



STATEMENT ON THE AZERBAIJANI OFFENSIVE AGAINST ARTSAKH

On September 27, 2020, the dictatorial regime of Azerbaijan launched a large-scale attack along the entire line of contact of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) using heavy artillery, tanks, aircraft and missiles. Towns and villages in Artsakh are being bombed, including the capital city of Stepanakert, as well as the border of Armenia in the direction of the town of Vardenis. Azerbaijan specifically targets the civilian

population in gross violation of international humanitarian law and with absolute disregard for the call by the UN Secretary General for a worldwide ceasefire given the COVID-19 pandemic. There are already over a hundred wounded and over a dozen people were killed among the military and civilian population in Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh), including at least one child. This attack is unprecedented in the size and scope of the military arsenal engaged. There is clear evidence that it was prepared in advance and with the apparent support of the Turkish regime. We believe that if the international community does not react in a timely and appropriate manner, the military operations may expand beyond the conflict zone, resulting in serious atrocities and a humanitarian crisis in the region, exacerbated by the situation related to the coronavirus outbreak. We are determined to support all efforts to address the challenges to human rights, peace, and security in the region. The Armenian civil society strongly condemns the aggression by the Azerbaijani regime and appeals to the international community, international organizations – the UN, the Council of Europe, the European Union, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs – to take urgent and effective measures to end the Azerbaijani regime aggression and to resume negotiations for peaceful resolution of the conflict.

THE NEXT IN TURN VICTORY: THE ECHR VERDICT

On September 24, 2020, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) made a decision about the cases of A.S. against Armenia and S.P. against Armenia. The Government of the Republic of Armenia has acknowledged the violation of the rights of applicants guaranteed by Article 5, part 3 of the Convention. The ECHR obliged

the RA to pay the applicants 1.000 (one thousand) euros within 3 months. New Generation Humanitarian NGO provided legal and attorney's assistance in the case.

The background of the case:

On September 22, 2017, a criminal case was initiated against transgender women A.S. and S.P. in accordance with Article 258, Part 4 of the RA Criminal Code. During their detention at Nubarashen criminal-executive institution S.P. was repeatedly subjected to cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or torture, which was also reported by a lawyer. A.S. and S.P. have been

under arrest for about two years. NGNGO attorney Ara Gharagozyan submitted applications to the ECHR. On May 27, 2019, the ECHR communicated the two applications submitted by the “New Generation” Humanitarian NGO attorney Ara Gharagozyan – A.S. against Armenia (the application was submitted on 20-02-2018) and S.P. against Armenia (application was submitted on 26-02-2018). According to the applications, in both cases there was a violation of Article 5 part 3 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.



ARMENIAN-GERMAN YOUTH EXCHANGE WAS HELD

10 participants from Yerevan and all regions of Armenia were hosted in Yerevan on 22-27 September 2020 by New Generation Humanitarian NGO (NGNGO) within the framework of a youth exchange on Democracy. The project will be continued in the second stage and the participants will have the opportunity to apply for a small grant and implement projects in their communities.

“The youth exchange has been organized within the framework of cooperation between New Generation Humanitarian NGO and Bavarian Youth Council (BJR) with financial support of the latter and is aimed at developing the knowledge and skills of the participants on Democracy, exchanging experiences with German participants and developing intercultural communication”, said NGNGO president Sergey Gabrielyan. The exchange project was supposed to take place in Munich, Germany, but due to the epidemic situation, the participants contacted each other online from each of their countries.



MEETING-DISCUSSION WITH BENEFICIARIES OF LORI REGION



MEETING- DISCUSSION WITH BENEFICIARIES OF LORI REGION On September 8, 2020, a meeting-discussion with participation of HIV Prevention projects assistant Levon Chilingaryan

and NGNGO regional beneficiaries, took place at New Generation Humanitarian NGO Lori regional office. The goal of the meeting-discussion was provision of information to the project beneficiaries about the importance of HIV Prevention and Testing. During the meeting project assistant Levon Chilingaryan discussed the ways of HIV transmission, prevention and treatment. A special reference was made to PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV) and PEP (Post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV). The discussion was accompanied with active questions and answers. For details on PrEP and PEP, you can visit [HERE](#).

Hmayak Avetisyan, the Armenian coordinator of the exchange project, says that in this case the cooperation is highly important, "We have been in direct contact with our German partners from Yerevan.

Of course, it would be great if we could be in Munich with this team on the same days, meet our friends face to face, speak with the language of democracy, exchange our experience, but new opportunities are still to come".



The first day of the course was spent in separate groups of countries. The project coordinators in Armenia, Hmayak Avetisyan and Anna Zakaryan, did introductory exercises for the Armenian group and small team building exercises. The teams spent the second day together being in contact online. The project was welcomed by Sergey Gabrielyan, President of NGNGO, and Matthias Fack, President of the Bavarian Youth Council (BJR). The partners highly valued the cooperation between them, expressed hope that it would strengthen and become more fruitful. After the opening remarks, the participants of the two countries presented their expectations and goals. In the second half of the day excursions were held in Yerevan and Munich. The Armenian team presented the revolutionary Yerevan, and the Germans told the LGBT history of Munich through pictures.

On the other days of the training, two German experts, Sabine Sommer and Tom Muhr, conducted trainings, group exercises, and practical workshops with the participants.

