

Lesson Plan

Activity 1: "Only for Me" is suggested for learners aged 6-9

Activity 2: "The Big Bad Divider" is suggested for learners aged 9-12

Activity 3: "Mixing it up" is suggested for learners aged 13 and above

Activity 4: "What Are They Thinking?" is suggested for learners aged 13 and above





United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Preface

Each student has a right to learn in a safe space. Bullying, whatever the motivation, is a violation of that right. Educators play a central role in preventing bullying in schools. They act every day to create safer spaces and have often developed innovative approaches to tackling sexuality-related bullying in general, and homophobia/transphobia in particular, in their classes.

The lessons contained in this packet are inspired by these practices. Homophobic bullying is something that each and every educator can, and should, address. Educators can start by creating an environment of tolerance and respect and demanding the same of their learners. The lessons in this packet provide a means for educators to begin to address homophobic bullying in their school setting.

The lessons in this packet are designed to build healthy values and skills through interactive learning methods. These discussion-based activities are heuristic devices for exploring personal beliefs, social norms, and the effect one's actions has on others. Gender is a social construct that differs in each setting. These lessons, therefore, are not prescriptive and can be adapted to fit any local context. In spite of these changes however, there is a universal normative principle that shall not change: bullying should not be tolerated.

In some contexts, addressing homophobia through formal means, such as planned lessons that will be reviewed by education managers, may be nearly impossible. In these instances, the lessons may need further adaptation and be broadened to address bullying in general. This does not mean however, that educators are powerless to address homophobic bullying. Educators should challenge bullying and stigma when it arises in their educational setting, in and out of class. Each case can be treated as a teachable moment. When there is bullying in the educational setting, educators must take advantage of the situation by stopping any violence; addressing stigma and discrimination; discussing causes, and promoting and protecting equality. Some of the procedures in these lessons can be used for that purpose.

We invite you to use these lessons, share it with colleagues and partners, and share your experiences. Homophobic bullying can be stopped, but only if we respond. We hope the suggestions in these lessons help you to make learning safer and contribute to a quality Education for All.





Introduction

Each year, the world celebrates the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO) on May 17th.

During the days surrounding IDAHO, private and public actors, ranging from the United Nations agencies, to city councils, police stations, human rights organizations, individual citizens, schools and others, implement activities to mark the day.

The theme of this year's IDAHO is "**Fighting homophobia and transphobia IN and THROUGH education**". This theme was selected in response to a growing awareness that homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools which are manifestations of homophobia and transphobia, are serious issues that students and educational staff face every day across the world.

Studies show that homophobic and transphobic bullying can have a serious impact for the young people subjected to it at a crucial moment in their lives. Homophobic bullying can often lead to poor learner performance or even, in some cases, school dropout. Potential negative consequences of homophobic bullying on the physical and mental health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) young people include a higher likelihood to contemplate self-harm. As a result the incidence of suicide is much higher among them than among young people overall. Research also reveals that these young people tend to engage in high-risk behaviour including unprotected sex and drug use.

"Homophobic bullying is ... a moral outrage, a grave violation of human rights and a public health crisis".

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, on 8 December 2011

Homophobic and transphobic bullying do not only target young lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders but every young person perceived to be outside of the norms that constitute what are 'feminine' and 'masculine' behaviours. It occurs in all levels of education, including in primary schools. It undermines gender equality, respect for all and the right to quality education in a safe environment.

Over the years, teachers around the world have been developing activities in their classrooms, with the help of various organizations working on efforts to address and homophobia and transphobia in educational institutions. Building on the success of these experiences, UNESCO and the IDAHO Committee propose teachers take advantage of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia to conduct an 'IDAHO Lesson'.

The four activities proposed below are aimed at both primary and secondary level classes. A list of resources from other organizations for teachers, for all subjects and all grades is included below to enable greater choice of possible activities. By conducting an "IDAHO Lesson", you can create safer learning environments, address discrimination and encourage respect and tolerance between and amongst learners.





Discussing homophobia and transphobia in the classroom

Sexual orientation, gender identity, homophobia and transphobia are sensitive topics and there has been much controversy surrounding the discussion of these issues in educational institutions. Even though these topics may be sensitive issues, addressing them through age-appropriate discussions can help **foster a more respectful environment in your classroom and in the school.**

The purpose of these activities is **to help ensure all learners' right to a safe learning environment regardless of who they are.** That said, these activities are meant to assist learners understand **the importance of respect** of all people and the acceptance of diversity

You do not need to be an expert on homophobia and transphobia to conduct these activities. Your main role is to facilitate an **open discussion** respectful of diverse opinions. To create an environment that encourages open debate, you need to know how to:

- facilitate a discussion;
- handle questions to which you do not know the answer;
- deal constructively with stigmatising and discriminatory statements.

