

**The Endeavour and Action on Preventing LGBT
Children from Campus Bullying in China**



Gay and Lesbian Campus Association of China (GLCAC)

Submitted by:

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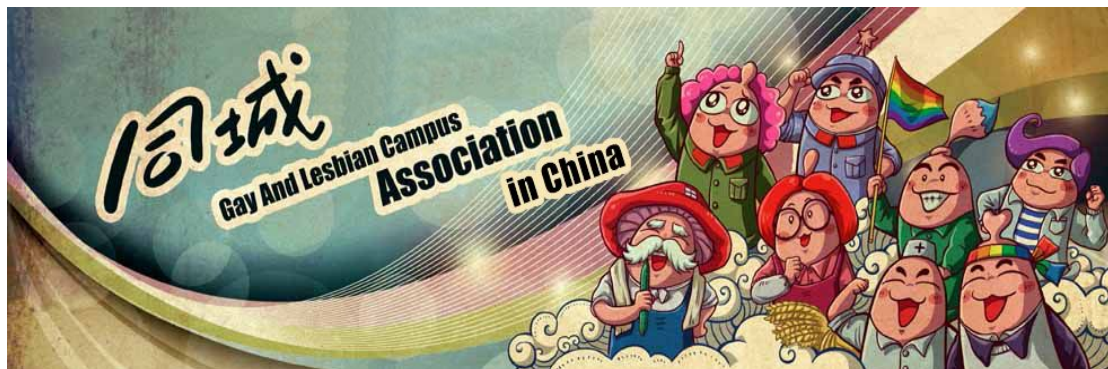
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Association Brief

Gay and lesbian Campus Association of China (GLCAC) is founded in 2006. It is one of the earlier local non-governmental, non-religious and non-profit organization as well as a civil group focusing on the current living situation of the LGBT youth and offering service, education and support to LGBT in campus in mainland China. By adopting the strategies of development of the youth community, joint cooperation of campus education and teacher participation, and study and advocacy, we propose that every lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth in China should enjoy equal rights. At present, we are carrying out our work mainly in Guangzhou, Wuhan, Nanchang, Shenzhen and many other cities.



Abstract

Many LGBTI students in China have reported bullying in educational institutions on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity, with negative consequences, including poor academic performance, school dropout, depression and suicide. However, seldom research and practice focused on their serious situation in campus, so we decided to be the pioneer engaged in this empty area.

Early in 2012, GLCAC has drawn close attention on the bullying accrued in campus. Subsequently, we have taken great effort to engage in preventing children from bullying, particularly in campus in which they spend the most time. What we have undertaken and are currently promoting on would be mention in the following five aspects. First of all, we launched the two investigations and researches on bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identification and current homophobic and transphobic textbooks in China on account of viewing the whole picture of the campus-bullying. Second, various of workshops and training focusing on raising the educators and people's awareness on campus bullying initiated. Thirdly, a nationwide micro-funding project and China LGBT Campus Youth Leadership Development Program have been launched to support LGBT children's participation. Fourth, we initiative advocacy and polices changes on homophobic textbooks in china. Fifth, we set up a national child-friendly hotline 400-633-5911 to serve young people below the age of 27. Counseling over hotline is free but a minimal fee is charged for face-to-face counseling.

Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying Investigation and Research in China

1、 Online Survey of Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying in Campus

Many LGBTI students in China have reported bullying in educational institutions on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity. However, prior to this study there has been no data or research on the subject. This bullying also generally goes unreported by major media and schools. As a result, there is little or no care and support for those students, who have been bullied.

