



TEACHER ATTITUDES  
TOWARD **SEXUAL ORIENTATION**  
& **GENDER DIVERSITY**  
in the northern part of Cyprus

Queer Cyprus Association  
August 2023



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# TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD SEXUAL ORIENTATION & GENDER DIVERSITY in the northern part of Cyprus

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## ABOUT ASSOCIATION

### Queer Cyprus Association

Queer Cyprus is a civil society organization that started out as the “Initiative Against Homophobia” in 2007 to change sodomy legal texts in the northern part of Cyprus and to raise awareness on the rights and freedoms of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex people. In 2012, we changed our name to Queer Cyprus Association. Queer Cyprus imagines a world where no one is subject to discrimination on grounds of nationality, language, religion or belief, disability, race, colour, ethnicity age., sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. Therefore, Queer Cyprus embraces diversity and adopts feminist, anti-militarist, ecologist and veganist values. Queer Cyprus works in various areas such as law, education, psychology, health with a view to ensure equal and effective access of LGBTI+s’ to human rights in cooperation with local and international organizations.



## ABOUT THE PROJECT

### Rainbow Project

The Rainbow Project is funded by the European Union under the Cypriot Civil Society in Action VII Grant Scheme and implemented by the Queer Cyprus Association, from April 2022 until October 2024.

The project aims to increase LGBTI+ inclusiveness in the education and health sectors in the northern part of Cyprus. With the support of relevant stakeholders, the Rainbow Project aims to ensure that LGBTI+s’ rights to education and health are safeguarded, and community members’ access to these rights are guaranteed. The activities planned under the project include surveys to map the attitude of educators and health workers towards LGBTI+s, gap analysis of the school curriculums, focus group meetings with experts, developing modules for LGBTI+ inclusive education, round table discussions, capacity building trainings for trainers in the education and health sectors, trainings conducted by trained trainers in health and education sectors, advocacy visits to relevant stakeholders, in-kind support to individuals and organisations to implement rights-based activities on LGBTI+ issues through Rainbow Fund, informative brochures, billboards, and promotional materials and seminars on education and health.

The project also aims to contribute to increasing the diversity of the Queer Cyprus Association’s supporters through community-building activities such as focus group meetings, socialising events, local and international networking events and thematic discussions. Moreover, free social welfare services are also provided under the scope of this project.



## PREFACE

Queer Cyprus Association (QCA) is a non-governmental organization working to end discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics. QCA continuously strives to ensure LGBTI+s have equal access to human rights in the northern part of Cyprus. Thanks to its efforts, a number of significant steps have been taken toward this goal, however a number of hurdles still exist, particularly with regard to certain institutions the education and health care systems being the most prominent.

The Rainbow Project project was undertaken with the aim of increasing LGBTI+ inclusivity in both education and healthcare sectors in the northern part of Cyprus. We therefore conducted extensive surveys with teachers and health care professionals to understand their attitudes and myth endorsement toward the LGBTI+ community. By doing so we hope to further develop LGBTI+ inclusive curriculums for both sectors on the road to equality and inclusivity.

### On behalf of Queer Cyprus Association,

Shenel Husnu Raman

Ziba Sertbay

Kaan Berkan

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## LIST OF SYMBOLS / ABBREVIATIONS

**LGBTI+:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersexes and Pluses

**LGBTQ:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersexes and Queer

**LGB:** Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual

**CSO:** Civil Society Organization

**YRBS:** Youth Risk Behavior Survey

**CDC:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**GLSEN:** Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Educational Network



# INTRODUCTION



# 1 Introduction

**Sexual orientation** refers to a person's romantic and/or sexual attraction to another person. Sexual orientation has been typically categorized to include attraction to members of one's own gender (**gay or lesbians**), attraction to members of the other gender (**heterosexuals**), and attraction to members of other genders (**bisexuals**). Some people might identify as **'queer'** in terms of their sexual orientation, which means they define their sexual orientation outside of the gender binary of **'male'** and **'female'** only. While these categories continue to be widely used, research suggests that sexual orientation can actually occur on a continuum and not be defined by such clear categories (APA, 2012).

**Gender identity** refers to one's sense of self as male, female or nonbinary or none of these specific categories. When one's gender identity and assigned gender at birth are not congruent, the individual may identify as nonbinary or along the transgender spectrum (APA, 2012).

**LGBTI+** stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and other sexual orientations or gender identities.

## 1.1 Rainbow Project – Aims and Goals

The Rainbow Project was launched in April 2022 by Queer Cyprus Association with the goal of increasing LGBTI+ inclusivity in both education and health care sectors in the northern part of Cyprus. The project is funded by the European Union under the Cypriot Civil Society in Action VII Grant Scheme and is planned to run for two and half years and includes a number of activities including expert focus groups meetings and module development for LGBTI+ inclusive education, to name a few.

As part of the project one goal was to assess attitudes toward the LGBTI+ community among teachers and health care professionals in the northern part of Cyprus. This report will include data obtained from teachers alone. The findings will then be utilized toward developing educational material and organising training sessions designed specifically to meet the needs of teachers in schools in the northern part of Cyprus.

## 1.2 Negative Attitudes Toward LGBTI+s in the northern part of Cyprus

Research conducted in the northern part of Cyprus has shown that attitudes toward the LGBTI+ community is mostly negative (Husnu, 2021) with high levels of homophobia and transphobia (Uluboy & Husnu, 2020). In a recent study conducted by Queer Cyprus Association (QCA) assessing the experiences of LGBTI+s in the northern part of Cyprus (Erzeybek & Uluçaylı, 2021), two areas in which LGBTI+ prejudice is particularly apparent was that of education and health. It is due to this finding that the Rainbow Project was formulated in order to tackle such biases by teachers and health professionals.

## 1.3 Teachers Attitudes Toward LGBTI+s

School settings play a critical role in LGBTI+s' victimization and protection (D'Augelli et al., 2002; Ryan & Rivers, 2003). Schools are where young people spend most of their time. Attending schools without protective policies have been linked to negative consequences for the well-being of sexual minority youth. Therefore, the school climate can be significant for LGBTI+ youths' mental health (Kosciw, 2004; Varjas et al., 2008; Walls et al., 2010). Extensive research shows that sexual orientation-and gender-identity based victimization is associated with adverse mental health outcomes such as increased depressive symptomology and suicidal ideation (D'Augelli et al., 2002). Similarly, trans students who experience harassment at school and who have teachers using inappropriate language such as incorrect names, or pronouns report poorer academic outcomes, increased absenteeism as well as truancy and higher likelihood of dropout (Jones et al. 2016; Smith et al. 2014).