The exchange project was conducted through online platforms, where participants both in joint and small groups had discussions on various topics, organized group games and activities. "I participated in the project with great expectations, because, as you know, we would get cooperated with Germany, and democracy has a big place there.

I am satisfied with the project; I gained a lot of knowledge.

The practical parts were more interesting, because they allowed to apply the acquired knowledge in practice", says Inga Asatryan, a participant in the project. The second stage of the project will take place in November.



The press release was made by Svetlana Davtyan, one of the participants of the youth exchange.



TRAINING-DISCUSSION WITH PARTICIPATION OF 12 THERAPYSTS FROM YEREVAN AND PROVINCES OF ARMENIA TOOK PLACE

On September 16-18, 2020 training-discussion on HIV and AIDS, HCV and HBV, Importance of Prevention of Stigma and Discrimination in medical institutions took place with participation of 12 therapists from Yerevan and provinces of Armenia. The training was organized by New Generation Humanitarian NGO with the financial support of Gilead Sciences Inc. and in cooperation with RA MOH National Center for Infectious Diseases CJSC.

On the first day of the meeting, September 16 Yulya Manukyan, infection disease doctor of medical aid and service department of RA MOH National Center for Infectious Diseases CJSC, spoke about HIV and AIDS, introduced to the participants the treatment methods and registered successes of Armenia in the field of HIV and AIDS, World Experience and Innovations in this field. On the second part of the session the doctor discussed Pre-Exposure and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis for HIV with the participants.

The expert of the second training day, Narina Sargsyants, deputy director on medical affairs of the RA MOH National Center for Infectious Diseases CJSC discussed the HCV and HBV prevention, care and treatment with the participants. The third and fourth days of the

meeting were dedicated to prevention of stigma and discrimination in medical institutions, professional ethics and work with vulnerable groups of the society, medical confidentiality. NNGO lawyer Shushan Khnkoyan introduced to the participants the definition, types and manifestations of discrimination. The importance of exclusion of discrimination during provision of medical aid and the impact of discrimination on public health and treatment.

Hovhannes Madoyan, acting director of RA MOH National Center for Infectious Diseases CJSC, presented the definition of medical ethics, importance of maintaining the principles and norms, medical confidentiality, the patient's rights and medical worker's obligations during provision of services. The right to health and specificities of the work with vulnerable groups of the society, were also discussed with the participants.



The meeting took place in an atmosphere of free-and-easy questions and answers, active discussions.

The participants were awarded with certificates of participation.



LIFE-14 OFFLINE TRAINING WAS HELD

On September 3-5, 2020, LIFE-14 offline training was held within the framework of “Fighting against discrimination in Armenia” project. This time the training was held for beginner CSW activists. The goal of LIFE-14 offsite training is the awareness-raising and capacity building of CSW community representatives on the topics of Leadership and Human Rights, enhancing their legal consciousness,



acquainting them with the domestic and international The president of New Generation Humanitarian NGO, Sergey Gabrielyan, joined the offline training and delivered a welcoming speech. In his speech he expressed his joy at seeing the active participants, and presented the history, fields of activity and priorities of the organization. National human rights protection mechanisms .



On the second day of the training the participants got acquainted with the topic Leadership and Activism.

Trainer expert Hmayak Avetisyan introduced the participants to the concept of leadership, the description of leadership, the characteristics of a leader, as well as the types of leadership.

He also presented the history of activism, the precedents of the movements, need for activists to protect the rights of the vulnerable groups. The expert also spoke about the work of Country Coordinating Mechanism and the importance of community engagement in decision-making processes.

Naira Sergeyeva, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist of the Global Fund projects of RA Ministry of Health, was invited to meet the participants. In her speech she referred to the RA National Program in Response to HIV and AIDS, spoke about the HIV infection, as well as discussed the problems raised by the participants.

The first part of the first day of the training was dedicated to the topic Domestic and International Mechanisms of Human Rights Protection, ECHR which was presented by trainer-expert Sirak Eghiazaryan who spoke about the concept of human rights, generations of human rights, domestic and international protection systems. At the end of the training, the European Convention on Human Rights and the procedure for applying to the ECHR were presented.

The day continued with the topic Prevention of Stigma and Discrimination within the framework of which trainer expert Lusine Gasparyan presented the definition of discrimination, types and protected bases of discrimination, discriminatory terms and their non-discriminatory variants.

The second day of the information platform was dedicated to legal topics. Experts Arman Gharibyan and Ara Gharagozyan presented topics Freedom of Speech vs Hate Speech and Torture, during which the trainers presented the definitions of freedom of speech, hate speech, torture and their legal regulations.

RA PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE SATISFIES COMPLAINT FROM NEW GENERATION HUMANITARIAN NGO

On August 19, 2020, New Generation Humanitarian NGO applied to the Prosecutor's General Office of the Republic of Armenia to recognize the violation of the rights and freedoms of R.K., instructing the investigative body to prepare materials for initiating a criminal case. As a result, by the letter of August 26, 2020, Arabkir and Kanaker-Zeytun Administrative Districts of the RA Prosecutor's Office instructed Kanaker-Zeytun Division of Yerevan City Department of the RA Police to report a crime on the report submitted by R.K., prepare materials and solve the process in the manner prescribed by Articles 180-181 of the RA Criminal code.