Portions of the following sections are adapted from learning materials developed for the EFAIDS Programme of Education International.

Facilitating a discussion

It is important to create a safe, accepting, supportive environment in order to maximise sharing and learning, especially when students are asked to talk about sensitive and sometimes controversial topics. A helpful practice is to set up Ground Rules or Class Rules before the activity. These rules help learners understand from the start what behaviour is expected of them. Encourage learners to develop their own rules in order to create a sense of ownership. Then post the rules in a prominent place so everyone can refer to them as needed.

Examples of Ground Rules:

- We value and respect one another's questions and opinions.
- We do not talk about personal matters discussed in class with people outside the classroom, that is, we keep personal matters confidential.
- We do not interrupt one another.
- We do not put down or criticise other people in class.
- We have a right to pass if we do not want to answer a question.
- We can choose to not do an activity if we are uncomfortable with it.
- If we do not want to ask a question in front of everyone, we can ask it anonymously to the teacher (e.g., through a question drop box).

Handling questions to which you do not know the answer

You may not know the answer to all questions. In this case, you may feel comfortable saying "I do not know the answer to your question, but I will find out for you." You can then ask the appropriate contact for the correct answer. You could also encourage the learner to do their own research and hold an additional session to ensure their research produced a factual result. **It is important to provide accurate information.**





Dealing constructively with stigmatising and discriminatory statements

Make clear that **stigmatising and discriminatory statements are not acceptable** by introducing the activity with the following:

- Different opinions on sexual orientation and gender identity are ok, but not respecting someone because of who they are is not acceptable.
- No one deserves to be treated negatively for any reason, including because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Everyone has the right to a safe learning environment.
- Everyone has a role to play in establishing respect for all people.

Remember: The goal of these activities is not necessarily to change opinions on the topic but to emphasize the importance of being respectful of peoples' differences and to promote safe learning environments for all learners.

Here is some information that can help you deal with stigmatising and discriminatory statements related more specifically to homophobia and transphobia:

- *Homosexuality* is the physical, emotional and/or sexual attraction to people of the same sex.
- A significant portion of homophobic expressions are targeted toward people who do not, and will not later in their lives, identify themselves as homosexual.
- *Gender* is socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women, boys and girls.
- *Transgender* describes a person whose gender identity differs from their sex at birth. Transgender people may be male to female (female appearance) or female to male (male appearance). Transgender people do not necessarily desire a permanent sex change or other surgical reassignment.
- Widely agreed upon definition of *homophobia*: the irrational fear, rejection, or aversion, often in the form of stigmatising attitudes or discriminatory behaviours, towards homosexuals and/or homosexuality.
- Widely agreed upon definition of *transphobia*: the irrational aversion, anxiety, discomfort or hatred of people because they are or are perceived to be, transgender. A significant portion of transphobic expressions are targeted toward people who do not, and will not later in their lives, identify themselves as transgender.

Activities for IDAHO Lesson Plan

In this Lesson Plan there are:

Two activities for **primary education**. The first one, "Only for Me" is for learners aged 6-9 and the second one, "The Big Bad Divider" is for learners aged 9-12.

Two activities for **secondary education**, "Mixing it up" and "What Are They Thinking?". Both of these for learners aged 13 and above.





The 'ONLY FOR ME' activity (Primary Education)

Purpose:

- To create understanding of who defines norms
- To create awareness about gender norms

Facilitator(s): One or several teachers

Target Group: Learners aged 6-9

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Board and chalk/pens

Procedure:

