very afraid to go.⁴⁸

When we say 'all,' it is about all people, including our LGBTI colleagues, students, families and community.⁴⁹

One of the things that is so important to celebrate is the fact that EI and many of its member unions have demonstrated a steadfast commitment to supporting LGBTI rights for over 20 years, despite polarization within the education union movement and broader backlash in many of the societies in which EI members operate. Dating back to 1998, when the first resolution related to LGBTI rights was adopted by Congress, and on an ongoing basis throughout the years, EI has clearly stated this commitment, and has also affirmed and reaffirmed that LGBTI rights are a union issue. EI has also been clear in stating that diversity is a strength, and that more inclusive unions make for stronger organisations and ultimately a stronger education union movement.

El Resolutions Relevant to LGBTI Rights in Education: A Rights-Based Framework

We have inspirational resolutions that address LGBTI rights in education and labour. When you read them, they are clear and unambiguous. The policies do not use euphemisms and are comprehensive. I congratulate EI that we have solid policies on LGBTI rights as human rights.⁵⁰

I believe that for LGBTI teachers and education personnel staff, they are very motivated and happy to see that EI has policies on sexual diversity and LGBTI rights.⁵¹

These are the standards that are important to us, and we want to follow these standards. In addition to these standards, there are examples of good practice that can guide us in how to counteract discrimination against people

⁴⁸ From an interview with Davanand Sinanan from the **Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association (TUTTA)**, Trinidad and Tobago, conducted on March 11th 2019

⁴⁹ From an interview with Lily Eskelsen Garcia from the **National Education Association (NEA)**, USA, conducted on March 12th 2019

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ From an interview with Fumiyo Fukuzawa from the **Japan Teachers' Union (JTU)**, Japan, conducted on March 15th 2019

*with a different sexual orientation, and make us aware that we all have the same rights.*⁵²

Since 1998, EI has adopted a series of progressive policies in the form of resolutions, declarations and statements — each of which draws on various international human rights instruments — that have provided a rights-based framework for EI's work on LGBTI issues in education. These policies recognise that LGBTI people face particular forms of discrimination, harassment and violence based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression, which violate their fundamental human rights — thus requiring explicit laws and policies at global and national levels to protect these rights to non-discrimination, equality and inclusion. EI's policies are underpinned by a strong commitment to LGBTI rights as a social justice issue.

EI's LGBT Caucus and the EI-PSI LGBT Forum: Formal Spaces for Unionists to Discuss LGBTI Issues

*EI is trying [to create support and space for LGBTI teachers and issues within the education union movement]; in each and every World Congress there is an LGBT forum that seeks to talk to members who identify as such.*⁵³

*I participated in an EI-PSI LGBTI Forum in 2017 ... This type of meeting — and making networks — is very important*⁵⁴

Over the past 15 years, EI has promoted LGBTI rights within the union movement by creating specific spaces for LGBTI-friendly unionists and their allies to come together. Both the **EI LGBT Caucus** and the **EI-PSI LGBT Forum** have offered consistent, formal spaces for unionists to come together across regions and discuss LGBTI issues and rights in education.

More specifically, the **EI LGBT Caucus** has ensured that there has been a formally recognised space focused on LGBTI issues and rights in education as part of EI's World Congress, and this has provided an important opportunity for union representatives to learn more about these issues. The **EI-PSI LGBT Forum** has allowed for educators and unionists working on LGBTI

⁵² From an interview with Dorota Obidniak from the **Union of Polish Teachers (ZNP)**, Poland, conducted on March 19th 2019

⁵³ From an interview with Dorcus Sekabate from the **South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU)**, South Africa, conducted on March 13th 2019

⁵⁴ From an interview with Fumiyo Fukuzawa from JTU, Japan, conducted on March 15th 2019

rights to develop important declarations, and to make recommendations to the Executive Boards of EI and PSI on an ongoing basis.