Pre-history of the case

On March 16, 2020, citizen R.K. applied to New Generation Humanitarian NGO as he was refused surgery at IZMIRLYAN medical center, learning about his HIV positive status. New Generation Humanitarian NGO submitted a written complaint to the RA Ministry of Health, the Health and Labor Inspectorate and submitted a report on the crime to the RA Police.

On April 20, 2020, R.K. visited the Kanaker-Zeytun Division of the Yerevan city Department of the RA Police

together with the attorney provided by New Generation Humanitarian NGO and gave an explanation. According to the August 8, 2020 letter of the Kanaker-Zeytun Division of the Yerevan City Department of the RA Police, based on the report submitted by NGNGO, any factual data on intentional non-provision of medical care to the R.K. was not received, so the letter was left without results and was attached to the secretariat with conclusion.

No materials were prepared in accordance with Articles 180-181 of the RA Criminal Procedure Code, as the circumstances mentioned in the letter of 17-03-2020 were discussed as information in need of verification.



TRIPARTITE WORKING MEETING WAS HELD

On September 16, 2020, a tripartite working meeting was held at the office of New Generation Humanitarian NGO (NGNGO) with the participation of NGNGO president Sergey Gabrielyan, For Strong Future NGO President Maxim Trubkin and Colorful House NGO president Garik Amolikyan.

NGNGO president Sergey Gabrielyan thanked the parties for participating in the meeting, noting the importance of cooperation between the organizations and the efforts of the two organizations dealing with trans* issues in the HIV prevention projects. The parties expressed readiness to continue, deepen and strengthen the

established cooperation between each other. The two organizations reaffirmed their desire to work together to provide the necessary services to the trans* community of Armenia. NNGO president Sergey Gabrielyan highlighted the importance of joint efforts to ensure the engagement of the trans* community in the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) during this period of time. The meeting was held in an atmosphere of active questions and answers and discussions.

NATIONAL TRANS* PEOPLE WORKING GROUP. MEETING ON REGULATION DEVELOPMENT

On October 5, 2020, meeting of the general members of the National Trans* People Working Group (NTPWG) on the development of the Regulations of the Group took place at New Generation Humanitarian NGO office. The general members of the NTPWG represent the following organizations dealing with trans* issues in Armenia: New Generation Humanitarian NGO, For Strong Future Youth NGO, Colorful House Social-Cultural and Human Rights Defender NGO, Fearless Human Rights Defender NGO, Equality for All Human Rights Defender NGO. At the beginning of the meeting, Hmayak Avetisyan, the coordinator of "Trans* Map at EECA" project and a member of the NTPWG, presented the possibility and efficiency of working within such format and nominated V.M., the project assistant of New Generation Humanitarian NGO as the Group facilitator. The participants presented their motivation to join the group. Hearing V.M.'s motivation, the members of the group unanimously approved his candidacy. The second part of the meeting was chaired by Hasmik Petrosyan, a lawyer-attorney and an expert on the Regulation development. She brought out the important parts of the Regulations and answers to questions through active questions and answers and discussion. In addition to the questions regarding the Regulation, the group members also discussed

WORKING MEETING WITH PARTICIPATION OF HIV PREVENTION PROJECTS STAFF MEMBERS

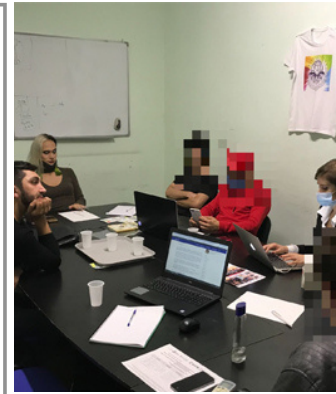


On September 11, 2020, a meeting-discussion of the staff of HIV prevention projects implemented by New Generation Humanitarian NGO was held in the big hall of the National Center for Infectious Diseases CJSC.

The meeting was attended by the president of the organization Sergey Gabrielyan, the coordinator of HIV Prevention Projects Artyom Movsesyan, projects assistants, lawyer, monitoring and evaluation specialist and other staff members.

The project administration staff discussed with outreach workers the progress and results of the projects, the achievements, the shortcomings, the obstacles. The list of training topics among the outreach workers and other organizational issues were clarified. The working meeting was held in an atmosphere of active questions and answers and discussions, all the participants appreciated the importance of meetings of such format.

the format of organization of the work, online platforms that should be used to keep the connection. Nora Aghazaryan, President of Fearless Human Rights Defender NGO and trans* activist, was elected as the coordinator of the working group. The meeting took place in a very active and enthusiastic atmosphere. The members of the group expressed readiness to continue the work in the same spirit, to contribute to the solution of the trans* issues in Armenia, to the protection of their rights, to the increase of the visibility.



PROVISION OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE TO VULNERABLE GROUPS CONTINUES

New Generation Humanitarian NGO continues to provide food packages, temporary shelters and COVID-19 prevention material to those LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans*) people, MSM (men who have sex with men), CSW (commercial sex workers), PWID (people who use drugs) who have been subjected to stigma, discrimination, violence or torture, have been left without shelter and family support, have lost their jobs and have no other financial income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Legal and psychological consultation are also available for the beneficiaries. You can apply for assistance by the following link.

FOR ARTSAKH

Large-scale military operations have been launched along the entire borderline between Artsakh and Azerbaijan since September 27, 2020, as a result of which the civilian population has suffered and residential buildings have been damaged. A significant part of the population of Artsakh has left their settlements in order to find safety.