According to the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) LGB students have reported experiencing physical bullying on school grounds in the last 12 months almost double the amount compared to their heterosexual counterparts (33 vs. 17%). LGBTI+ youth are also more likely to report weapon-related violence or threats at school. Similarly, LGBTI+ youth report increased truancy due to lower feelings of safety compared to heterosexual students. Relatedly, a 2017 report by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Educational Network (GLSEN) reported approximately 70% of sexual minority students stated they were verbally harassed, 28% indicated that they were physically harassed at school due to their sexual orientation; whereas 59% reported verbal harassment and 24% physical harassment at school due to gender expression.

LGBTI+ based victimization is higher in schools where teachers lack the training or interest in LGBTI+ issues (Mishna et al. 2009; O'Connell et al. 2010; Warwick et al. 2001). Teachers may often be aware of such violence against LGBTI+ however their negative attitudes, personal views or lack of willingness may prevent them from intervening (Meyer et al., 2014; Warwick et al., 2001). Conversely, in schools where teachers play a supportive role, LGBTI+ students report feeling safer, more connected at school and report lesser bullying (McGuire et al., 2010). These findings highlight the importance of teachers' attitudes as well as trainings directed at teachers aimed at capacity increase in recognizing LGBTI+ bullying and victimization and providing them with effective tools to intervene.

## 1.4 Current Research

To assess teachers' attitudes toward LGBTI+s in the northern part of Cyprus, a number of reliable and valid questionnaires were utilized. A general measure of attitudes toward LGBTI+ (Wright et al., 1997) and feelings thermometer (Esses et al., 1993) were used. We also included questions on myths regarding LGBTI+s as an indication of knowledge (Mudrey & Medina-Adams, 2006) as well as items specifically designated to the school climate (Taylor et al., 2016). Similarly, knowledge regarding risk factors of LGBTI+ stigmatization was assessed (Savage et al., 2004; Smith-Millman et al., 2019). Finally, questions regarding demographic characteristics and past training and experience on LGBTI+ issues were questioned. All the scales were found to have robust psychometric properties.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Each scale used was analyzed for reliability and found to have high Cronbach Alpha coefficients which are indices of a psychometrically sound assessment tool.












**SAMPLE**



## 2 Sample

A total of **N=402** participants who are teachers currently employed at both public and private schools in the northern part of Cyprus completed the survey. They were a representative sample based on the distribution of population in the northern part of Cyprus from all tertiary levels of education- primary; secondary/middle and high school. The data was collected by a consultancy and research center over a period of 3 months during the last months of 2022. The demographic characteristics of participants can be seen in **Table 1**. None of our participants identified as non-binary or trans, therefore the remainder of the report will refer to the binary division of female and male.<sup>2</sup>

**TABLE 1: Demographic Characteristics of Sample**

	PROPERTIES	N (%)
	<b>Age, years</b>	22-64 years Mean= 39.9 SD=9.17
	<b>Gender</b>	Female Male Non-specified
	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Heterosexual Lesbian/Gay Bisexual Asexual Prefer not to answer
	<b>Nationality</b>	Turkish Cypriot Turkish Dual Turkish Cypriot & Turkish Other
	<b>Educational Background</b>	High School BSc MSc PhD Other
	<b>Level of Education Taught</b>	Primary school Middle school High school
	<b>Okul Türü</b>	Özel Kamu
	<b>Region Taught</b>	Nicosia Famagusta Kyrenia Morphou/Güzelyurt Trikomo/İskele Lefka/Lefke
	<b>Residency</b>	Urban Rural

<sup>2</sup> A number of scales were used to measure the attitudes, myth endorsement and knowledge of teachers. Each scale used was analyzed for reliability and found to have high Cronbach Alpha coefficients which are indices of a psychometrically sound assessment tool.

<sup>3</sup> Due to an outdated clause in the "Teacher's law" in the northern part of Cyprus, high school graduates working at a school for 4 years who then complete intensive pedagogy training are allowed to work at schools. Only a minority of such teachers exist today.



# RESEARCH FINDINGS



## 3 Research Findings

### 3.1 General Findings of Teachers Regarding LGBTI+

#### 3.1.1 Knowledge Regarding LGBTI+

Teachers were initially asked whether they knew what the acronym of LGBTI+ stood for to which 335/403 (83.1%) said they did, 38 said they did not (9.4%) and 30 (7.4%) said they were unsure as to its meaning. As can be seen below, the majority of teachers were familiar with the acronym.

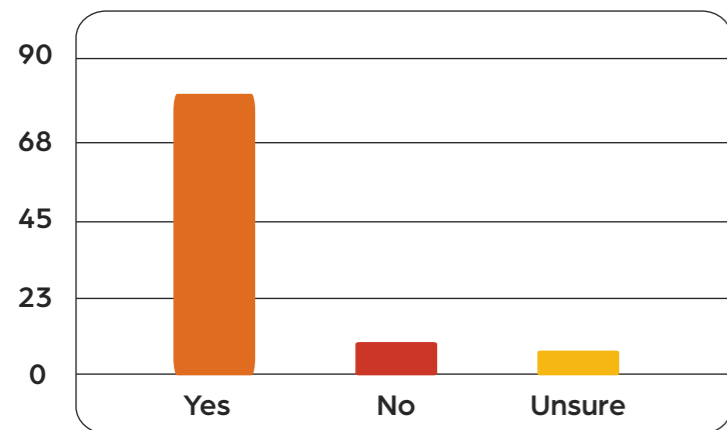


Figure 1: Percentage of teachers who state knowing the acronym of LGBTI+

With regards to the meaning of *'intersex'* the majority of teachers knew the correct definition (31%), however 28.5% believed it meant 'having both genitalia' and 7.9% believed it equated to homosexuality. An additional 32.5% stated that they did not know the meaning of being *'intersex'*. Teachers were next asked whether *'sexual orientation'* *'gender identity'* and *'sex characteristics'* were essentially synonymous or different terms. It transpired that 66% believed they were *'different, and they are not necessarily related nor do necessarily affect/imply certain specific development of the other ones'* whereas 24.1% agreed that they were *'synonyms as they all refer to a person's specific set of characteristics'*. Close to 10%, however, indicated being unsure. Finally, teachers were tested regarding their knowledge on relevant "criminal code" amendments in the northern part of Cyprus and asked whether they thought that *'sexual intercourse between people of the same gender is "illegal" according to the legal texts in the northern part of Cyprus'* to which 24.3% replied that it was "illegal", 41% stated that it wasn't and a further 34.7% did not know the answer. As can be seen below a significant proportion of teachers were uninformed regarding the legal context. Furthermore, teachers were also questioned whether they were aware of an NGO working for LGBTI+ rights, to which 57% replied positively, and 43% negatively.