- 1) Explain the objective of the exercise using simple words, such as the following:
During this activity, we will discuss what you think boys and girls do differently, why and what you think about it.
- 2) Establish ground rules. Explain to the learners, that this is a free open space, where each must respect what the other is saying without interrupting or laughing, that everybody's input is equally valued, and that no idea is bad.
- 3) Divide the board into two columns 'girl' and 'boy'.
- 4) Ask the learners to give you examples of what is 'ONLY FOR' each for boys and girls. Write down EVERY suggestion, even (and especially!) very controversial ones (like for example 'riding a bicycle' suggested in the boys column).
- 5) Observe when the level of inputs gets quieter then ask who amongst the girls has done at least one of the things that are listed in the boy's column, and vice-versa. Learners can either say which one or keep this secret, so as not to force any disclosure of information which might make them feel uncomfortable. If controversial suggestions were made, then everyone should be tempted to 'cross the gender division' and question the validity of this line. Discussions can be held about who defines what is 'only for' whom, if this is fair, and if this has always been the case.
- 6) Conclude the activity, the facilitator/teacher should select one/some of the suggestions (e.g. astronauts are often placed in the "boy" column even though 55 females have flown in space) and explain to the learners that both girls and boys can do them and that the way boys and girls are supposed to act are based on preconceptions. The facilitator/teacher should highlight that preconceived notions of how boys and girls should act are much different today than they were in the past and that they will continue to change.



“The BIG BAD DIVIDER” activity (Primary Education)

Purpose:

- To create awareness about processes that lead to discrimination and exclusion
- To create understanding of what creates categories of ‘normal’ and ‘not normal’

Facilitator(s): One or several teachers

Target Group: Learners aged 9-11

Time: 40 minutes

Materials: None

Procedure:

- 1) Explain the objective of the exercise using simple words, such as the following: During this activity we will talk about why some people treat others unfairly, such as the colour of their skin, where they come from, or the way they look or act is different from other students normally at our school. We will also talk about how that makes people treated unfairly feel.
- 2) Establish ground rules. Explain to the learners that this is a free open space, where each must respect what the other is saying without interrupting or laughing, that everybody’s input is equally valued, and that no idea is bad.
- 3) Choose one learner or one small group of learners to be the “Big Bad Divider.” For younger classes, the teacher/facilitator or another teacher should play that role until the learners understand the concept. The “Big Bad Divider” is given the instruction to divide the class in several categories (the number of categories can vary depending on the size of the group and the division criteria). Only the “Big Bad Divider” knows the criteria of division (e.g. colour of shoes or clothes, first letter of name, front tooth missing, colour of eyes, etc.). The criteria need to be easily identifiable by the Divider, so material/physical aspects are the most obvious choice (but possibly stigmatizing criteria have of course to be excluded).
- 4) Separate the learners by dividing the class into different spaces (either by drawing circles on the ground, or by identifying specific spaces, or creating them by rearranging tables and chairs). Learners are individually assigned to one space by the “Big Bad Divider”. The newly formed groups then need to guess what the dividing criteria are.
- 5) After each group has identified the criteria that divide them, the learners should express themselves on whether these criteria made any sense (whether people with one same characteristic belong to a same ‘group’) and if the groups that were formed were the ones that they would have chosen to form if they had chosen their own criteria. Learners will most likely say they were missing some of their good friends and that they would rearrange the groups according to their affinities and not according to criteria defined externally.
- 6) For older elementary classes, learners could be asked if they could identify some real ‘Big Bad Dividers’ criteria, e.g. colour of skin, age, disabilities, conformity to gender patterns, etc.
- 7) By varying who the “Big Bad Divider” is (for example by asking another teacher to set a dividing criterion), the game can bring interesting variations.
- 8) To conclude the activity, the teacher/facilitator should recap some of the big dividers and explain how setting criteria can lead to discrimination and exclusion. For example if learners were divided into groups depending on the colour of their T-shirt, and one child was the only one with a certain colour, the child would have been in a group alone and excluded from the other groups.





The “Mixing it up” Activity (Secondary Education)

Purpose:

- To engage students in critical thinking about gender norms in their socio-cultural context
- To sensitize students to the links between gender norms, and sexual and gender-based bullying, including homo/transphobia depending on the context
- To encourage students to take action in response to sexual and gender-based bullying

Facilitator(s): One or several teachers

Target Group: Learners aged 13 and above

Time: 60 – 90 minutes

Materials: None

NB: Prepare for this activity by writing or typing the text of Role play #1 and Role play #2 (see procedure 2) on separate sheets of paper, which will be handed out to small groups in class.