New Generation Humanitarian NGO has been assisting people displaced from Artsakh to

Yerevan since September 27 by providing them with food, shelter, basic necessities, as well as COVID-19 prevention measures.

Our organization has provided shelter and basic necessities to 32 people displaced from Artsakh.

15 displaced Artsakh residents still live in the temporary shelter. New Generation Humanitarian NGO continues and will continue to stand by the people in need, providing assistance to the extent of the NGO's capabilities.



LIFE OF LGBTI PEOPLE IN ARMENIAN SCHOOLS. PART 1

“I remember I was 14 when I, by chance, met a guy in summer, we got acquainted, exchanged contacts and talked for about 2 months, then he left for Russia and I got depressed. I fell in love with that guy, I was 14 or 15 years old when I clearly understood that I am interested in boys” tells Adam (name is changed) and sadly remembers the 9th of September at his school. “It is impossible to describe in words how it feels when you reach puberty and realize that your sexual orientation is different. It was the beginning of the 9th grade. I remember going to class in September and realizing that I was a stranger in that environment. I felt different, but I can not explain how it feels when you feel like a stranger, isolated,” he says with a smile. Adam, who is not like the majority, wants to live with his identity but because of his different behavior and appearance, his friends were alienated, he was removed from social networks, schoolboys made fun of him, teachers became indifferent, and he was self-contained and reserved. “The way I dressed was different, I was not into «թեմաներ» (“topics for arguments”) behind the school. On the contrary I was against that kind of things

like fighting. There was no Russian slang in my vocabulary either like «նիրյաղ ըլնել», «կուռածիտ ըլնել». That’s why the boys did not talk to me. Well, how do I explain it? It all that makes you an “outcast”, I was the only good student among the boys. I always participated in academic competitions. I remember they called me a “nerd” and said, “how can that “fruit” go to the competitions?” Or they said, “he will pass this stage but will fail the next one because they will not let him to, “Adam wants to remember this much about the reasons.

To my question whether the teachers did not intervene, he answered after a little silence. “I first heard the word ‘pervert’ from a Church History teacher. He was a zealous Christian, a patriot. He said that everyone should follow the Apostolic Church. Everyone who does not believe is a “sectarian”, “perverted”. By “perverted” he meant LGBTI people. And our physical education teacher once said about HIV that it is a disease which is spread through “faggots”, so we should not “communicate with” them”. Adam left school at the age of 15 and went to college, where his sexual orientation was revealed when he once forgot to hide a necklace with an LGBTI sign under his clothes. After that “incident” a habit formed among the boys of the class, he was greeted and sent home with insults, and mocked during classes. Insults and swearing were accompanied with persecution and physical violence, which were increasing year by year.

“Every morning when I entered college, I heard various remarks about me and my family, insults with the most disgusting words. They said, “this faggot came again. Look at how he’s dressed,



his movements and the way he walks, even girls do not walk like that.” During classes, the boys would sit behind me and start mocking, punching me, writing insulting words on papers and throwing them at me, drawing on my back.

And on the way home, they would gather at the exit door, as soon as they saw me approaching, someone would put his foot on the threshold so that I would stumble and fall... I fell once. There have been cases of beatings... several times... "behind the building". Well, my hair and clothes were discussed among college students. They said, "How can a boy have long hair?" Adam says, adding that he felt insecure, especially after cases of physical violence. That's why he didn't go to classes since the second semester of his sophomore year, and he had a hard time graduating from college. "I remember dreaming when I would finish school. It was the same way in college. "I dreamt of the day when I would finally graduate, and when I would never see those people again," says Adam. Karen (name changed) felt interested in boys from an early age but revealed the term "homosexual" when he was 13 years old. "I used to follow a blogger on the Internet who lived in Germany and often talked about his sexual orientation. I knew I liked boys, I just did not know what it was called. That's how I found out I was gay," says Karen and adds that he has always been in conformity with his identity, it's the others that weren't. He had problems since he was a child. The reason is clear. He was born, raised, and attended school in a village, in a closed society, where everyone knows one another. "Not only my class but the whole school of 300 people knew me as some special kind that existed," Karen remembers his school years. He's trying to list reasons. "Well, at school I was always different from the boys, both physically and in the way I talked and dressed, which was already a big problem." Because of his "non-standard" appearance, the teachers or schoolboys didn't like Karen. "The physical education teacher always insulted me. He called me "faggot", "fruit". The boys did not communicate with me, they did not even accept me around them, they offended me a lot. "I was called "faggot" and a lot of other insulting words, which I do not want to say now." He remembers that there were a lot of fights because he was insulted and tried to defend himself. He also remembers the cases of physical violence on the way home or behind the school and the indifference of teachers. "If the teachers had seen it, they would have separated us, but they would never have defended me. They would never say I was right, but they wouldn't blame the others either. "They would never say that they were wrong." This is how the image of his "man in solitude" was formed during his school years. The argument for the "why alone?" question is also clear. "If there was a problem, no one would stand by me, support me," says Karen. He's sure his parents knew about his sexual orientation. They would ask what was going on at school. They understood the reason. Sometimes they would call the school, but "those cases" continued throughout the school year. He repeatedly asked his parents to change schools. He says he had the choice to go to school in a nearby town. He thinks that in this way he would at least avoid physical violence because the town was bigger, the people were many and did not know each other there. But the parents did not meet his request, saying, "It is not convenient in the town, our acquaintances are here in the village." Speaking about his school progress, he mentions that he was a capable student. He is now studying at the university with excellent progress. But it is not surprising that he finished school with very low grades. "The reason was that I was constantly discriminated against