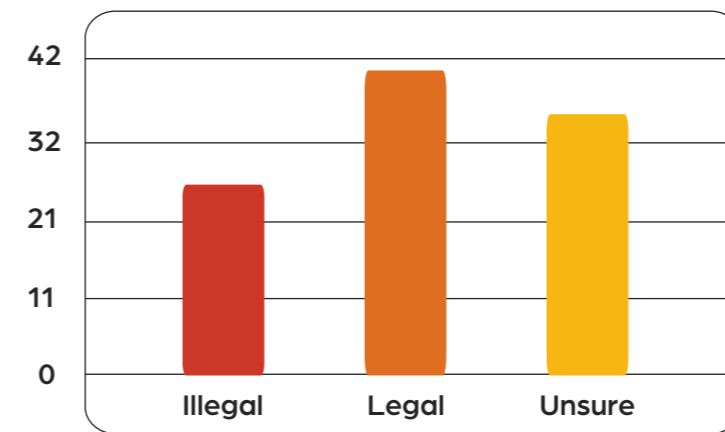


Figure 2: Percentages on knowledge of change in "criminal code" regarding sexual intercourse between consenting adults of the same sex

Having completed these preliminary knowledge questions participants were then given clear instructions regarding the definitions of LGBTI+ so that they could complete the remaining questions with the correct definitions in mind.

#### 3.1.2 Myths Regarding LGBTI+s

To assess myth endorsement a number of questions such as *'There is a good chance of changing homosexual persons into heterosexual men and women'* and *'A person becomes a homosexual (develops a homosexual orientation) because he/she chooses to do so'* were included. Additional questions pertaining to the context of the northern part of Cyprus were included such as *'Being LGBTI+ is a Western phenomenon'* and *'Many young people's gender identity and sexual orientation is influenced by Western TV shows like those shown on Netflix'*. On a scale of **1 (Strongly disagree)** to **5 (Strongly agree)** teachers scored an average of **2.25**, showing low myth endorsement.

A selection of items from the scale is presented below in order to show the distribution of views on critical items, low scores indicate disagreement whereas high scores indicate agreement with the question. These results demonstrate that teachers can often distinguish between common false assumptions and true/scientific knowledge. However, some false beliefs prevail such as the existence of heterosexual roles in same-sex relationships. Another cautionary finding is the higher percentage of teachers who indicated being 'undecided' on whether sexual orientation can be changed via conversion therapy.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

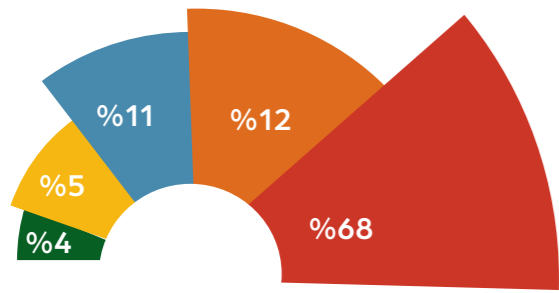


Figure 3: LGBTI+ is a Western Phenomenon

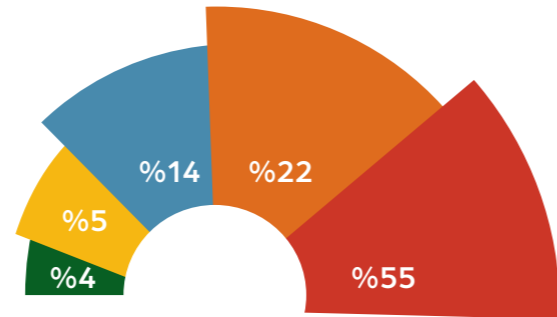


Figure 4: Pride demonstrations encourage people to become LGBTI+.

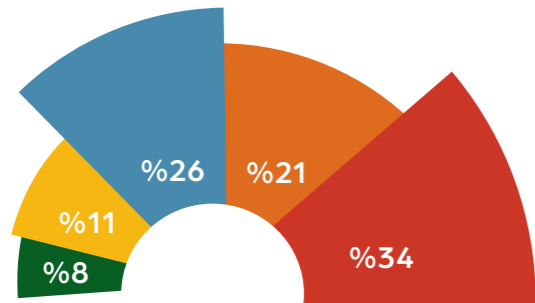


Figure 5: Sexual Orientation can be changed with conversion therapy.

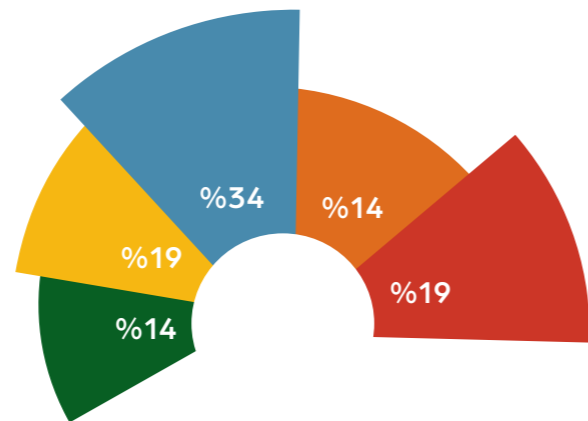


Figure 6: In gay relationships one partner plays the role of woman and the other man.

Figure 3, 4, 5 ve 6: Some results on myths regarding LGBTI+s.

### 3.1.3 Attitudes Toward LGBTI+s Within the Education Setting

Teachers were asked specific questions regarding LGBTI+ issues within the school climate, these included items such as *'I feel comfortable discussing LGBTI+ issues with my students'* and *'I approve of LGBTI+ inclusive education'*. Once again, a total score was obtained based on the 10 items on a scale 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). The teachers obtained an average score of 3.82 showing more positive than negative attitudes toward LGBTI+ issues within the school context.

Once again a few select items have been provided below for further analysis. As can be seen in Figure 7 there is on average a balance in terms of feelings of comfort vs. discomfort when discussing LGBTI+ issues with students.

