

Power and community: organizational and cultural LGBT responses against homophobia and promotion of inclusion values.

Eduardo da Silva Alentejo

Library Science Department, Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO),
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

alenteju@gmail.com



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Abstract:

In 2003, Brazil proposed universal resolution against LGBT's discrimination to the United Nations (UN). Only in 2011, UN declared "zero tolerance" against any form of discrimination or violence based on sexual orientation to member countries. Since 90's, Brazilian LGBT community had major influence to develop public policies within society. Brazil took a long journey to reach promotion inclusion goals of Brazilian Program "Brazil without Homophobia". Cultural and Educational highlights can be measured from an overview of public libraries in places where non-governmental LGBT organizations took part with affirmative actions within public and private sectors. This nationwide survey gathers quantitative and qualitative data on 61 LGBT organizations through semi-structured questionnaire. Brazilian NGOs joined the National Civil Program against homophobia and have promoted actions for the right to culture of the LGBT population. Working groups have been created to support the production of cultural goods and formalize massive visibility events affirmation of sexual orientation under a culture of peace. These groups have encouraged the distribution, circulation and access to cultural goods and services from public and private sectors, including libraries. LGBT NGOs stated that public libraries have contributed to the promotion of LGBT citizens for two main reasons: promoting the participation of the homosexual population regarding the use of the collections in development and also support events aimed at LGBT visibility. As one of the consequences, centers of governmental and non-governmental documentation as well as Publishers have expanded their collection to fulfill library's collections and meet needs of LGBT users in the field of education, culture, health, civil rights and social inclusion. Power and community of LGBT organizations have sensitized public libraries under new approaches of public libraries for all against homophobia.

Keywords: LGBTQ, Promoting Inclusion, Partnership with Community Organizations

1 Introduction

Cultural and Educational highlights can be measured from an overview of public libraries in places where non-governmental LGBT organizations took part with affirmative actions within public and private sectors. As part of the Program “Brazil without Homophobia”, NGOs have improved LGBT's visibility and positive actions in the country, among them promotion of inclusion values in cultural context. In this sense, this paper discusses how Brazilian NGOs have contributed to increase cultural and educational inclusion values for LGBT community. What are the main results of such actions in the access to library by LGBT people? This paper aims to analyze organizational and cultural LGBT responses against homophobia through promotion of inclusion values from NGOs activities within cultural sphere. Specifically it aims to analyze them in the context of changes on public libraries in Brazil. According to the Brazilian Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (ABGLT) in Brazil there are 75 NGOs registered as its members and that are engaged in Brazil without Homophobia Program. One of the lines of work of the LGBT movement in Brazil refers to the empowerment and inclusion of LGBT people in cultural projects. These are supported by specific projects that are executed by ABGLT and through affiliated organizations. Brazilian NGOs joined the National Civil Program against homophobia and have promoted actions for the right to culture of the LGBT population. Working groups have been created to support the production of cultural goods and formalize massive visibility events affirmation of sexual orientation under a culture of peace. These groups have encouraged the distribution, circulation and access to cultural goods and services from public and private sectors, including libraries.

2 Background

In the 90s the social vulnerability of homosexuals in conjunction with AIDS required the participation of the state in social and health policies. In the 2000s the political activity of the LGBT population added to its base of operations issues relating to violence and discrimination. This created on government and society spheres visibility police, actions prophylaxis and combat homophobia (Conselho Nacional de Combate à Discriminação, 2004). The ‘Brazil without Homophobia Program’ came exactly with the engagement of the Brazilian state in the context of increasing participation of LGBT NGOs in national politics (Melo, 2013). In 2003, Brazil proposed universal resolution against LGBT's discrimination to the United Nations (UN). Only in 2011, UN declared "zero tolerance" against any form of discrimination or violence based on sexual orientation to member countries. Since 90's, Brazilian LGBT community had major influence to develop public policies within society. Brazil took a long journey to reach promotion inclusion goals of Brazilian Program “Brazil without Homophobia”. Its central aspect is the recognition of the state and its people that sexual rights are human rights (Silva et al, 2005). This also includes the training and inclusion of LGBT people in cultural projects in the country (Associação Brasileira de Lésbicas, Gays, Bissexuais, Travestis e Transsexuais, 2013). The first stage of this research occurred through exploratory study. We observed the growth of projects on the role of the LGBT movement in Brazil within academic participation, for example: Integrated Laboratory for Sexual and Gender Diversity, Policies and Rights of the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). Research projects have been checked within the public higher education which results in theses and dissertations in various fields of knowledge. For this first analysis, we compared the growth of the subject in works deposited in the Digital Library of Thesis and Dissertation (BDTD). Works retrieved about Brazil without Homophobia Program since of 2000s: from 2000 to 2004 no one was found, but from 2005 to 2013 we identified seventeen

works. This growth can be related to visibility actions from LGBT NGOs in the country in the last decade. Yet we could not identify any research about promotion of inclusion values in the library context.