EI Surveys and Reports: Taking Stock of LGBTI Rights in Education

EI has regularly 'taken stock' of the situation of LGBTI rights in education since 2001. In that time EI has produced five triennial/quadrennial reports on the status and rights of LGBTI people in the education sector, many of which have been based in part on results from surveys sent out to all EI regions and members every 3–4 years. These surveys and reports have been important in terms of documenting how EI has developed its policies, structures and activities about LGBTI issues and rights in education over time.

The EI Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Unions: A Pilot Initiative

The Rainbow Newsletter is useful; it shares what is happening in other parts of the world in terms of LGBTI issues.⁵⁵

The EI newsletter is a significant opportunity to learn about other countries' activities.⁵⁶

The EI Secretariat has been collating and disseminating information about the work of EI member unions on LGBTI rights in education across regions through the EI *Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Unions* since 2016. This was launched as a three-year pilot initiative, during which time the newsletter was only distributed to certain people. The pilot phase is now over and the newsletter will be 'out' and available to all member unions and the public as of mid-2019. This will provide an opportunity to track interest and readership amongst the broader union membership.

EI's Support to Member Unions on LGBTI Issues and Rights: A Bottom-Up Approach

It is clear from reviewing the activities of EI members at the national and local levels over the years, as outlined in the triennial/quadrennial reports, that EI has supported actions at these levels in a variety of ways. This gives the impression that EI has been responsive to the needs and priorities of its members, when it has been approached for support, and has been sensitive

⁵⁵ From an interview with Dorcus Sekabate from SADTU, South Africa, conducted on March 13th 2019

⁵⁶ From an interview with Fumiyo Fukuzawa from JTU, Japan, conducted on March 15th 2019

to the vastly different contexts in which its members operate. As noted by one interviewee:

El takes its cue from its membership. So, if things are happening in a particular country, in a particular union, and that union seeks out El's support, then El will respond as best as possible ... It is a bottom up operation — the membership dictates the agenda. El is very responsive to context — they really see the uniqueness of each situation. There is no blanket approach.⁵⁷

Strategic Alliances and Advocacy to Promote and Defend LGBTI Rights in Education

Over the past two decades, EI has developed and sustained strategic alliances with other global trade union federations — namely **PSI**, **ITUC** and **CGU** — to move forward a common agenda on LGBTI rights in education. Together, these global federations have engaged in a range of external work, and through their combined advocacy efforts have succeeded in putting LGBTI rights on the table in key global processes, including in UN agencies such as the **ILO**. While it is not possible to assess the level of success of these efforts — in terms of the influence or impact of the work of EI and other global trade union federations on global policies — due to a lack of available data, it is important to acknowledge and celebrate the fact that EI and some of its member unions have actively participated in many important global spaces over the years to promote and defend LGBTI rights in education.

II. Reflecting on Learning and Identifying Challenges

While much has been achieved, and deserves to be celebrated, many obstacles and challenges remain in terms of achieving LGBTI rights in education. This section highlights two main challenges:

- Implementing EI's global policies at regional and national levels: Differences within the union movement
- Connecting across Contexts: Limitations to global spaces and events

⁵⁷ From an interview with Davanand Sinanan from TUTTA, Trinidad and Tobago, conducted on March 11th 2019

Implementing EI's Global Policies at Regional and National Levels: Differences within the Union Movement

EI's policies apply at the global level, and impact different countries in different ways in terms of their particular cultures and religious issues.⁵⁸

I really do believe that our main obstacle comes from within. We have a resistance factor within some of our own Education International affiliates and leaders who are not convinced that LGBTI issues are education issues that should be addressed as we take on other discrimination issues facing our members and students.⁵⁹

The issue of LGBTI rights is a highly politicised one. As noted earlier in the report, the increasing visibility and recognition of LGBTI rights has inspired backlash in some parts of the world, particularly in places where religion continues to strongly influence social norms, and/or where LGBTI issues can be used to align support for particular political ideologies. These same trends also apply to the education sector and to EI specifically; there has been, and continues to be, significant differences amongst EI member unions in their views on LGBTI issues and rights, which range from extremely progressive to highly conservative. This makes it difficult for EI to implement its policies and programs on LGBTI issues and rights in certain regions and countries, particularly in eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. While it has been noted in various documents and interviews that overall there has been a trend of increasing support amongst education unions to accept and actively work on LGBTI issues and rights, there are still divisions, which hinder the level of engagement and impact that EI can have.

