



TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS LGBTI ADOLESCENTS IN THE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN ALBANIA

SURVEY FACT-SHEET

Albania's Constitution, international human rights standards, as well as the Law on pre-university education and the Law on protection from discrimination, prohibit all the forms of discrimination, including on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. This Survey, carried for the first time in Albania by PINK Embassy, with support from the small grants scheme of the USA Embassy, explores teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards LGBTI adolescents attending public high schools (gymnasiums). The survey was implemented in 6 largest cities with the participation of more than 200 teachers across Albania.

Since the decriminalisation of same sex relations in 1995, Albania has slowly moved forward to guarantee the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. One of the groups that need protection are the LGBTI adolescents attending public pre-university education.

Discrimination, as a form of violence, against children and young people, on any grounds, has grave consequences on their emotional, physical and educational development. Moreover, violence impedes educational outcomes for students. Schools and educational authorities are required to take any measures that eliminates violence and discrimination of their students. However, when it comes to sexual rights and bodily integrity of children and young people, Albania has been slow to act.

Legislation regarding protection from discrimination was approved in early 2010 in Albania, establishing among others a national Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination. Since then several other important laws have been amended or approved, one of which is the new Law on Pre-university Education in Albania. The law for the first time recognises the protection from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity for children and young people attending pre-university education in Albania (approximately aged between 3 to 16 years old). This is a step forward because it requires the educational authorities and schools to take active steps

to protect their students from violence, exclusion and discrimination.

In this regard, the findings and observations of the survey "Teachers' Attitudes towards LGBTI adolescents in public High Schools in Albania" is the first effort to observe the attitudes and consequently the discrimination of LGBTI adolescents attending public high schools in six major cities of Albania. As there are more than 87,000 high school students it means that a considerable number of them are in danger of being victimised and bullied because of SOGI.

The study gathered data in structured meetings with teachers in the following cities: Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan, Korça, Vlora and Shkodra. The population of these cities jointly represents almost two-thirds of the population in Albania. Thus, the attitudes presented in the survey are in a way indicative of the overall attitudes of the population in these urban centres.

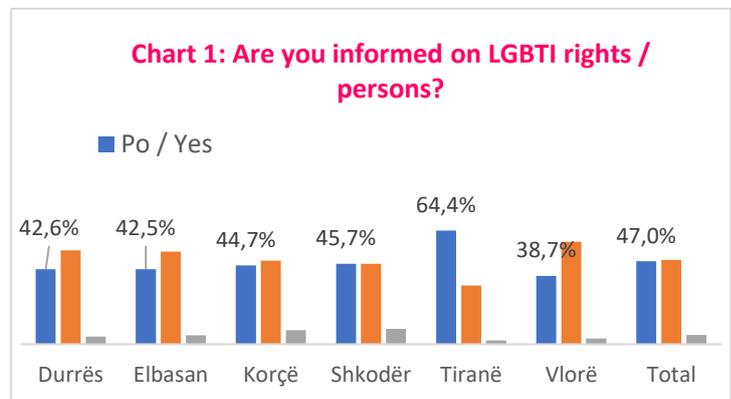
The survey gathered information on the level of education of teachers and their knowledge of anti-discrimination law. What we found out is that having a university degree (95%) being a woman (75%) or having respectable knowledge of the current laws (94%), it doesn't influence teachers' attitudes towards LGBTI adolescents. What is even more concerning is that the majority still hold the same negative views (70%) on LGBTI people even if they were their own children.



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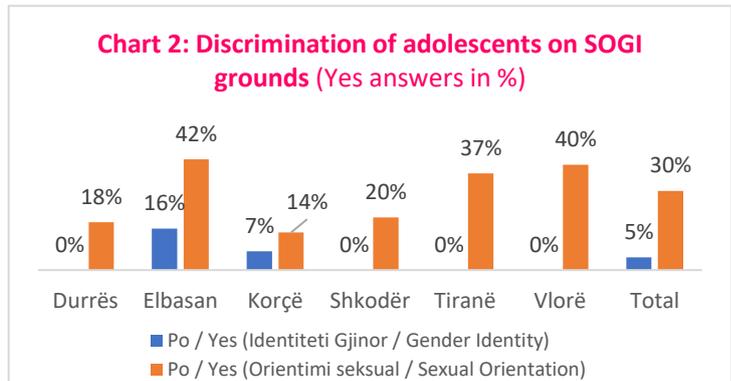
Teachers' knowledge of LGBTI rights

The law on pre-university education states that secondary education (grades 10-12, defined as high school) is developed through three forms: gymnasium, vocational education and oriented secondary education. Because secondary education is not compulsory, only a part of the students continue from basic education to secondary education. Chart 1 tells us that almost half of teachers have knowledge on LGBTI rights with the other half stating that they don't.



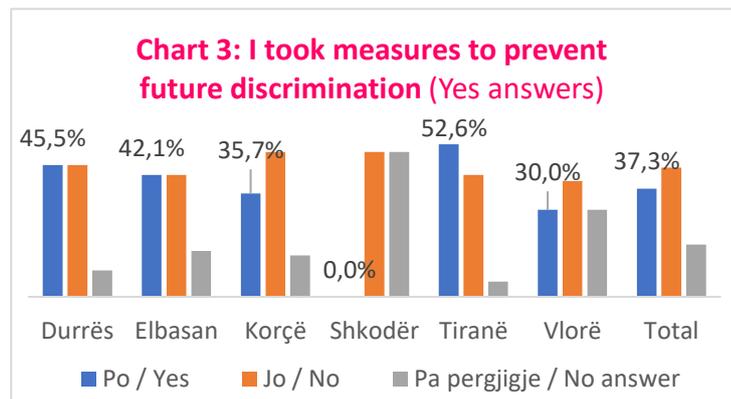
Discrimination on SOGI grounds

Teachers declare a higher level of victimization of adolescents in their school (over 30%) than their classrooms (10%). 30% of teachers stated that one of the main causes of adolescent discrimination is their sexual orientation, while only 5% of teachers in overall said that the cause of discrimination was related to the gender identity of their student.



Protection from discrimination and violence

Only 2.4% of teachers participating in the survey of PINK Embassy Albania, notified the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination regarding adolescents' discrimination, while 37% of them said that they have acted on their own to discourage discrimination. When teachers were asked what they did when confronted with such cases, 16% of them said they had intervened to stop the violence, meanwhile 66% of teachers refused to give an answer to the question!



Attitudes towards LGBTI adolescents

Only 8% of teachers stated that there are LGBTI adolescents in their school. In 21% of teachers this information was given by the LGBTI adolescents, 26% from other teachers and 48% from adolescents' peers.

At least 12% of interviewed teachers in overall think that LGBTI adolescents are sick when asked about their sexual orientation and gender identity. A higher percentage of men (18%) think so, compare to women (10%), Meanwhile 9.3% of teachers stated that they cannot accept LGBTI adolescents. When teachers were asked how they would behave if their child was LGBTI, 70% of them said they would not accept them for who they are. The same percentage of teachers (70%) stated in the survey that they would not accept, respect or support their child if he / she declared to them that they were gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex.