Therefore, GLCAC in partnership with the Beijing LGBT Center, the Aibai Culture and Education Center and UNESCO launched a project to, Raise Awareness of Importance to Eliminate Homophobic and Trans-phobic Bully at Educational Institutions in China, at the beginning of 2012. This project aims to raise the awareness among Chinese media, teachers, educational institutions and university students about the importance of eliminating homophobic and transphobic bullying at educational institutions through an online survey, press release, workshop and teacher training, campus activities and resource development. The results are showed in the following sheets:

¹Sheet 1 Data of School Bullying Type

77% of the respondents were victim to at least one of 17 types of school bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

44%	22%	21%	10%	7.6%	5%
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¹ Data from *STOP! Preventing and Coping with Campus Bullying*

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Verbal abuse by classmates and/or teachers, including name-calling, ridicule, spiteful jokes, or “well-meaning” advice on behavior or appearance.	malicious, forced outing as well as hateful gestures and stares by classmates and/or teachers	Ostracism by classmates and teachers.	Direct or indirect attacks, including being forced to behave in certain ways against their will, as well as being hit, kicked, slapped, or pulled by the hair.	sexual harassment by classmates and/or teachers, including being forced to remove all clothes, being touched in private parts, and being forced to be photographed in the nude.	Blackmail, extortion, or threats to life and property by classmates.
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²Sheet 2 School Bullying Negative Effect on Learning Experience

Bullying negatively affected the learning experience of 59% of the respondents

41%	23%	10%	3%
reported tensions in classmate relationships	a loss of interest in learning and declining academic performance.	instances of skipping classes or school	suspended from school

³Sheet 3 School Bullying Negative Effect on Psychological Aspect

Bullying negatively affected the learning experience of 63% of the respondents

42%	26%	19%	16%	5%
depression	Prone to anger and had desires for revenge.	Insomnia	Living in long-term fear	Had varying degrees of physical injuries

² Data from *STOP! Preventing and Coping with Campus Bullying*

³ Data from *STOP! Preventing and Coping with Campus Bullying*

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	self-harm, commit suicide, or have sex with strangers			
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Although they are facing several problems, only **33%** of the respondents sought support from others after being bullied. Of those who sought support, 72% went to their more friendly peers.

83% of the respondents believed that support and care were lacking for students suffering from bullying. **33–41%** of the respondents pointed out that for students suffering from bullying, there was a lack of channel for grievance, timely action to stop and punish the bullies, adequate and free counseling for victims, and supportive services for victims to re-establish interpersonal relationships with their classmates and the people around them.

During this investigation, several recommendations we received: Three quarters (**76%**) of respondents recommended advocating against school bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity through mass media. Nearly two-thirds (**60%**) thought it was necessary to Improve the nation’s policies by introducing regulations to prohibit bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Almost half of respondents (**44%**) thought awareness courses should be offered in schools, with a similar proportion (**43%**) indicating the need for support groups in schools.



The cover of the manual- *Stop! Campus Bullying*

2、 The Survey of Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying in Textbooks of China

From March to June, 2014, GLCAC started a overall investigation on how textbooks described homosexuality. 90 textbooks on abnormal psychology and mental health could to some extent reflect the situation of homosexuality in China. Later, based on the results, GLCAC held series of advocacy events and activities including press conference, Teachers' Voice (of refusing using textbooks with misconceptions), reporting presses to educational department for their publishing wrong textbooks, and filing lawsuits against the presses.

(1) Less than half of the textbooks for main courses conclude homosexual contents: **90** kinds of Abnormal Psychology and Mental Health Education textbooks and they are the main subjects in Mainland China that could mention homosexuality, but there are only **42** kinds of books do, and the percentage is **46.67%**.

(2) 80 percent of the Mental Health textbooks lack of support on mental health and social identity for LGBT students.

(3) Considering homosexuality to be sick is still the core of textbooks, and 40% of them in mainland China have the judgment that homosexuality is sick. Homosexual contents are usually put in the "Psychological Disorders", "Sexual Perversion" or "Common psychological disorders of college students" chapters. Only **3** of the **42** books separate "Homosexuality" as an individual part. The other hand, **88.10%** of the books which mention homosexuality have the discussion that whether homosexuality is sick.

(4) Homosexual contents in textbooks are gravely lacking of rigor and scientificity. Some of the contents are antithesis to national standards and contrary to facts, the others are paradoxical and old-fashioned. The problem of lacking consensus within the disciplines is also reflected in these contents.

(5) Among all the textbooks which contain homosexual contents, only **20%** are clear, logical and unmistakable.