Connecting Across Contexts: Limitations to Global Spaces and Events

The **EI-PSI LGBT Forum** has been an important strategic alliance for both global trade unions; however, as with any global structure, it has faced some challenges over the years. For example, language can be a barrier when bringing together people from across the world, and it requires significant resources to ensure translation of resources, publications and conversations. Also, given all the different demands and pressures on unions — including labour challenges (e.g. budget cuts, human resource constraints) — they must continually revise and refocus their priorities. This means that the issues of 'minority' groups who have specific identities and priorities have been getting less visibility within the union movement, especially amongst

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ From an interview with Lily Eskelsen Garcia from NEA, USA, conducted on March 12th 2019

unions that are less well resourced. Also, due to backlash by governments in many countries, some unions have become less vocal and visible on LGBTI rights for security reasons, which has in turn affected the level of engagement of many EI and PSI members in the Forum.

The fact that there has not been an **EI-PSI LGBT Steering Committee** in place since 2011 is an additional challenge, as it means that the advisory role of the committee to the Executive Boards of EI and PSI has been lost. It is also not clear how recommendations coming out of the Forums have been, or will be, followed through.

III. Looking to the Future: Recommendations to Inform EI's Work on LGBTI Rights in Education

This final section draws heavily on the interviews carried out with key union officials and officers from member unions from different regions — who are active on LGBTI issues within the union movement — to put forward a series of recommendations to inform EI's future work on LGBTI rights in education.

Continue to Speak Out and Advocate in Support of LGBTI Rights

- It is important for EI to speak out and publicize the importance of these issues, including gender equality and LGBTI rights, as human rights issues. There are many human rights violations all over the world ... and we have to tell people the significance again and again to ensure these issues are one of the priorities for EI's members.⁶⁰
- LGBTI rights should be prominently discussed and included whenever EI addresses discrimination. As education unionists, we may be comfortable in framing non-discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, and hopefully, gender — though we know this is not the reality in many parts of the world. Where it is scandalous to talk about LGBTI issues, EI should not blink or pull away because someone in the audience may be uncomfortable. Our commitment and resolutions should be visible in EI presentations and trainings. LGBTI rights should be a natural part of what we [Education International and affiliates] address anytime that we talk about social justice, human and labor rights, and non-discrimination.⁶¹

⁶⁰ From an interview with Fumiyo Fukuzawa from JTU, Japan, conducted on March 15th 2019

⁶¹ From an interview with Lily Eskelsen Garcia from NEA, USA, conducted on March 12th 2019

Intensify Advocacy Work at the Regional Level to Challenge Discriminatory Legislation

- The advocacy work has to intensify, and EI has to take the advocacy not only to other global bodies, but to get into governments in countries where there are still huge pockets of homophobia.⁶²
- Some of the union leaders are using the Constitutions of their countries to say they cannot work on these issues [on LGBTI issues and rights] ... EI needs to support the lobbying of national governments to change their Constitutions so that it is easier for unions to do the work.⁶³

Encourage EI Leadership to Promote LGBTI Rights in their Regions and Unions

- EI Executive Board meetings have representatives from each region — leaders from each region — they need to further recognize these [LGBTI] issues, and bring them back to each region to share the significance [of the issues] in each region; and also to their own trade union member organizations.⁶⁴

Build Support for LGBTI Rights by Creating Spaces for Union Leaders and LGBTI Educators to Come Together

- The resistance [to LGBTI rights] is often due to lack of information or ignorance. We should bring leaders together with LGBTI educators in the same space.⁶⁵
- If EI convenes a workshop on LGBTI rights — and the only people in the workshop are union leaders, and there are no LGBTI people in the room, it doesn't make sense. You need to have them together in the same spaces.⁶⁶

Actively Promote the Participation of LGBTI People in EI Structures and Events

⁶² From an interview with Davanand Sinanan from TUTTA, Trinidad and Tobago, conducted on March 11th 2019

⁶³ From an interview with Dorcus Sekabate from SADTU, South Africa, conducted on March 13th 2019

⁶⁴ From an interview with Fumiyo Fukuzawa from JTU, Japan, conducted on March 15th 2019

⁶⁵ From an interview with Dorcus Sekabate from SADTU, South Africa, conducted on March 13th 2019

⁶⁶ Ibid.