every day. Even if I did well in class, I was not highly graded by the teachers. During PE, I ran the best in the class, but the physical education teacher always graded me the lowest compared to other boys. I did not have a large circle of friends either, the children tried not to talk to me. “Those lessons that I learned in school in the form of physical violence and insults will always stay with me until the end of my life, like a wound, they will not be forgotten, because they have already become a part of me,” says Karen at the end of the conversation. After a few seconds of silence he adds. “I was able to use my pain and difference to get out of that hole. Not everyone succeeds. I was able to do it with my effort. It was difficult but not impossible. “ Unfortunately, schools in Armenia are not a safe place for LGBT children. Stories like this show that children are discriminated against because of their sexual orientation or gender identity by both classmates and teachers, which causes many psychological problems, leads to isolation, low self-esteem, and hinders the realization of their right to education.

LIFE OF LGBTI PEOPLE IN ARMENIAN SCHOOLS. PART 2

Discrimination Against LGBTI Children As A Result Of Flawed Organization Of Human Rights And Sex Education

Discrimination, hatred, and violence against LGBTI children in Armenian schools are viewed by experts as a result of an ineffective organization of human rights and sex education. According to Goharik Tigranyan, a human rights education expert, the school has not fulfilled its duty of educating citizens for years. The task of awakening civil and legal awareness among children was carried out by civil society when it was the responsibility of the state. Human rights education has been included in school curricula since the 1990s, first, it was called “Human Rights”, then “State and Law”, which in 2007 was replaced by “Sociology”.

“The subject should be entirely aimed at developing tolerance, equality, elimination of discrimination, development of individuals as citizens, and all the other skills needed to enter the society. However, the teaching of the subject does not serve its purpose in practice,

”says G. Tigranyan and singles out the reasons. “As such, there are no “Social Science” teachers in Armenia, other professionals of “History”, “Church History”, “Chemistry”, “Physics” etc. teach that subject in schools. There have even been cases when the teachers instead of teaching that subject preferred to teach the subject they are specialized in, but in the registry book they would add that they have taught “Social Science”. Yerevan State Pedagogical University started its “Social Science” faculty in 2015-2016 to train relevant teachers with a bachelor’s degree. However, in schools, the hours allocated for that subject are very few, for example, there are only 2 lessons in middle school and 1 in high school. “How should working as a part-time teacher motivate graduates to teach “Social Science “in schools?” my interviewer wonders. According to G.Tigranyan, it is problematic that the continuousness of human rights education is not ensured in schools. The students learn “Human Rights” in the 9th grade and the connection is cut in the 10th grade, and then they study “Law Science” in the 11th grade. In the 9th grade, the topics are presented in a slightly more accessible way,

practical tasks are included, but in the 11th grade, the science of law is introduced to children.

Moreover, there are no dictionaries in the textbook, the terms are not explained. These complex texts taken from professional books are not even understood by the teachers who teach the subject, as their qualification training is not properly organized. "The textbook is the first link to education for children. If the formulations are complex, it is naturally difficult to grasp the knowledge, moreover, the value system underlying human rights - dignity, equality, anti-discrimination - is not presented, and the delivery of the material is artificial. Children may theoretically learn what the rules of coexistence are, but in practice, they do not understand that human rights are the very rules of coexistence given in the legal field. The right-need combination is not presented or explained. "I think it is not surprising why the part of legal education remains open or incomplete when an individual or citizen is formed," the expert is concerned. An important part of education is sex education.

Sex education provides accurate information about sexuality, sexual health, and reproduction, taking into account the age-appropriate and cultural characteristics. In addition to accurate information, it also conveys several important values such as love, care, harmony, body immunity, and the ability to navigate different life situations.

Many countries have adopted a comprehensive approach to sex education, which conveys not only the information but also those values, which are very

important in terms of personal development and building healthy relationships.

With this approach, the education teaches what potential values there are, how one can orient oneself in different life situations, and make the right choices.

"The World Health Organization's standards accurately note what kind of information children of what age should know. For example, at the age of 11-12, they should already know what sexual orientation is, what gender identity is, which are not considered as a disease. It is a proven fact. "In countries where there is sex education, there are fewer cases of unwanted pregnancies, fewer cases of sexually transmitted infections and cases of sexual violence," says Anush Poghosyan, psychologist, sexual and reproductive health expert.

According to A.Poghosyan, the fact that sex education among children has never been organized in Armenia is worrying. "Healthy Lifestyle" classes, which are included in the subject "Physical Education", have been piloted since 2008. In other words, it was not a separate subject, it was just lessons that were attached to the subject "Physical Education" in grades 8 to 11.

The children could not exercise due to the cold weather in January-February,. Therefore, they considered it practical to replace those "Physical education" lessons with "Healthy Lifestyle" topics, which were 14 lessons in total. 7 lessons were on

reproductive health. The other 7 lessons focused on the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs. "In such a situation, we can not talk about sex education at all, especially comprehensive sex education.