3 Method

This nationwide survey gathers quantitative and qualitative data on 61 LGBT organizations through semi-structured questionnaire. This allowed analyzing the organization's point of view. The answers were classified by two main criteria for analyzing: accessing to cultural goods and also promotion of inclusion values in libraries and within bibliographical production. Most of responses report actions under educational system priority. And regions such as Bahia, Rio de Janeiro e São Paulo included in their answers some actions on visibility and cultural access through educational and cultural instances such as public libraries.

4 Results

In more developed regions, Southeast and Midwest, there is the largest number of LGBT NGOs, respectively: 23 and 21. In the North (3), Northeast (17) and South (6) LGBT NGOs reported more concern about combating homophobia and inclusion of LGBT people in the school environment. However, all responders also state some participation and contribution of librarians from public libraries in the state capitals. LGBT NGOs stated that public libraries have contributed to the promotion of LGBT citizens for two main reasons: promoting the participation of the homosexual population regarding the use of the collections in development and also support events aimed at LGBT visibility. As one of the consequences, centers of governmental and non-governmental documentation as well as Publishers have expanded their collection to fulfill Library's Collections and meet needs of LGBT users in the field of education, culture, health, civil rights and social inclusion. According to Nunes (2007, 11) public libraries assert themselves and act as disseminators of cultural products to all sectors of the population. This means that while the main contents of libraries inevitably reflect the editorial market and the dominant ideological contents in society - the so-called "mainstream" (capitalist, sexist, consumerist, heterosexual), the very concept of public library implies rejection of any censorship and points out to creating spaces for specific products and cultural manifestations of so-called minority cultures. In this sense, one discussion refers to new skills of librarians in Brazil. They are emerging as the main point of access to library services to the LGBT population. Such skills should enable librarians work in this universe of constant change towards social inclusion of LGBT people. There are no Statistical data about LGBT users available. There is more evidence of the program 'Brazil without Homophobia'. Some highlights can be reported, such as the growth of Publishing Houses for LGBT audience and LGBT visibility in public libraries.

4.1 Publishing Houses for LGBT citizens

Wexelbaum (2013) explains that before the Internet, young queer person in USA could learn about LGBT culture by accessing gay or lesbian newspapers usually available in "community" establishments. According to author, "they provided affirming images and stories about LGBT people, and connected us to LGBT-specific news that was not always covered in mainstream papers". Similar to United States, young LGBT people in Brazil could access information from different newspapers and magazine publications within LGBT community. Most of LGBT publications were accessible in places where LGBT people could to meet, in most cases, in nightclubs and bars. The first national LGBT newspaper began to

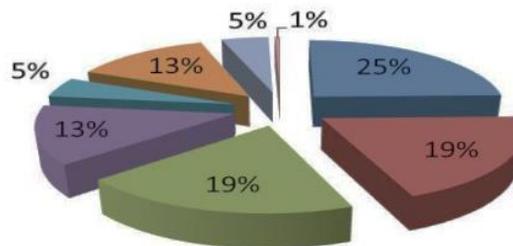
be published in 70s with the first well-known 'Lampião da Esquina' (Grupo Dignidade 2010). It was a LGBT publishing initiated in 1978 and over at 1981. In the late 1980s, others newspapers and magazines came to public access in commercial sphere such as: "O Grito de Alerta" and "Sui Generis Magazine", with national coverage. But, in the pre-Internet age, the AIDS pandemic and its social consequence had sensitized NGOs and Brazilian State under its new atmosphere of democracy. As a result, others types of LGBT publishing emerged in the national context. Most of them were about health, awareness campaigns on prevention of AIDS and LGBT citizen rights. Commercial houses publishing also emerged in the end of 1990s in the country. In this context, Archives, Documentation Centers and Libraries have also emerged and developed in greater numbers within the LGBT NGOs and also entities within the government agencies. Three examples can be highlighted: The site ABGLT on the Internet that provides full access to scientific publications, proceedings of the institution of Congress and the collection of laws on matters of LGBT people, Documentation Centre of 'Grupo Dignidade' in the south of the country, and the library developed by the 'Grupo Gay da Bahia' that also includes publications issued by this entity as part of its collections. The most of commercial publishers for LGBT audience can be found in São Paulo. GLS Publisher, for example, provides 61 titles of books; 'Escândalo Publishing' offers twenty titles that include scientific works as well as romances, and 'Malagueta Publishing House' that has thirteen titles for lesbian citizens. Other publishers have also released stamps geared toward the LGBT audience, as 'Alethia' stamp released by 'Brasiliense Publishing'; and the 'Contraluz' stamp of Record Publishing. According to the answers of NGOs, 51% indicate that the contribution of commercial publishers to develop collections for the LGBT audience is poor, 48% indicate that the contribution is regular, and responses indicating excellent and no contribution totaling 1%. It is important to political involvement of LGBT NGOs communities with governmental instances for human rights in Brazil. NGOs may receive support from private or government sector for publishing of instructional, promotional, cultural, educational materials and scientific, such as brochures, books and serial publications which are aimed at LGBT audiences with free distribution. For example, Bibliography on sexuality and sexual orientation produced by the University of Santa Catarina to the training course for teachers in the field of sexual orientation in Brazilian schools. This work was sponsored by the Special Secretariat of Policies for Women, Ministry of Education (Brazil). Other example refers to 'Grupo Gay da Bahia' (2003) with 29 titles to LGBT population. Grupo Gay da Bahia also maintains since 1994 a dedicated serial publication updating data on violence against homosexuals in Brazil titled: 'Annual Report Deaths of Homosexuals in Brazil', and also publishes the manual "brainy gay does not sleep with the enemy", both publications available on the Internet. The most bibliographic materials for LGBT audience are produced by LGBT NGOs that almost always make them accessible to citizens free of charge. Government and Private institution are usually sponsors.