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Press conference for the Report “Homosexuality Contents in University Textbooks”⁴

Awareness of Anti-homophobic Bullying Raising in China

After the previous data collect and analysis in the online survey, we decide to initiate a range of actions on raising educators and people’s awareness on campus bullying, which is unprecedented in China mainland that included writing report, press conference, teacher workshop, publish manuals etc.

■ Press conference of the report of campus bullying in china

In 2012, we released the *Campus Bullying Investigation on Sexual orientation and Gender in China* and launched the press conference jointly with UNESCO Representative Office in China, Royal Netherlands Embassy .ect.

■ Workshops related to anti-campus-bullying for teachers and social workers

From 2013-14, we provided workshops related to anti-campus-bullying for teachers and social workers in Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Foshan City; contents covered ABC knowledge, situation in China mainland, problem identifying, misconception, classroom culture, and strategies.

■ Comic manual – STOP! Preventing and Coping with Campus Bullying

We developed the comic manual – STOP! Preventing and Coping with Campus Bullying – for school organizations and teachers in 11 cities that contained the result

⁴<http://www.unescobkk.org/education/news/article/call-to-revise-textbooks-wrongly-portraying-lgbt-people-in-china/>

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in online survey. And we distributed the manual to the schools and organization freely.

Through years of efforts, in Guangdong Province, more and more concerns are being given to campus bullying; teachers and in-school social workers are willing to cooperate with us to support victims bullied.

The number of known case for us has risen from just a few in 2012 to 20-30 today. We are also glad to hear the feedback for teachers and social workers. And now we are bringing our experiences in the Middle and Primary School.

Workshops related to anti-campus-bullying for teachers



Support Children's Participation in Campus of China

In order to initiatives more children participate to the action to prevent themselves from bullying, we launched a nationwide micro-funding project and “Photosynthesis” LGBT Youth Leadership Project.

■ A nationwide micro-funding project

This project aims to encourage them to build the anti-campus-bullying group in their school. Various ways such as interview, announcement and the recommendation of partners were adopted to select the funded targets. So far 4 sessions (half a year per session) have been carried out to provide funds to near 100 campus LGBT activities in 15 universities from 11 cities, which would greatly enhance the visibility and discussion of topics related to LGBT to promote the development of campus gay and lesbian communities. And currently these successful groups would enter to the local middle and primary schools to initiatives more youngsters to join their activities.

■ “Photosynthesis” LGBT Youth Leadership Project in China

In addition, we implement the project called “Photosynthesis” LGBT Youth Leadership Project that promotes the empowerment and civil engagement to LGBT young people. From 2011, two sessions have been finished, and we cultivate young people to be the activists to push the issues of the right of LGBT youth in campus. Also we support these young people to establish the local LGBT groups in order to improve the LGBT- friendly campus environment rooted in their living areas. Currently, 11 groups nationwide have been built and grow step by step with our supports. To establish a LGBT-youth national network would be our next step.

After these projects' implement, we found that that the empowerment and civil engagement play very important roles on the improvement of anti-bullying in campus.

Advocacy Initiative and Polices Measures on Homophobic Textbooks in China

Base on the survey of homophobic and transphobic bullying in textbooks of China mentioned above, GLCAC looked for the objectives we severed in the past work so that to find the gay or lesbian student who is willing to implement the textbooks ‘advocacy as the litigant’. Later on, this student named “Qiubai” marched on her way to the right protection. The timeline of this influent issue is as followed:

1. Timeline of lawsuit of textbooks stigmatized homosexuals in china

■ August. 27, 2014, p.m.

Gay and Lesbian Campus Association of China (GLCAC) held a media conference in Guangzhou themed “LGBT Acceptance in Textbooks”, releasing Report on Misconception and Defamation of Homosexuals in College Textbooks. The report revealed that about 40% of the 90 textbooks, which contained homosexual content and we are published after Chinese Classification of Mental Disorders - third edition was issued in 2001, still regarded homosexual as a kind of disease, over 50% insisted that homosexuals need conversion therapy.