Procedure:

Part 1 (20 minutes)

- 1) Explain the objective of the exercise using simple words, such as the following: During this activity, we will be acting out different role plays that will help us understand how a young man or woman can be discriminated against (or treated unfairly) because of how they look or act. We will discuss how this kind of discrimination relates to discrimination based on someone’s sexual orientation. Lastly, we will also explore appropriate and inappropriate ways to respond to situations like the role plays we will perform.
- 2) Divide the class into small groups of approximately 5 students. Hand each small group one of the scenarios below:

Role play #1

A girl whose appearance is quite masculine has been seen holding hands with another girl at school over the lunch break. She quickly let go of her partner’s hand when she saw she was watched by a group of fellow students. They make fun of her when she gets back from lunch.

Characters: the girl whose appearance is quite masculine, her partner and the students who make fun of her.

Role play #2

A new male student has been admitted into your school. His appearance is different than the way boys’ appearances usually are in your school (e.g. the way he dresses, the way he speaks, etc.). During a class one of the teachers makes comments on the new student’s appearance in front of all his classmates. The teacher even seeks approval from the classmates and they all approve except for one student who says that it is the right of every student to choose how he appears. The boy also protests and says that it has never been a problem before.





Characters: the male student whose appearance is different from the norm, the teacher, the classmates who giggle and the classmate who expresses a different view.

Note: You may also invent other scenarios, which are adapted to your specific school and community setting.

- 3) Give each group maximum 10 minutes to prepare the role play based on the scenario they received. Students should decide who will play each role and choose names for the characters that are different from their own names, or from names of other students in the classroom (this is to avoid any confusion between real situations and the role play as otherwise some students may feel hurt during the role play).

Part 2 (40 minutes)

- 4) Depending on the size of your class you can pair up groups and have them perform and discuss their two role plays (maximum 10 minutes by role play). Then ask for a couple of volunteer groups to present their role plays (one for each scenario) and discuss each in front of the whole class.
- 5) Once groups have stopped their role play ask participants how they felt during the role play, starting with the students who played the roles of the students who were bullied by their fellow students.

Note: You should refer to the characters and not the students when you debrief the role plays to make clear that this was fiction.

Part 3 (30 minutes)

- 6) Initiate a discussion asking the following questions:
 - Is it a problem for a girl to look masculine in our school/ in our community/ in our country? Why? Or why not?
 - Is it a problem for a boy to appear differently in our school/in our community/in our country? Why? Or why not?
 - How are girls supposed to look and act? Why?
 - How are boys supposed to look and act? Why?
 - Has it always been always like this?
 - Is it OK to insult someone because of the way they look? Why? Or why not?
 - How would you feel if someone insulted you or beat you because of the way you look?
 - What can be done in the school if a student is bullied because of the way they look?
 - Do you know what the words “gay”, “lesbian”, “bisexual”, “transgender” and “straight” mean? Can you explain what they mean?
 - Does a girl/woman who is a lesbian or is bisexual always looks masculine and acts like a boy/man?
 - Does a boy/man who is gay or bisexual always looks like a girl (effeminate) and act like a girl/woman?

Note: If you think time will be limited for this section of Part 2, be sure to ask some of the questions related to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues.





If you live in a country where it is not possible to talk about homosexuality you can ask the following questions:

- Is it a problem for a girl to look masculine in our school/ in our community/ in our country? Why? Or why not?
- Is it a problem for a boy to appear differently in our school/in our community/in our country? Why? Or why not?
- How are girls supposed to look and act? Why?
- How are boys supposed to look and act? Why?
- Has it always been always like this?
- Is it OK to insult someone because of the way they look? Why? Or why not?
- How would you feel if someone insulted you or beat you because of the way you look?
- What can be done in the school if a student is bullied because of the way they look?

Part 4 (15-30 minutes)

7. Explain to students the following items listed below:

- Just because a boy/man looks like a girl and acts like a girl/woman doesn't mean he is gay or bisexual;
- Just because a girl/woman acts like a boy/man doesn't mean she is a lesbian or bisexual;
- Even if they are, it is not something they choose to be;
- There is no reason why they should be bullied based on what they are or what we assume they are.

If you live in a country where it is not possible to talk about homosexuality you can explain the following items:

- The way boys/men and girls/women are supposed to look/act is completely influenced by the society where we live. The way it is now is not the way it was before, and it will continue to change;
- We are all different in the way we look and act;
- It is not acceptable for teachers and students to bully (insult, beat, etc.) students just because they look/act different from the way they are supposed to.