- In some meetings, they say that part of the delegation should be people under 35 years. I think it should be the same for LGBTI people — that they find space to attend meetings. That part of the delegation to these meetings should be LGBTI people. Delegations sent to Congress or any other meeting that EI convenes, especially if issues that are going to be discussed in the meetings are LGBTI related.⁶⁷
- It would be good for EI to suggest that members invite at least one LGBTI person to attend the [EI-PSI LGBTI] Forum. It is a space for discussing LGBTI issues, but it is not necessarily a space for LGBTI educators. I have never seen a person openly identify as LGBTI in that Forum. It is more for people who have interest in that issue. My recommendation would be for EI to encourage more LGBTI members to attend the Forum. We can't talk about the plight of a person, and the person is not there. It will have not have an impact.⁶⁸

Support the Establishment of LGBTI Structures or Spaces at the Regional and National Levels

- I think we need more of those spaces at a country level, not just at the EI [global] level. Because it [the EI LGBT Caucus / EI-PSI LGBTI Forum] only comes after 4 years, which is a long time. It could be interesting to set up a forum in different countries. In Africa, it could be a mountain to climb; but where we can, we must try to set up those forums directly for members.⁶⁹
- I believe the EI-PSI LGBTI Forum that occurs every 4 years is a very important forum. I note, though, that these are self-selected participants, often from organizations that support LGBTI rights. There is still not a comfort level with LGBTI issues within all EI member affiliates in every region. Some people think 'it is best not to talk about this.' As EI affiliates, we speak to inequalities and discrimination that impact education, including income, racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination. Often, LGBTI issues are still not seen by our unions in the same light. And so — although we applaud the EI-PSI LGBTI Forum — we believe there is so much more that can be done to advocate for LGBTI rights at the regional and national levels.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ From an interview with Lily Eskelsen Garcia from NEA, USA, conducted on March 12th 2019

Provide Opportunities for Exchange Amongst EI Member Unions Across Regions and Contexts

- When you interact with leaders and you want to get a sense of their position in terms of LGBTI rights, with some of them you realize that their arguments, or the view that they hold, is from a point of ignorance, or a lack of information about LGBTI people. So, we suggest that leaders from unions that are interested in learning about LGBTI issues and do not necessarily find an opportunity in their own countries to discuss freely because of the laws, that they can visit countries where the law doesn't forbid the discussion e.g. South Africa, to talk about these issues.⁷¹
- There are unions in the world that are doing so much better in terms of LGBTI rights in schools, and in the union itself — we must be encouraged to exchange with them. To visit each other; to learn from best practices. Learning exchanges.⁷²
- From the EI perspective, Western Europe, Canada, US — those are big unions and they need to work with the smaller unions in developing countries on the issue, in terms of sharing resources, sharing expertise, and helping them traverse the road they have traversed many years ago. In terms of treating issues from a human rights perspective.⁷³
- I strongly believe that regional exchange of information or meetings would further motivate our activities.⁷⁴

Test out New Approaches to Engaging EI Members that are Not Active on LGBTI Rights

- As Education International seeks to provide programming to EI affiliates and regional gatherings on LGBTI rights, and there is little or no interest, then perhaps it is time to try another approach. It may be valuable for EI staff to identify affiliates which have never participated in an LGBTI training or whose leaders have expressed repulsion. This would not be an email or a survey, but a conversation with the EI affiliate leader to say, 'we are following up on the fact that you don't want assistance in addressing LGBTI rights;

⁷¹ From an interview with Dorcus Sekabate from SADTU, South Africa, conducted on March 13th 2019