Very comfortable Comfortable Neither Uncomfortable Very uncomfortable

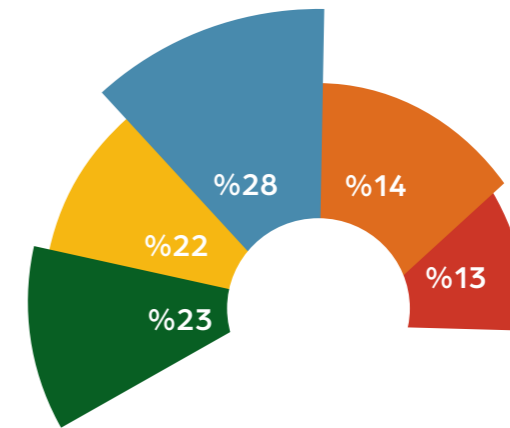


Figure 7: Percentage of teachers who feel comfortable vs. uncomfortable discussing LGBTI+ issues with their students

Similarly, a large proportion of teachers report being supportive of LGBTI+ inclusive education:

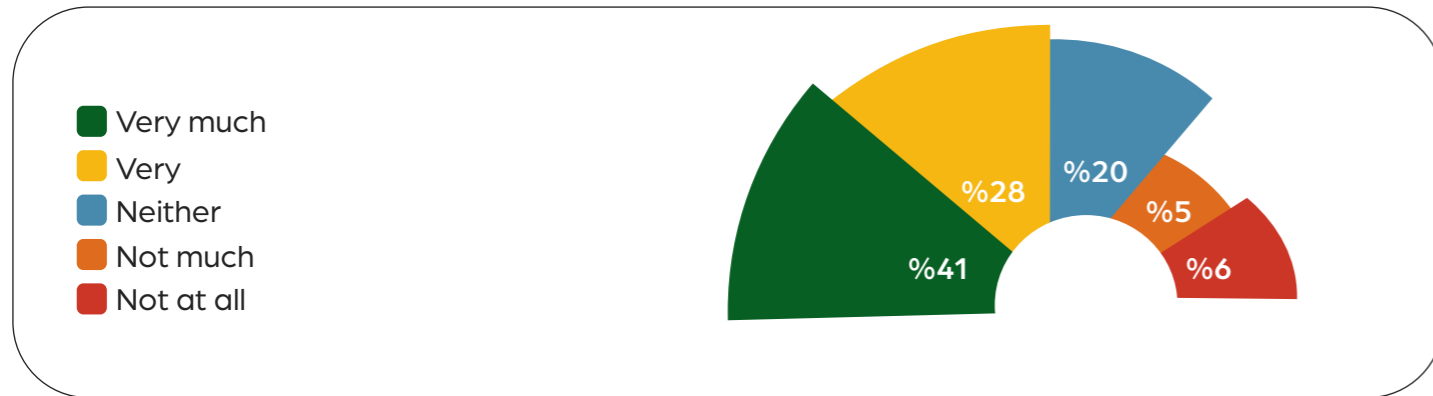


Figure 8: Percentage of teachers supportive of LGBTI+ inclusive education

As can be seen below, teachers report being significantly more supportive than non-supportive of their students if they choose to 'come out'.

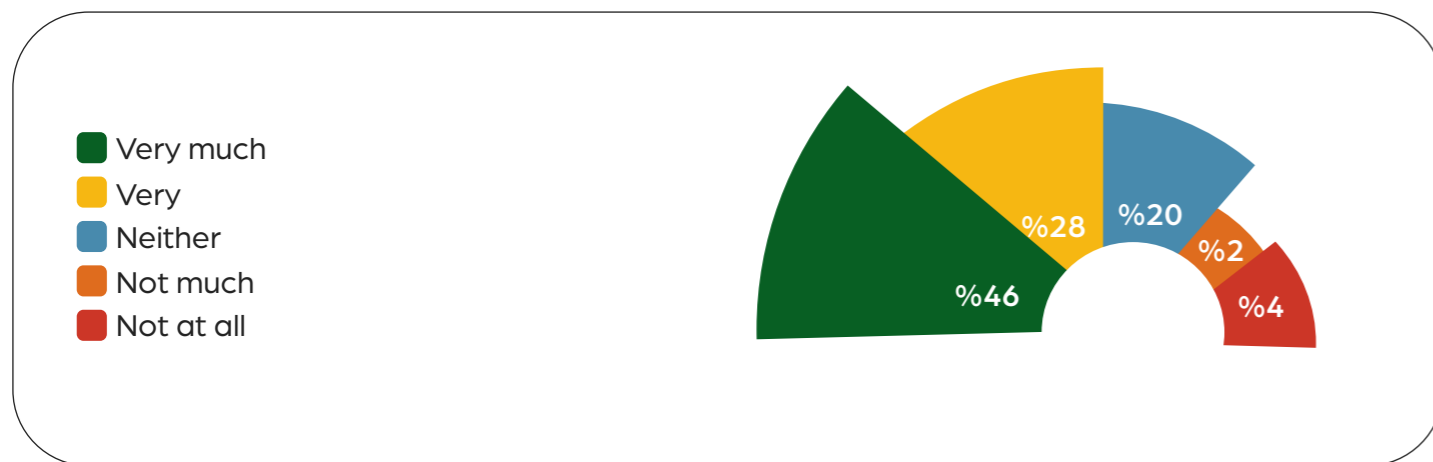


Figure 9: Percentage of teachers supporting LGBTI+ students if they choose to come out

### 3.1.4 Knowledge of Risk Factors for LGBTI+s

Teachers were also questioned regarding their knowledge of risk factors for stigmatization. These included items assessing whether they believed that LGBTI+ students were more (or less) likely to experience depression, anxiety, truancy, drop-out, etc. than their heterosexual counterparts. Teachers stated LGBTI+ were on average **3.85/5** likely, whereby **1 (unlikely)** and **5 (more likely)**, to have such experiences, suggesting they were more inclined to believing LGBTI+ were more likely to experience these risk factors. However, as can be seen below in the charts, teachers were more inclined to believe that mental health risk factors (*e.g., depression and anxiety*) were more prominent than school-related risk factors such as absenteeism or lower grades, suggesting the need for more extensive training in this area.