■ November.2014

16 nongovernmental LGBT groups made a joint appeal to teachers with a slogan of “Support LGBT, Refuse Stigmatizing Textbook”. These group members later managed to communicate with 72 local teachers face-to-face in the "Teacher We Need You" activity and thrillingly gained approximately 60 teachers' support.

■ March 9, 2015

QiuBai and her fellow students hold banners protesting against stigmatizing textbooks in front of Guangdong Provincial Education Department. They also submitted a complaint letter to both the department and National Press and Publication Administration, reporting the stigmatizing homosexual content in textbooks. The

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action drew media attention, including Xinhua News Agency and Southern Metropolis Day.

■ April. 18, 2015

Guangdong Higher Education Press responded to the complaint letter, explaining why homosexual content were included. However, no explanation was given to illogical chapters and content related to homosexual pathology and conversion therapy. In addition, the press considers "homosexual patients" an appropriate expression, for gay and lesbian youth generally felt anxiety and depression about relationship and sex issues.

■ April 29, 2015, p.m.

QiuBai and "Baymax" sent a silk banner with "quick response, efficient services" to Guangdong Provincial Education Department as a gift of acknowledgement.



■ May 12, 2015

QiuBai filed a lawsuit at Tianhe District People's Court, alleging reputation infringement from the homophobic textbooks published by Guangdong Higher Education Press. The reply came with rejection: there was no direct interest conflict

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between the prosecutor and the publication of referred books, plus, the prosecutor didn't provide any evidence proving infringement directly or indirectly from those referred books.



- May 25, 2015, p.m.

Unsatisfied with the result, QiuBai appeal against for a second time at Tianhe District People's Court in Guangzhou City.

Unfortunately, Qiubai has bitter experiences after this action that her teachers and school considered that “she is overreacted”.

2. Timeline of a Lesbian student's struggle after filling the case successfully

- August 14, 2015 - to the present

Beijing First Intermediate People's Court accepted the case and decided to file for trial.

- August 18th, 2015(Morning)

The news widely reported that a lesbian school filled the case against the MOE successfully.

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■ August 18th , 2015(Afternoon)

The supervisors, her teachers and her constructors in school boost with all their might to stop Qiubai's action. Because they considered that Qiubai's action would ruin the school's reputation. And in order push her give up the trial immediately and they rudely inform Qiubai's parents her sexual orientation intentionally. And her parents rush to school with great sadness about what their daughter has done.

■ August 19th, 2015

Qiubai went back home in a hurry and tried to comfort her parents.

■ August 20th, 2015

Qiubai's parents called her constructor in school and asked her to recommend the psycho logistics to Qiubai for the torsion therapy. Constructor answer: "If she is willing to 'change', teachers in our school are willing to help you".

■ August 21th to 22th, 2015

Qiubai faced the great pressures at home and struggled to persuade her parents.

■ August 23th, 2015

Qiubai lied to her parents that she needed to go back to school for lessons.

■ August 24th-25th, 2015

Numerous of students' groups, media, individual stand out and speak out for Qiubai. For example, a teacher in university came out to support Qiubai and said "Qiubai is not alone". And many people condemned the school behaviors which had been invaded her privacy right and legal right to fill the suit. LGBT NGO requested school to apologize to Qiubai and should take actions to protect the LGBT students.

■ August 26th, 2015

Qiubai wrote a letter, titled About Love and Freedom in her Wechat moment so as to

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respond the event. She wrote: There was a time when I could choose to be like most other homosexuals, who hide their sexual orientation till the end of their lives. Instead, I have been treating it as a precious gift which I kept for my parents, hoping that one day they would come to know who their daughter really is. But I stepped back, just thinking of how unsettled and disappointed they would be. Living in this era, we want to make the world a better place-- even just a little. These contrasting elements are difficult to balance, and it brings me hesitation and fear, and gives the school authorities opportunity and leverage over me. This entanglement cannot be simply solved by “making arrangement in advance” and thinking things through. No matter how impolitic I was, I did not deserve the liaison teacher directing despicable and ham-fisted methods at me.