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ From an interview with Davanand Sinanan from TUTTA, Trinidad and Tobago, conducted on March 11th 2019

⁷⁴ From an interview with Fumiyo Fukuzawa from JTU, Japan, conducted on March 15th 2019

please help us understand why.' This way, the question is put in their court; they have to explain why they are not interested.⁷⁵

Mainstream LGBTI Issues and Rights into Other EI Spaces and Strategies

- As we consider the Women's Caucus at the World Congress and the Status of Women's Committee — while the focus of these is gender equity, LGBTI issues are still part and parcel of these. The same goes for the Gender Equality Action plan. We think LGBTI rights could be more intentional within this aspect of Education International's work.⁷⁶

Create a Virtual Space for Unionists Active on LGBTI Rights to Share Support and Resources

- EI could create virtual space to bring unions and their members together to address LGBTI rights without a lot of bureaucracy. A structure could allow Education International affiliates and their members to share their experiences, which could include: EI affiliate news of progress, actions, and products; a safe, secure reporting space for educators to call out for help addressing homophobia and transphobia; and an opportunity to identify EI affiliates and educators who are interested in LGBTI justice issues. On a global scale, a virtual space could provide a platform for exchange of experiences, trainings, and materials.⁷⁷

Broaden Out the Analysis of LGBTI Issues as Part of a Larger Threat to Democracy

- In the past, we talked about LGBTI issues in the context of human rights. It is very sad, but it turns out that nowadays reminding leaders about human rights is not effective. We can see this in how the attitude of many people to migrants and refugees has changed. We should understand that right-wing political groups use the LGBT 'issue' to refresh old prejudices and divide people. Extremists use narratives against LGBT people as an instrument in the fight against democracy, to eliminate it from our lives. This kind of discourse is dangerous for all people.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ From an interview with Lily Eskelsen Garcia from NEA, USA, conducted on March 12th 2019

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ From an interview with Dorota Obidniak from ZNP, Poland, conducted on March 19th 2019

- We need short, very concise materials about how extreme [nationalistic right-wing] parties use LGBTI issues as part of their narrative for their own purposes — as a strategy — and why they do it ... We should open our eyes and understand that they are manipulating the LGBTI ‘issue’ to increase their power.⁷⁹

If we are not inclusive of all the communities, we can't build up the global unions and the workers' power that we represent.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Sharon Burrow, ITUC General Secretary (Geneva, 2017)

Annex A: Timeline of Significant Moments, Reports and Policies Related to EI's Work on LGBTI Rights and Education

Text in *red italics* = key EI policies relevant to or including a specific focus on LGBTI rights (e.g. EI Constitution, EI Resolutions)

Text in *green* = key EI reports / structures / events relevant to or including a specific focus on LGBTI rights (e.g. Regional EI Events) NB. Text in *green italics* indicates EI reports / publications

Text in *orange* = key international events / processes / structures related to LGBTI rights and significant for EI (NB. Text in *orange italics* indicates international policies and reports)

- **1993 (January):** *Education International* (EI) is established resulting from a merger between the WCOTP (World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession) and IFFTU (International Federation of Free Teachers' Unions).
 - The *EI Constitution* is adopted, which commits EI "to combat all forms of racism and of bias or discrimination in education and society due to gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, religion, political opinion, social or economic status or national or ethnic origin" [see Article 2 (h)].
 - This policy forms the basis for EI's work on equality and non-discrimination.
- **1993 (June):** A United Nations (UN) *World Conference on Human Rights* is held in Vienna, Austria, and the problems facing gays and lesbians in society and at work are discussed.
 - The *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*, which presents a common global plan for strengthening human rights work, is adopted.
 - EI participates in the Conference alongside representatives from *Public Services International* (PSI) — another global trade union federation — which gives trade unionists an opportunity to become acquainted with gay and lesbian rights issues and organisations.
- **1995 (July):** EI's *1st World Congress* is held in Harare, Zimbabwe.