More likely   Likelly   Neither unlikely nor likely   Less likely   Unlikely

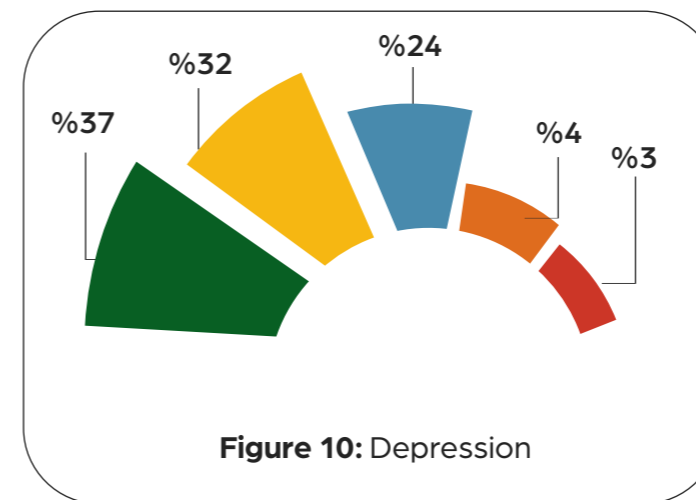


Figure 10: Depression

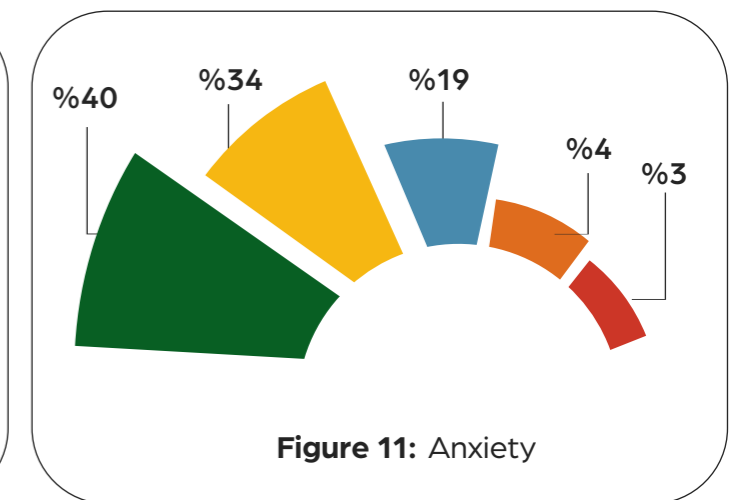


Figure 11: Anxiety

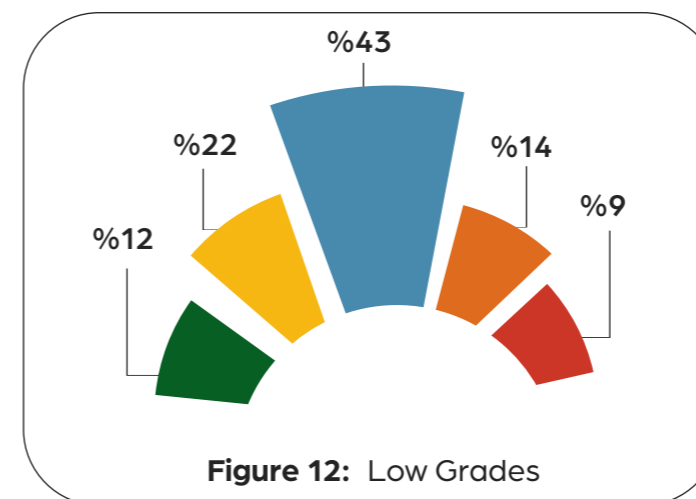


Figure 12: Low Grades

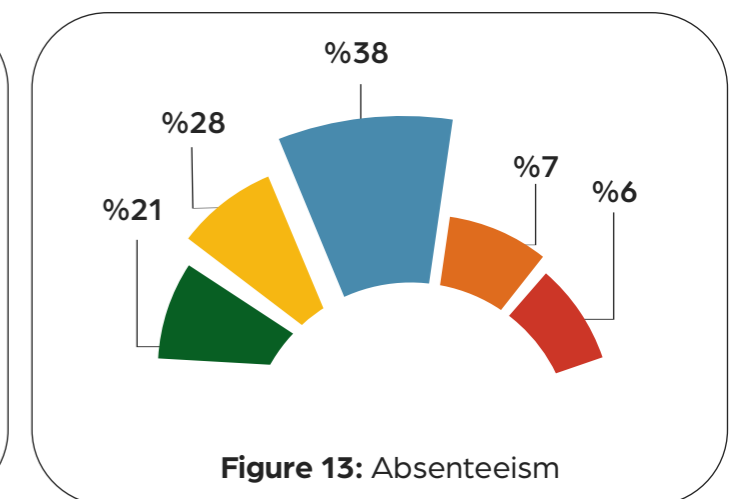


Figure 13: Absenteeism

Figure 10, 11, 12 ve 13: Some results regarding knowledge of risk factors for LGBTI+s

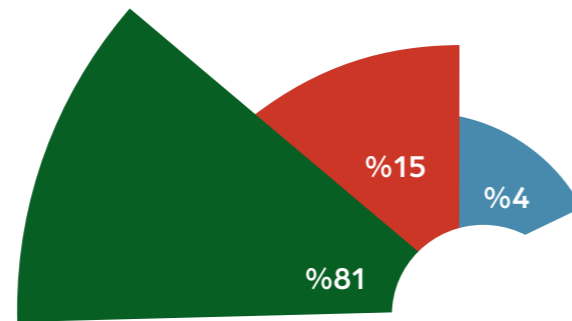
Teachers were also asked 4 dichotomous questions (*did you know- yes? no? can't answer*) regarding LGBTI+ risk factors. It included questions such as 'Did you know: Lesbian or male gay-teenagers are forced to leave their homes due to disclosure of, or conflicts over, their sexual orientation.' The highest points that could be obtained on the scale was 4/4. Out of the participants 57.3% scored the highest points, showing knowledge of LGBTI+-specific risk factors. A smaller percentage of 15% scored between 0-1 points showing no knowledge on risk factors. Once again, surprisingly teachers were less aware of school related risk factors than mental health factors:



**Did you know?**

Lesbian or gay male teenager is forced to leave home due to disclosure of, or conflicts over, their sexual orientation.

- Yes
- Prefer not to reply
- No



**Did you know?**

LGBTI+ are more likely to drop out of high school as a result of academic, personal, and/or social challenges associated with their sexual orientation.