First of all, these topics are taught by physical education teachers who are not specialists in the topic, and qualification trainings for those specialists are carried out infrequently. This is already a serious problem. In practice, there are cases when the physical education teacher is not ready to talk about sex education, and the students, in their turn, are constrained.

The consequence is that reproductive health issues are skipped. That is, that knowledge, as part of school education, is not valued, not even assessed separately. What's more the topics of sex education, reproductive health are taught incompletely whereas sexually transmitted infections are discussed in great detail. "How justified is it to explain syphilis, HIV / AIDS to children at that age in that depth?" Poghosyan says.

Manuals of "Healthy Lifestyle" subject were last modified about 2 years ago. Although the changes were not based on comprehensive sex education, however according to the expert, they showed a positive trend, for example, they included topics on puberty and contraception, but the teachers were again "Physical Education" teachers.

"We can succeed in the issue of sex education and upbringing of children only if it is introduced in school curricula as a

separate subject and taught by a trained specialist," Anush Poghosyan concludes.

People subjected to discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity don't have measures for legal protection:

The problem is that discrimination, hatred, and violence against LGBTI children hinder the realization of the right to education of LGBTI children, but the domestic legislation of the Republic of Armenia does not provide the necessary protection due to the lack of legal mechanisms. In 2018, the RA Ministry of Justice drafted the RA Law on Ensuring Equality, which is still in circulation and has not been adopted. However, according to Shushan Khnkoyan, New Generation Humanitarian NGO lawyer, the draft does not meet international standards for anti-discrimination legislation, as the draft does not include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected grounds from discrimination.

As of the assertion that the RA Constitution and domestic legislation contain provisions prohibiting discrimination, Sh. Khnkoyan counters, "These provisions do not provide legal protection mechanisms based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

"If, for example, a person is abused because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, they can seek protection only on the grounds of being abused."

According to domestic legal regulations, the interrogation of a victim under the age of sixteen is carried out with the participation of a pedagogue.

The legal interests of the juvenile participant are represented during the criminal proceedings by his / her legal representatives - parents, adoptive parents, guardians, or trustees.

According to Sh. Khnkoyan this circumstance, , again causes problems in terms of legal protection as very often juveniles do not want to tell their parents about their sexual orientation to avoid possible domestic violence.

“Our organization has had such a case. The child did not want to go to school because his sexual orientation was revealed, as a result of which he was discriminated against.

However, the organization could not apply for legal proceedings for this and many other similar cases because the children did not want to.

They feared double discrimination. The solution was that they just changed their school, “Sh. Khnkoyan brings this example from practice.

Thus, schools are not a safe place for LGBTI children.

Meanwhile, LGBTI children would have carefree and happy schooling if their rights were protected by law if the state showed political will to recognize and protect those rights if the school did not fail in its duty of educating citizens ... problems, the solution of which, unfortunately, is still unrealistic in Armenia.

Nare Hovhannisyan

LGBTI PEOPLE AND EMPLOYMENT



Each person has a right to free choice of employment, which is established by Clause 1 of Article 57, of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, while the representatives of the LGBTI community state that they cannot realize this as well as many other rights in Armenia due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Transgender person Nora Petrosyan is a nurse by profession, even though she tried to work in her profession, but did not succeed. “I applied to a dental clinic, ambulance department, they did not accept me, they always reasoned that they had no place, it was not convenient at the moment.”

In 2017 she finally found a job in the service sector She worked as a waiter in a cafe. Nora says that she was discriminated against many times while working in the cafe, she says that the employer was initially aware of her sexual orientation, but problems arose with the clients

“The visitors of the cafe said that they do not want a gay person to serve them, to give them food because it is unhygienic.

The director also said that he was losing clients because of me, so I should quit the work. ”

Nora Petrosyan currently does sex work.

Speaking about discrimination in labor relations, lawyer Shushan Khnkoyan mentions that the problem is that there is no separate law on the prohibition of discrimination in the legislation of the Republic of Armenia. "Although Article 3.1 of the RA Labor Code prohibits discrimination, it does not specifically mention the prohibition on the basis of the SOGI, the only clauses by which we can provide protection is the basis of the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of a social or other statuses.

"Nora states that she is aware of that clause of the Labor Code. "No employer openly says that he/she is fired on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, other reasons are cited, that's why we cannot apply to the law."

According to the lawyer, the employer mentions other reasons in the order of dismissal, which reduces the protection mechanisms. Gay person Alaska (name has been changed at his will) says that before he revealed his sexual orientation, he had no problems with work. At that time he was working in a warehouse as a worker. Then, when he revealed his sexuality, he was able to find a job only in the service sector. He still works as a waiter in a cafe. He is a marketing manager by profession. "I worked in one place for a year and a half as a waiter, I had problems in the first few months. A friend of my boss had seen me walking down the street with my friends. The next day he came to the cafe, I approached to serve, he said that he prefers someone else to serve him." After this the employer gave Alaska a month to

leave his position, but seeing his work skills, he changed his mind and did not fire him. According to Alaska, he has been discriminated against many times in his work, even by his colleagues. "One day one of my colleagues said that they were discussing me. My sexual orientation and gender identity were discussed at work, and I answered that I did not care, I came to work, I did not come so they discuss my personal life. " According to Alaska, employers do not mention sexual orientation and gender identity when dismissing, they simply put forward other reasons. According to lawyer Shushan Khnkoyan, employers do that in order to secure themselves, it is prohibited to state any conditions other than professional training and qualifications when dismissing a person, which would be a manifestation of discrimination unless it stems from the inherent requirements of the job. "It is necessary to understand that if a person does his/her job properly, what is the difference if the person is gay or heterosexual?" According to the lawyer, the representatives of the LGBTI community mainly do not hold high public posts. "Homosexuality is still considered a mental illness in Armenia. For example, they are released from compulsory military service, if they mention that fact according to the government's decision. Then, naturally, it becomes a reason for not being able to find employment in high positions." The right to work is an inalienable human right, and in employment relations, only the person's personal and professional qualifications must be taken into account.