- **1995 (September):** The [*Fourth UN World Conference on Women*](#) is held in Beijing, China, and again, the challenges facing gays and lesbians in society and at work are discussed extensively.
 - The [*Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*](#), which presents a set of principles concerning women’s empowerment and gender equality, is adopted.
 - While proposed language on sexual orientation was eventually dropped, the final text does include explicit language for the first time on the right of women to control their sexuality.
 - EI participates in the Beijing Conference, alongside representatives from PSI and the [*International Trade Union Confederation*](#) (ITUC), which is the largest global trade union federation.

- **1996:** At the 83rd Session of the [*International Labour Organization’s*](#) (ILO) [*International Labour Conference*](#), the [*Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations*](#) examines discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation (amongst other issues).
 - Committee members agree to extend the scope of the [*ILO Convention 111 on Discrimination \(Employment and Occupation\) \(1958\)*](#) to include new criteria regarding prohibited forms of discrimination.

- **1998:** The ILO adopts a [*Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*](#) which commits member States to respect and promote principles and rights in four categories, one of which is the elimination of discrimination with respect to employment and occupation.

- **1998:** The first International Conference on Homosexuality, Unions and Work is held in Amsterdam, Netherlands.
 - EI participates in the Conference, which is organised by PSI.
 - The Conference results in a clear call for coordinated action by the international trade union movement on the rights of lesbian and gay workers. In response, PSI's Steering Committee establishes a Lesbian and Gay Working Group to oversee implementation of the Conference's recommendations.

- **1998 (July):** EI’s [*2nd World Congress*](#) is held in Washington D.C., USA.
 - EI’s [*Resolution on the Protection of the Rights of Lesbian and Gay Education Personnel*](#) is adopted.
 - The Resolution forms the basis of EI’s work on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT)⁸¹ issues and rights.

⁸¹ The term currently used by EI is LGBTI — Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex.

- 1999: EI and PSI release their first joint publication *PSI and EI Working for Lesbian and Gay Members* to assist member affiliates around the world that are developing this area of trade union work.
- 2001 (July): EI's *3rd World Congress* is held in Jomtien, Thailand.
 - The First Triennial Report on the Situation of Gay and Lesbian Teachers and Workers in the Field of Education is developed and presented at Congress.
- 2002: EI appoints a part-time *Human Rights and Equality Coordinator* to work on LGBT issues.
- 2003: In partnership with the *World Health Organization*, and as part of a global program on HIV and AIDS focused on training for teachers in 17 countries, EI publishes a resource entitled, *Building a Gender Friendly School Environment: A Toolkit for Educators and their Unions*.
- 2003: EI and PSI agree to set up a joint *EI-PSI LGBT forum* as an advisory body to both the EI Executive Board and PSI Committee.⁸²
- 2003: An *EI-PSI LGBT Steering Committee* is set up, involving 8–10 members drawn from the Executive Boards of each organisation, as well as the Chair of PSI's Women's and Equality Standing Committee and union representatives from both organisations, including LGBT representatives.
- 2003: An ILO global report — *Time for Equality at Work* — is published as follow-up to the 1998 *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, and acknowledges sexual orientation as an emerging form of discrimination in the workplace.
- 2004 (July): EI's *4th World Congress* is held in Porto Alegre, Brazil.
 - The first joint *EI-PSI LGBT forum* meeting is held prior to the Congress opening.
 - Participants exchange experiences through seven panel sessions and ten workshops, and adopt a Declaration which is then presented to the EI Congress — the *EI-PSI LGBT Porto Alegre Declaration*.
 - The second (2001-2004) *Triennial Report on The Rights of Lesbian and Gay Teachers and Education Personnel* is developed and presented at Congress.

⁸² The PSI Committee is equivalent to the EI Executive Board.