- Yes
- Prefer not to answer
- No

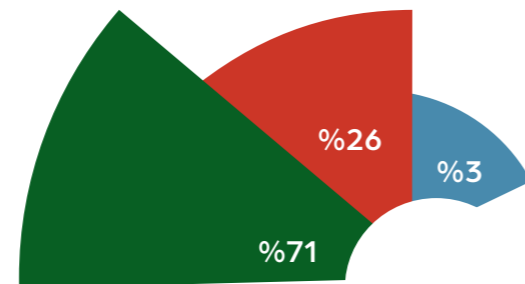


Figure 14 ve 15: Some results regarding school related risk factor

**3.1.5 General Attitudes and Emotions Toward LGBTI+s**

To assess more general attitudes, we benefited from a common measure used in research, asking participants about general feelings toward the LGBTI+ community as **cold-warm; friendly-hostile; envious-disgusted**; etc. We found a mean score of **3.80** indicative of more positive as opposed to negative general attitudes.



Additionally, a single item called the '*feeling thermometer*' was used to ask participants to express their overall feelings and attitudes towards LGBTI+s with the analogy of a thermometer in which **0°** indicates **the coldest (negative)** attitudes to **100°** which refers to **the hottest (positive)** attitudes and feelings, with **10°** increments. On average participants rated **69°** which is once again more on the positive side of the scale. It's noted that **10%** of the sample were on the '**colder**' side of the thermometer.

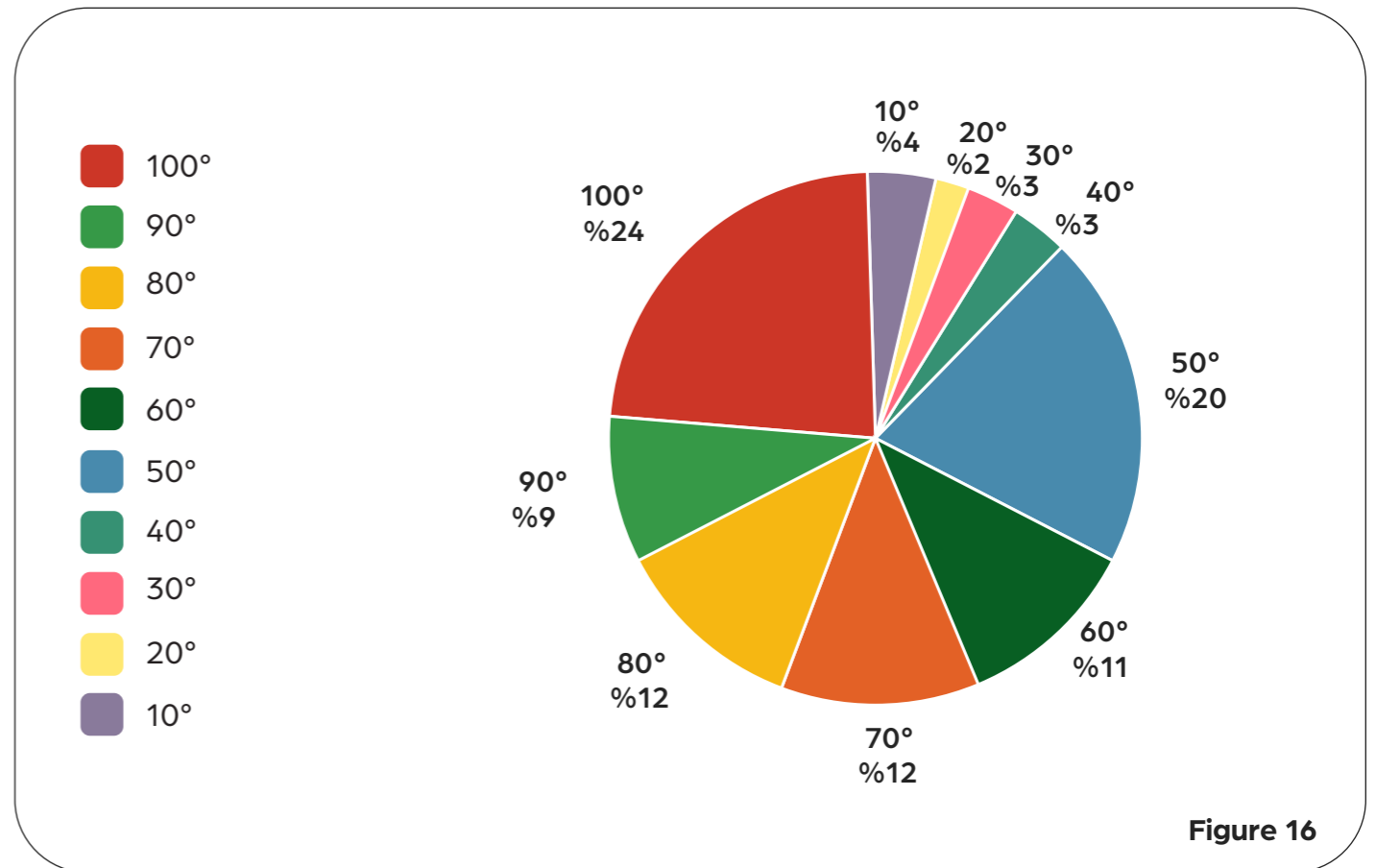
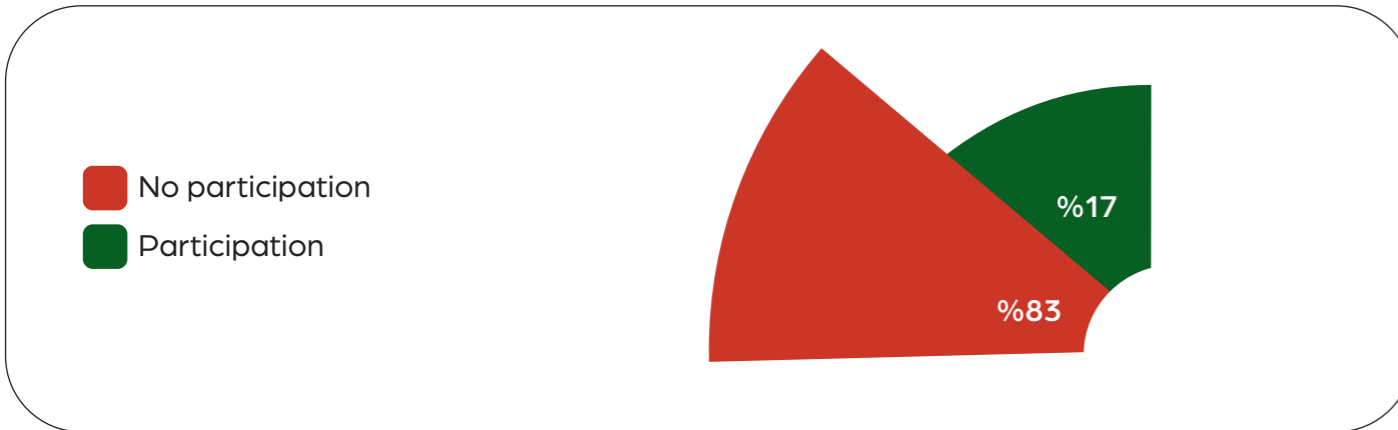