Shushanik Miskaryan

THE PROBLEM OF GENDER AFFIRMATION IN ARMENIA

They say nature never makes mistakes, each person should adapt to the physique they have received.

Some people are born with, for example, respiratory problems that the medicine is able to solve. It is, of course, encouraged by the society, after all, breathing is vital for the normal functioning of the body, but what will the same people say about the infallibility of the same nature, when it turns out that it has failed, for example, when assigning gender?

Of course, we will hear that it's wrong to go against nature but what if we think better?

It's a fact that each of us needs socialization from an early age but how is it expressed? The child tries to get the parent's favor in every situation, especially by imitating the parent's behavior.

However, there are children that are different since childhood.

An attentive parent, of

course, notices but not always accepts it.

Usually, those persons themselves speak about it in late or early adolescence.

We are talking about Trans * people. People who are not at peace with their bodies but have to live like that for many years, and often even for all their lives.

Modern science has found a solution to this problem as well, the person can have gender affirming surgery but everything is not that easy.

Unfortunately, applying for gender affirming surgery is a very big problem in Armenia.

By international experience, if a person discovers that their gender is different from their sex assigned at birth, they should first turn to a psychologist, and then to the appropriate doctors, who can perform the complex and risky gender affirming surgery.

The whole process takes years in order not to harm

the mental and physical health of the person. But the reality in Armenia is different.

The trans * person cannot apply for resolution of the issue troubling them, as there are no legal regulations in this field, therefore there are no qualified specialists to take care of this issue.

Even in the case of a simple nose job, the patient is prepared mentally and physically, and if there is a slight risk that the result will not meet expectations in the future, many doctors postpone the operation. All this is done only for a cosmetic surgery while gender affirming surgery is a rather complicated process, on which the person's future full life depends. Unfortunately, Armenia does not even think about the solution to this problem, as it ignores even the existence of the problem and here the trans* people cannot legally undergo gender affirming procedures, the reason for which is the legislative regulations, this leads to the fact that the surgeries are performed secretly or abroad. However, not all of them can afford to have surgery abroad, as it requires a lot of money. So, why does the problem of gender reassignment not get proper solutions in

Armenia? We talked about this issue with transgender woman Monica Sarkisyan, who completed a series of gender affirming surgeries in March 2020, with Marine Stepanyan (name changed at her will), a transgender woman who wants to have a gender affirming surgery and with lawyer Anahit Mkrtchyan. Differences from the accepted norms appear in the person mostly since childhood. At an early age, a child has no idea what is happening to him when his interests do not match the interests of the people of his gender. And the parents, as the bearers of the public opinion, become the “victims of shame” and try to correct that “mistake” as soon as possible. Seeing no other way, they begin to put pressure on the fragile psychology of the child. Both Monica and Marine mention that they have felt like strangers in their own bodies since they were children and they both started thinking about changing their sex at the age of 17-18. And when they tried to talk about their gender identity at home, both of them were thrown out of the house as a result. This is the first problem that a transgender person faces alone. Later the problems only increase. Monica started taking contraceptives containing female hormones at the age of 18. “There is no endocrinologist in Armenia that would specialize on the issues of Trans * people. We cannot take hormones specifically for Trans* people, because they simply do not exist in Armenia. “And the doctor, prescribing substitute drugs, does not bear any legal responsibility,” she says.

Defense lawyer Anahit Mkrtchyan confirms this, adding that there is no evidence in medical institutions that Trans * people take

such drugs, therefore they are deprived of further protection, although a reference can be made to the other rights of a person under the Constitution. Speaking about this issue, transgender woman Marine notes “I have never taken those drugs because I value my health. It’s like a self-harm for me. Yes; I want to be a woman, but a healthy one! “ Let’s say, a person undergoing a “hormone therapy” wants to have gender affirming surgery as well. Anahit Mkrtchyan says that there is a ban on gender affirming procedures in Armenia and adds that the RA Civil Registry Office states that changes regarding gender can be made in the birth certificate. “That is, they envisage that such thing may happen, but there is also a constitutional ban.” Are these double standards or omissions based on the invisibility of Trans * people? In this context, Marine also adds that the state accepts the views of the World Health Organization on everything except the recommendations on the health of Trans* people. Steps are taken by NGOs dealing with the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups for the solution to this issue. Anahit Mkrtchyan mentions that New Generation Humanitarian NGO has developed a draft law on the Legal Recognition of a person’s gender identity. Shushan Khnkoyan, lawyer of New Generation Humanitarian NGO, adds that the draft law was sent to the RA Ministries of Health and of Justice to provide a relevant professional conclusion. The NGO received an answer from the RA Ministry of Health, according to which the law draft cannot subject to discussion. The Ministry of Justice informed that the draft law may be discussed by the ministry in the context of relevant legislative changes.