In conclusion, what Qiubai experienced cautions us the improvement on LGBT-friendly campus cannot exclude the change of the power relation and educational system. And if not, LGBT students would be live in the campus that is inundated with bullying...e.g. LGBT stigmatizing content in textbooks, restriction on LGBT groups’ registration, censorship of campus LGBT activities, homophobia remarks by teachers, the lack of sex education courses, and the lack of anti-homophobia-and-bullying campus policies. Our future work would aims to change these negative situations above.

Child-Friendly Counseling — Counseling Hotline and Psychological Guidance for LGBT Children

The hotline and counseling center aims to provide timely support to LGBT young people (including children) who are faced with homophobic bullying, depressed and feeling helpless, or confused about information received about sexual orientation, etc. Particularly those live in the area that the network is not developed.

From 15 September 2014 GLCAC made the Centre accessible nationally and also set

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up a national hotline 400-633-5911 to serve young people below the age of 27. Counseling over hotline is free but a minimal fee is charged for face-to-face counseling, with discounts and credits offered to those who help to spread the information around. Hotline is open every Thursday and Sunday night 7:30-10:30pm, and face-to-face counseling is based on appointment made via phone three days in advance.



Several cases we collected through this hotline that we consider that the rate of campus bullying in high school is pretty high. And we should address our works in the middle school and high school.

■ Case 1

I have come out to my classmates in high school because I did not try to cover it up. Although they were easy with my sexual orientation, some friends still reminded me now. They would comment “do not be serious about your relationship, there’s no future for homosexuals” or “why are you so serious? It’s a girl anyway”. These words hurt me every time and I’ve realized it’s a kind of discrimination. But without a right way to deal with it and nobody to ask for help, I have to keep silent after I went to college.

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- Xiaoduo, 20,
A college student from Nanning, Guangxi Province

■ Case 2

I have been treated as a “tomboy” from childhood. My classmates had less knowledge about transgender. They thought I was sexual perversion and homosexual. One night in my dormitory, some girls forced me to wash my butt violently with the reason that there shouldn't be privacy between girls. After that, they even said with full of conceit: “See, even if a sexual perversion person could learn to be a good girl”.

-Xiaowu, A transgender in Chengdu
He is recalling the experiences when living in junior high school.

■ Case 3

One day in 2012, I received a call from a stranger who said he was with high-status and wanted to be my partner. After being rejected, he threatened to discredit me. The other day, my counselor had a conversation with me, saying that somebody had reported that I had gay sex with a minor who was with unwillingness. Then out of trust, I told the counselor about my sexual orientation and love stories. But still, my parents were informed and I got expelled from the Party. The counselor regarded what had happened to me was not morally right although the slander was destroyed and kept as a secret.

“I was in despair after the conversation. It was so unfair but I cannot defy because of the potential hurt toward my boyfriend. And I've already being expelled from the Party; I don't want to lose the chance of being in college.”

-Xiaowei,
Harbin, recalling his encounter

■ Case 4

I lived in senior high school. There were 6 students in my dorm, 4 of them always isolated and humiliated me. Once, I shouted angrily because nobody would listen to me when I was trying to keep order in the night study class. Then back to the dorm, I

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found my desk filling of the words “FREAK” and “RUBBISH”. When a new teacher was asking about the number of the boys and girls in the class, a guy spoke loudly “22.5 boys and 22.5 girls!” then all the classmates laughed. I cried secretly during the class and ran to the playground, crying out. After that, I decided not to try hard to integrate into the collective and live my own life. I stopped taking charge of the class, feeling clam and comfortable being alone.

-Bingfeng, 20,
A sophomore student in Guangzhou



Poster of Counseling Hotline and Psychological Guidance for LGBT Children

Conclusion

4 years' endeavours and actions breed rich experiences for GLCAC in anti-bullying in campus for LGBT youth. Throughout these years, we still clearly view the tiny change day by day, but also recognize the fact that LGBT are remain criminalized in our country and LGBT individuals are still struggling for their lives and rights in campus. And we, as the activists in China, are struggling against injustice arrests, kidnaps and punishments done by the governments as well as legal and social discrimination. However, we would continually march on the way to the LGBT right movement in China.