- **2005 (May):** The first [*International Day Against Homophobia*](#)⁸³ (IDAHO) is held on May 17th.
 - From 2005 onwards, EI regularly organises events and/or solidarity actions on May 17th in commemoration of IDAHO.
- **2005-2006:** A draft plan of action for the EI-PSI LGBT forum — [*The EI-PSI Forum Plan of Action 2006-2007*](#) — is developed and adopted by the EI Executive Board and PSI Committee.
- **2006:** An international conference focused on human rights, sport and culture, referred to as the [*First World Outgames*](#), is held in Montreal, Canada.
 - EI, PSI and ITUC members mobilise resources to create a space for LGBT unionists to discuss their specific issues and actions — the [*Workers Out! Conference*](#).
- **2006 (February):** EI General Secretary delegates from some EI member unions participate at the first [*International LGBT Conference*](#) in London, UK, organised by the [*Trade Union Congress*](#) (TUC) and focused on the theme ‘Stamping out Homophobia: All Over the World’.
- **2006 (March):** EI and PSI jointly produce a brochure about the [*Sexual Diversity Forum*](#) (i.e. the [*EI-PSI Forum*](#)) in three languages.
- **2006 (March):** Representatives from EI and PSI (amongst others) participate in a panel on ‘Fundamental Rights, Discrimination and Equality Principles’ organised by the [*International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association*](#) (ILGA) as part of a [*Pre-Conference event on ‘Discrimination in the Workplace’*](#) (held prior to the annual meeting of the UN Human Rights Council)
- **2007:** An ILO global report — [*Equality at Work: Tackling the Challenges*](#) — is published and, for the first time, explicitly states that sexual orientation is a form of discrimination at the workplace.
 - EI worked with the ILO Standards & Fundamental Principles office to input into preparation of the global report.
- **2007 (April):** A new [*Council of Global Unions*](#) (CGU) — of which EI is a member — is established with the purpose of promoting cooperation and joint global union solidarity, mobilisation, advocacy and campaigns. The first CGU workplan has several areas of action, including LGBT issues and rights.

⁸³ Now referred to as the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

- 2007 (April): A revised version of the first EI-PSI joint publication — [*Trade Unionists Together for LGBT Rights!*](#) — is updated and republished.
- 2007 (July): EI's 5th World Congress is held in Berlin, Germany.
 - The first EI LGBT Caucus is held prior to the Congress opening and is open to all delegates and observers.
 - The third (2004-2007) Triennial Report on [*The Rights of Lesbian and Gay Teachers and Education Personnel*](#) is developed and presented at Congress.
- 2007 (September): The second EI-PSI LGBT forum takes place prior to PSI's 28th Congress held in Vienna, Austria.
- 2009 (April): The [*UN Durban Review Conference*](#) takes place in Geneva, Switzerland, to review progress towards the goals set by the [*World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance*](#), that took place in Durban, South Africa, in 2001
 - EI, PSI and ITUC join several human rights organisations to sponsor a side event that explores the relationship between race, sexual orientation, gender identity and other aspects of identity which are sources of systemic discrimination.
- 2009 (July): EI participates actively in the process leading up to the second [*International Conference on LGBT Human Rights*](#), also known as the [*International Outgames on LGBT Human Rights*](#), which is held in Copenhagen, Denmark.
 - EI Chairs the International Advisory Board alongside a representative from PSI.
 - EI works with other global unions to develop a 'Workers Out' event.
 - The Conference results in a catalogue of good practices from around the world produced by the [*Danish Institute for Human Rights*](#), which includes joint trade union efforts including the EI-PSI LGBT Forum initiative.
- 2011 (July): EI's 6th World Congress is held in Cape Town, South Africa.
 - The third joint EI-PSI LGBT forum is held prior to the Congress opening.
 - The fourth Quadrennial Report on the Rights of Lesbian and Gay Teachers and Education Personnel is developed and presented at Congress.
 - EI's [*Resolution on Respect for Diversity*](#) is adopted.