The “What Are They Thinking?” Activity (Secondary Education)

Purpose:

- To explore the patterns of thought that lead to homophobic bullying
- Recognise beliefs and behaviours associated with homophobic bullying
- Demonstrate some ways that one can stop homophobic bullying before it happens

Facilitator(s): One or several teachers

Target Group: Learners aged 13 and above

Time: 60 – 90 minutes

Materials: Chalk and chalkboard

Procedure:

Part 1 (15 – 20 minutes)

- 1) Explain the objective of the exercise using simple words, such as the following: During this activity, we will discuss what homophobia and homophobic bullying are and how you think some ways of thought can lead to homophobic bullying. We will also think critically about how homophobic bullying can be prevented and how people witnessing homophobic bullying can help put a stop to it (Language may need to be adapted depending on your context. If you are not able to use “homophobia” and “homophobic” bullying, you may want to use gender-based violence and bullying).
- 2) Open the session by asking students what they think homophobia is.
- 3) Discuss the responses given by students. Next, explain that homophobia is fear, rejection, or aversion towards homosexuals and/or homosexuality. Write the definition on the board.
- 4) Ask students to review the following case example:

‘T’ is the captain of the school football team. An incoming student asked T about trying out for the team. T took one look at this student and decided he did not like him. T thought this guy looked gay and he did not want any gay guys on his team. So, T lied by telling him that the team was closed. When the student showed up to practise the coach encouraged him to try out. Eventually he made the team. At practise, T would often insult and threaten the student so that he would quit. Some teammates would laugh and even join in with name-calling. The student did not quit, so T and his friends started to beat him when the coach was not looking.
- 5) Use the example above to discuss what motivates the bullying. Ask them what they think is on the mind of the bully, for example:
 - a) That gay people deserve to be bullied
 - b) It is fun to take advantage of people
 - c) One can earn respect from friends by bullying others





- 6) Ask students to explain why they think 'T' and his friends acted the way they did, which might include:
 - a) Lack of empathy
 - b) A need to dominate others
 - c) A quick temper and expression through physical aggression
 - d) Insecurity
 - e) Fear of being bullied him/herself (it could be the fear of oneself being identified as homosexual)

If you live in a country where it is not possible to talk about homosexuality you can use the following procedures for Part 1 of the exercise instead:

- 1) Open the session by asking students what they think discrimination is.
- 2) Discuss the responses given by students. Next, explain that discrimination is unjustified, unequal treatment. Write the definition on the board.
- 3) Ask students if they know of times/cases where people in the school were excluded, called names, or beaten because of who they are, write a few of these examples on the board. Please tell students that this is not about giving names or telling personal stories as it may have a negative impact for students who would be named and for students telling their stories.
- 4) Use some of the examples mentioned to discuss what motivates the bullying. Ask them what they think is on the mind of the bully, for example:
 - a. That people deserve to be bullied because of who they are
 - b. It is fun to take advantage of people
 - c. One can earn respect from friends by bullying others
- 5) Ask students to describe the causes of these beliefs, which might include:
 - a. Lack of empathy
 - b. A need to dominate others
 - c. A quick temper and expression through physical aggression
 - d. Insecurity
 - e. Fear of being bullied him/herself

Part 2 (15 – 20 minutes)

- 7) Challenge students to think of ways of dealing with homophobic bullying. Brainstorm responses to the issues discussed above.
- 8) Divide learners into groups of 5 and have them create a role-play that constructively addresses the reasons for homophobic bullying. Potential themes are:
 - a. Showing a respect for others
 - b. Showing concern for others
 - c. Controlling one's temper and anger
 - d. Working collaboratively





If you live in a country where it is not possible to talk about homosexuality you can use the following procedure for Part 2 of the exercise instead:

- 6) Challenge students to think of ways of dealing with the bullying. Brainstorm responses to the issues discussed above.
- 7) Divide them into groups of 5 and have them create a role-play that addresses the reasons for different kinds of bullying your class discussed. Potential themes to address are:
 - a. Showing a respect for others
 - b. Showing concern for others
 - c. Controlling one's temper and anger
 - d. Working collaboratively

Part 3 (40 – 50 minutes)

- 8) Depending on the size of your class you can pair up groups and have them perform and discuss their two role plays. Then ask for a couple of volunteer groups to present their role plays to the class and discuss each, as time permits. If you think time will be limited for Part 3, you can plan accordingly to focus on one or two of the questions below.
 - a. What was the bully thinking?
 - b. How was this addressed?
 - c. What can we do in our school?
- 9) Explain to students that bullying is not inevitable, it is learned. Therefore, it can be unlearned and we can all work to prevent it.