Figure 16

Figure 16: Percentages on the 'feelings thermometer' regarding LGBTI+'s, 0° (cold) – 100° (hot)

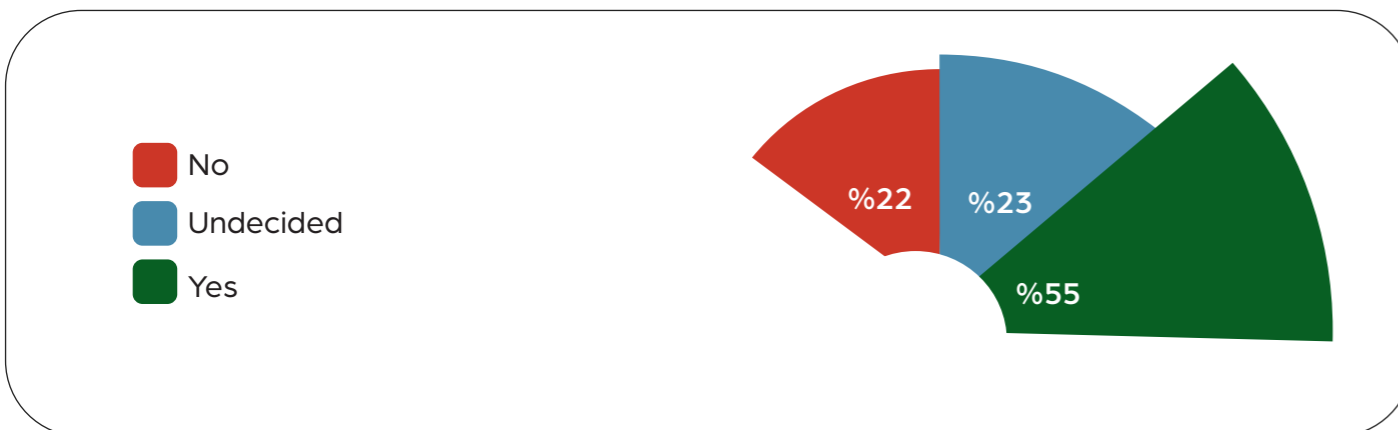
### 3.1.6 Training Regarding LGBTI+s

83.4% of the teachers reported having never participated in any training on LGBTI+ issues. Out of the 16.6% who had previous training experience, indicated participating in trainings via Queer Cyprus Association (7%), as part of their own training (3.2%) or via the teachers' trade unions (2.7%). Nine participants (2.2%) reported that they were taught that being an LGBTI+ was considered to be a form of illness and against morality.



**Figure 17:** Percentage of teachers who participated in LGBTI+ training

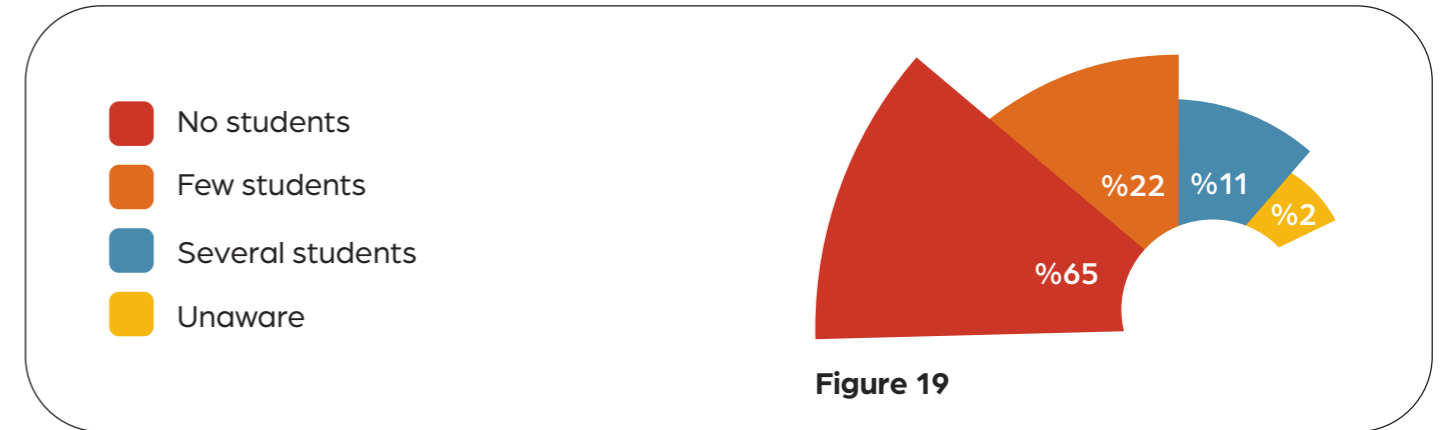
Teachers were asked whether they were interested in being trained on LGBTI+ issues, on a scale of **1 (not at all)** to **5 (most definitely)** the mean score was **3.46**, showing more than average interest in receiving training. Only 22.1% answered 'not at all' and 'not much' whereas 54.5% responded as 'mostly' and 'most definitely' (approx. 23% were undecided). A follow up question inquired the extent to which they thought knowledge on LGBTI+ issues was imperative for teachers; they mostly agreed with this (**3.86/5.00**) such that 70% 'agreed' and 'definitely agreed' whereas 22% did not think they needed to be aware of LGBTI+ topics as a teacher. Similarly, 78% believed their fellow teachers should also be aware of these matters.



**Figure 18:** Percentage of teachers who would like to participate in LGBTI+ trainings

### 3.1.7 Experience with LGBTI+ Students

The majority (60%) of participants reported that none of their students identified as LGBTI+ followed by an additional 20% who said a few students did. 10% reported having no knowledge of this and only 2% of teachers reported being aware of lots of students who identify as LGBTI+.