As a result, we have what we have. Steps are taken to change the situation; however they don't even receive attention. But can any of us state for sure that one day we won't experience first hand this problem and its consequences proceeding from it? Never Say Never.

MY CHILD IS TRANSGENDER

Mrs. Sarah (the name is changed by her wish) is a 57-year-old woman. She lives in one of the suburbs of the city with her only child, 26-year-old Ella. She is a cook by profession but currently is unemployed due to age discrimination. We are in their rented house which although is not situated in a multistory block however the conditions remind of a dormitory – the bathroom is shared with the other residents in their yard, and there is no water supply system in the house. They are sitting in front of me – Ella – shy and a little strained about the upcoming interview, and her mother is looking at me with her eyes full of delight. At last we have met after several months of distant communication. Mrs. Sarah keeps sending Ella here and there to bring the best treats for their guest and then makes her special ice-cream with



fruits. We are talking in a very warm and friendly atmosphere and enjoying the tastiness made by Mrs. Sarah. She sends Ella for water from the spring outside.

“Dear Anya, I am a mother.” Our conversation starts, “Just go into an animal’s den and try to touch its child. What will the animal do to you? The same way this kid is my child... And I am such a parent, I’m that animal. What!... How!... Why!... I am a mother. I have accepted my child the way she is and I live with her. I have received so many blows, and today I have bent down. The soldiers, God bless them, fight in the battlefield, and I fight in the society, do you understand me? So I protect my own positions here. It’s

been so difficult for me. They’ve spoken so many things about us, they’ve even thrown stones at our roof, I’ve heard the worst words about us...” Ella is a transgender woman. According to statistics Armenia has been among the top three homophobic European countries for already many years, from time to time giving up its place to Turkey and Azerbaijan. And the more homophobic is the society, the more difficult it is for LGBTI people to get love and care even from their own families. This is the reason that people belonging to gender and sexual diversity often hide their sexual orientation and gender identity from their family and society. In many cases when parents learn about their child’s identity, they renounce him and leave without home. Particularly now in the chaotic situation caused by

COVID-19, LGBTI people have become even more vulnerable in this context. But even in exceptional cases when the parents finally find the strength to accept and love their child, they often cannot do it openly in front of the society and relatives. But Ella's and Mrs. Sarah's story is different.

It was in 2014 when Ella completed her compulsory military service and finally told her mother that she felt herself a woman. They had quarrelled. And Ella left a note so that her mother could see and read the truth, then she went out of the house. But her mother had felt it a long time before. Still in childhood, Ella used to play with dolls and wear women's dresses. "Even in the old photos you can feel her femininity from her stance," states Mrs. Sarah. When Ella lived with the rest of her family, they, of course, had questions for example about her long hair but Ella herself told them about her identity. "Nobody accepted her in the family but I opposed all of them. I was telling

them "don't make me renounce my child". Now I may have become a speck in everybody's eyes for what I did but I have chosen my child", says Mrs. Sarah and points out the conditions of their house where there is no water supply and sewage, and then she adds, "but it's okay." Ella tells that only she was thrown out of the house but her mother also left the house to be by her child's side. "It's just that Grandma decided that way, that it is her house and I must leave it. But she's been a good Grandma, it's just the lack of information that makes people think that we BECOME like that. So that's why they won't accept it." And Mrs. Sarah tells that now despite that they have been living far from home for already six years, however, whenever she visits her mother, the latter sends some of her cooked dinner for Ella as well. "Today the most important support is my mom, if she's by my side nothing else bothers me", says Ella. In general, the recent six years have been difficult for Ella and Mrs. Sarah living in the above-described conditions, left

without a job and frequently harassed by the society. They are waiting for the day when they will have a chance for Ella to undergo gender-affirming surgeries. But before it could happen, Ella cannot find the simplest job due to the discrimination based on her gender identity. She walked from Raykom to the Center of the city and to the Third District (names of districts in Yerevan), entered different cafes, left her CV, applied to gas stations and even to Sanitek (waste management company in Armenia) for just any job. Nobody has ever called back. And to my question what she would change in the created situation if she had a chance, Mrs. Sarah answers, "I would change people's way of thinking, I'd change the discrimination, so that they at least do not ignore it. Nowadays there are parents who throw their children out, leave them alone in the streets. I pity those children. I can never imagine a mother whose child is in this situation and she rejects her child. I won't do it as long as I live and whoever doesn't like it, just let them stay away from me. I'm speaking about all children like her. I would like that there is a project within which mothers in such a situation could gather around a table and just look at one another's faces to understand who thinks what and

who wants what from whom... Wouldn't it be better if the mother was by her child's side, and tried to understand her child... I also got angry, became frustrated, didn't understand it but in the end when I put my head on the pillow every night, I thought how long I should nag at this child. Is she going to change? Of course not. She won't change. I gave birth to this child. She was born like that. Dear Anya, I was like a soldier in a battlefield; I should constantly beware that bullets did not hit us. But I can reject her only when dying. Only when I am no longer here. But in the meantime I will be by her side."

Anya Hayrapetyan

LEGAL VIDEO TRAININGS #42



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Monthly magazine "Along with Time" contains comprehensive description of "New Generation" Humanitarian NGO's activities during the given month.

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