- **2014:** A joint [*El-PSI Statement on LGBT Rights Violations*](#) is published, condemning discrimination and violence against LGBT people and calling for the global trade union movement to actively oppose homophobia and transphobia, and to organise to defend LGBT rights.
- **2014 (September):** The [*UN Human Rights Council*](#) adopts a second resolution related to sexual orientation and gender identity; this is the first time the UN adopts a resolution on sexual orientation and gender identity with the majority of its members in favour.
- **2015 (March):** The [*International LGBT Solidarity: A Trade Union Charter*](#) is developed by the TUC in the United Kingdom, and endorsed by the ITUC. It provides guidance for trade unions that are seeking to protect and advance the rights of LGBT people in other countries.
- **2015 (July):** EI's **7th World Congress** is held in Ottawa, Canada.
 - An **EI LGBT Caucus** is held prior to the Congress opening as part of a 'Diversity Forum'.
 - A Survey Report on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Persons (LGBT) is developed and presented at the Congress.
 - EI's [*Resolution on LGBTI rights*](#) is adopted.
- **2016 (June):** The [*UN Human Rights Council*](#) adopts a resolution related to sexual orientation and gender identity.
 - EI cooperates with PSI and ITUC to support actions related to the adoption of the resolution.
- **2016 (June):** EI launches an internal newsletter focused on LGBTI issues in education and education unions, to keep members informed on EI and affiliates' work to promote LGBTI rights.
 - A first edition of the [*EI Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Unions*](#) is published.
- **2016 (November):** The second edition of the [*EI Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Unions*](#) is published.
- **2017 (February):** At the 11th [*Council of Global Unions*](#) (CGU) annual meeting, held in Brussels, Belgium, EI and PSI table a proposal to establish a Working Group on LGBTI Rights; CGU adopts the proposal and Council members are asked to appoint representatives to the Working Group.

- 2017 (April): The third edition of the [*El Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Unions*](#) is published.
- 2017 (September): The fourth edition of the [*El Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Unions*](#) is published.
- 2017 (October): A regional [*Resolution on Advancing LGBTI Rights*](#) is adopted by the 8th [*EI Asia-Pacific Regional Conference*](#) held in Kathmandu, Nepal.
 - This is the first regional EI resolution explicitly focused on LGBTI rights.
- 2017 (October): The fourth [*joint EI-PSI LGBTI forum*](#) is held prior to the 30th PSI World Congress held in Geneva, Switzerland.
 - More than 80 delegates from all regions participate in the forum.
 - The forum aims to provide delegates with an opportunity to exchange good practices, strengthen alliances and share information on current trends in order to guide future work.
- 2018: UNESCO publishes the [*International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education*](#), which is meant to assist education, health and other relevant authorities in developing and implementing sexuality education programs and materials. The needs of LGBTI students are referenced extensively.
- 2018 (March): The fifth edition of the [*El Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Unions*](#) is published.
- 2018 (September): The sixth edition of the [*El Rainbow Newsletter on LGBTI Rights in Education and Education Unions*](#) is published.
- 2018 (October): The first meeting of the CGU [*LGBTI+ Working Group*](#) takes place in Ferney-Voltaire, France around the theme ‘Strengthening Global Union Federation Strategies for LGBTI+ Rights in the Workplace’.
- 2018 (November): The European region of Education International ([*ETUCE*](#)) adopts a resolution on [*Setting the Priorities to Develop the ETUCE Action Plan for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion*](#), which refers to discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- 2019 (Forthcoming): EI’s 8th [*World Congress*](#) will be held in Bangkok, Thailand.
 - An [*EI LGBTI Caucus*](#) will be held for half a day prior to the Congress opening, followed by a half-day meeting of the [*EI-PSI LGBTI Forum*](#).

- This *25-year Review of EI's Work on LGBTI Rights in the Global Education Union Movement* will be prepared for Congress (in lieu of a Quadrennial Survey/Report on LGBTI Rights and Education).

Annex B: Data Sources

EI Resolutions (by year, oldest to most recent)

Education International. 1993. *EI Constitution*. Available at: <https://ei-ie.org/en/detail/14780/constitution-of-education-international>

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Dorcus Sekabate. South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), South Africa: Interview conducted on March 13th 2019.

Dorota Obidniak. Union of Polish Teachers (ZNP), Poland: Interview conducted on March 19th 2019.

Fumiyo Fukuzawa. Japan Teachers' Union (JTU), Japan: Interview conducted on March 15th 2019.

Lily Eskelsen Garcia. National Education Association (NEA), USA: Interview conducted on March 12th 2019.