

Notes Workshop “Challenges for sexual minorities: A rights-based approach to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues”.

Intro:

LGBT issues are not always taken into account, but often forgotten or denied. There are no legal global instruments yet regarding discrimination against LGBT, but there are regional instruments or statements (like the Amsterdam treaty). It is hard to establish a global instrument because in some countries non-heterosexual sex is a capital punishment. But there are a number of bodies picking up LGBT issues, for instance within the UN.

Human Rights experts have come up with a document that lead to the Yogyakarta principles, that address a broad range of human rights standards and their application to issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. The principles are accompanied by detailed recommendations to States and other actors.

Presentation of case study:

Blessed from Uganda gives examples of HR violations regarding LGBT and LGBT organisations. LGBT are discriminated against: they are kicked out of school, denied jobs, ostracized by their families and communities, arrested by the police, end up in jail without trial and in some cases get tortured and killed. Organisations are raided, money confiscated and members arrested. In case of HIV testing: you cannot get good counselling unless you bring in your partner, but in the case of same sex partner this is not accepted. In Uganda, gay people hide their orientation and lifestyle. It is difficult for them to get organised, they cannot register and as a consequence cannot apply for funding.

Group work:

Four groups addressed the following questions in relation to the case study:

1. *What impact does it have on the individual level?*
 - mental
 - social
 - health
2. *What impact does it have on the LGBT community?*

Hard to organise, hard to legally register, no funding, difficult to get members, no power, not one voice, not clear who is represented, fragmentation.
3. *How do Human Rights apply in this case, which HR are violated?*

It is clear that many HR have been violated (esp. when applying the Yogyakarta principles)
4. *Who is responsible, who should act?*

International community can put pressure on national governments. Civil society responsible for awareness raising on community level. Non-LGBT community responsible to make alliance with LGBT community. Need to come with evidence that homosexuality was/is there in Africa; anthropological evidence, evidence of HR violation, statistics and figures. HIV prevention could be used as strategy to address LGBT issues, but is risky (risk of stigmatization).

At the end of the session the workshop participants got 30 seconds to reflect on what they could do personally and if there is a place for LGBT issues in their work.