**Figure 19:** Teacher perceptions of number of LGBTI+ students in their school

**Figure 19:** Teacher perceptions of number of LGBTI+ students in their school

A more general question on their own contact with LGBTI+s (not necessarily as students) was inquired and once again, the majority of teachers reported low levels of contact with LGBTI+s with 30% knowing none or only one LGBTI+ person and only 23% knowing more than about ten LGBTI+ persons.

Intervening in cases of bullying and victimization is a key issue and therefore teachers were asked whether they would intervene if they were to witness a case of an LGBTI+ person being discriminated or stigmatized in their workplace. The majority of teachers (78.5%) agreed they would 'most likely' and 'most definitely intervene' whereas 5.5% stated they would not.

### 3.2 Predictors of Teachers' Attitudes Toward LGBTI+s

PREDICTORS	SIGNIFICANCE	EFFECT
Gender	Yes	Males more negative than females
Education	No	No difference in educational attainment
Nationality	No	No difference between national groups
Residency	No	No difference between urban or rural, or location of school
Level Taught	No	No difference between primary vs. secondary vs. high school education level
Age	Yes	Older age more negative than younger
Year of Graduation	Yes	More recent graduates more positive than earlier
Type of School	Yes	Public schools more positive than private
Training and Education	Yes	Training improves attitudes

**Table 2:** Summary of findings

In line with the previous findings worldwide, we found that male teachers on average had more negative attitudes and feelings toward LGBTI+s than female teachers. This was also the case with regards to LGBTI+s within the education domain. No significant difference was found with regards to myth endorsement or knowledge regarding the risk factors for LGBTI+s. As age increased, myth endorsement and negative attitudes regarding LGBTI+s within education also increased. Those older were also more likely to report not wanting to receive training on LGBTI+ issues. Similar to age, those teachers who have graduated more recently had less myth endorsement. Individuals younger in age are more likely to have more liberal attitudes, including those pertaining to sexual orientation and gender identity.

It was found that teachers serving at public schools were more positive in their attitudes, were less likely to endorse myths and had better knowledge pertaining to LGBTI+ issues in comparison to those teachers working at private schools. This finding might be explained by training opportunities on LGBTI+ issues being more available for those teachers employed in public rather than private schools by trade unions and local bodies.

We found that those teachers who had received training regarding LGBTI+ issues reported more positive attitudes in general and were less likely to endorse myths regarding LGBTI+s. Similarly, knowledge regarding LGBTI+ issues and awareness of risk factors for stigmatization were found to be negatively correlated with myth endorsement, such that the higher the knowledge, the less teachers believed in the false myths concerning LGBTI+s. These findings highlight the importance of raising awareness of and providing trainings to teachers on LGBTI+ topics.

In summary, a number of variables played an important role in this finding; these include being female, being younger in age, being a relatively newer graduate, working at a public school, receiving prior training in LGBTI+ issues and consequently, having higher knowledge on LGBTI+ issues.

A key finding, we would like to highlight, is the role of LGBTI+ training and awareness. Prior research has found that LGBTI+ students suffer higher mental health and school-based risk factors when teachers lack training in LGBTI+ issues. Although most teachers were aware of the mental health consequences of discrimination and victimization (*including depression and anxiety*), they were less aware of the school-based consequences such as increased truancy and drop out. The multifaceted experiences of sexual minority youth need to be further explained to teachers, so they have a better and thorough understanding of their LGBTI+ students and the challenges they may encounter. Sexual minority students who have teachers interested and well-informed on LGBTI+ matters, feel safer and more protected, and they are more likely to thrive in contexts of support and inclusivity. From our findings we see that teachers particularly those who are older in age and hence graduated earlier than their counterparts, also those in private schools are the most in need of such trainings. The findings also show how such trainings can tackle false myths and wrong assumptions regarding the LGBTI+ community. Endorsing myths serve to reinforce negative attitudes toward LGBTI+s as well as incorrect beliefs about the origin of sexuality and its malleability. Correct knowledge empowers teachers and in turn their students as it better guides them in their understanding and support of sexual minority youth against likely risk factors.



# IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS



## 4 Implications and Suggestions

The aim of the report was to understand the attitudes, knowledge and myth endorsement of teachers at three levels of education: “primary-middle/secondary and high-school” in the northern part of Cyprus. As mentioned in research findings and discussion, the findings generally show that teachers hold relatively more positive than negative attitudes. However, it should be noted that three out of ten teachers do not have sufficient knowledge of LGBTI+ terminology, while over half were not aware of “legal changes” which decriminalized homosexuality. On the other hand, almost half of the participants do not have clear knowledge that sexual orientation cannot be changed with therapies or encouragement. Finally, almost half of the participants do not feel comfortable talking about LGBTI+ issues, but most encouraging is that more than half of them want to receive training and improve their knowledge. In order to further improve these positive results, to prevent prejudice and discrimination towards LGBTI+s in schools and, to make it sustainable, **LGBTI+ inclusive** policies should be established **in schools**, and existing legal texts should be changed and renewed.

Schools do not implement supportive policies like zero-tolerance to bullying based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and/or sex characteristics, or, have school clubs like gay and straight alliances, having teachers with supportive attitudes that are likely and willing to intervene in bullying cases on school grounds can provide a climate of acceptance of diversity and inclusivity. In line with this issue, it is recommended to that local body responsible for education should renew the curricula that was created based on the binary gender system which contains discriminatory language and no visibility of LGBTI+ families or the human rights of LGBTI+’s. It is important that local body responsible for education regularly include LGBTI+ and gender equality training sessions to the training of teachers, encouraging zero tolerance policies within school regulations and work closely with unions and LGBTI+ civil society organizations based on this topic.

Furthermore, there is no “legislation” prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation in education, and the curriculum taught yet, existing legal texts presume a cisgender binary, and, there are still educational regulations, statutes and legal texts that can potentially lead to discrimination as they utilise terms with unclear boundaries and definitions such as “**national morality**”, “**moral values**” that have traditionally been interpreted to justify violation of the rights of LGBTI+s. Such legal texts need to be modified to be more inclusive and accepting of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Lastly, there exists a “**Gender Equality Department Law**” which aims at ensuring gender equality within education, amongst other areas, and LGBTI+ issues are mentioned in the content of this legal text but unfortunately political will for its implementation is lacking. For this reason, it is essential to both improve existing legal texts and to safeguard their applicability.

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