4.2 Public Libraries

According to the NGOs' responses, participation and contribution of public libraries are varied. Both topics are more concentrated in the capitals with the main items.

Participating and contribution of Public Libraries

- Talk about cultural inclusion of LGBT people.
- LGBT citizens access to bibliographic collections.
- Support the implementation of educational meetings within the library
- Support the implementation of public events within the library
- Availability of collections with literature aimed at LGBT audiences.
- Educational performance in conjunction with NGOs and schools.
- Support for the dissemination of events sponsored by LGBT NGOs
- No contribution



The results demonstrate that public libraries are potential forums for promoting cultural inclusion of LGBT people. The topics with the second and third highest number of indications suggest that access to collections for LGBT citizens and educational meetings within the library are important to produce the effect of participation and inclusion values. The same extent, the public library can support the implementation of public events within the library and also educational activities in conjunction with NGOs and schools. However, the availability to collections targeted to the LGBT and support for the dissemination of public events organized by NGOs represent a smaller number than the first threads, adding 5% each of the topics. Only 1% of response does not endorse the contribution of the public library. In these perspectives, from the literature review and analysis of the responses obtained with NGOs, some evidence can be highlighted as follows. The library of 'Associação Brasileira Interdisciplinar de AIDS (ABIA)' has online catalog for bibliographical and visual resources about LGBT theme. ABIA (2007) also acts as Publishing House offering books, videos, posters, newsletters, proceedings and reports of the institution. ABIA is a nongovernmental nonprofit organization. Since its founding, ABIA is mobilizing society to address the epidemic of HIV/AIDS in Brazil, as well as the struggle for access to treatment and care and human rights of people living with HIV and AIDS. In this sense, ABIA has been working over the years in the monitoring of public policies in the formulation of projects for education and prevention of HIV/AIDS and access to information on sexual diversity and LGBT civil rights. The institution publishes newsletters, surveys and informational booklets, posters produces, promotes prevention campaigns for radio and television and develops projects. The Documentation Centre and its library were created in 1991. They bring together materials published and released by ABIA, as well as books, theses, videos, newspaper articles, and other educational materials, making it one of the largest LGBT information centers to meet general public in the country. All materials can be consulted on online catalog. Some events and projects supported by public libraries can be highlighted as follow. In 2008, the National Library of Rio de Janeiro promoted its exhibition 'homoeroticism and Rare Books - Books about Pleasure Treasures Amongst Equals'. This was an initiative of the director of rare books in the National Library - Ms. Pinheiro- in cooperative work with others librarians and LGBT NGOs of the city. The exhibition

presented to the public many rare works since the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries that were subject to censorship by their forbidden character but allocated in the division of rare works by librarians over time. The objective was to demonstrate that the homoeroticism theme provides scientific character and broadens the debate about homophobia and LGBT visibility through rare books. According to Ms. Pinheiro always there were publications on homosexuality which explain why it has always been of interest to many intellectuals in the past and target collections in libraries in Brazil and worldwide. In 2009, the Public Library at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro supported academic event organized by the university and LGBT NGOs entitled “University: the place of diversity, education and social inclusion of human groups transvestite, transsexual and transgender people in Brazil”. For a week, the library hosted meetings spaces, technological and informational resources for the event. In Salvador (Bahia), SOLAR Week against Homophobia (SSCH) is an annual event and takes place in May, leading to a varied mix of public tenders related to homophobia. The public library of the city of Salvador participates as a vehicle for promoting the event on its website and face mode. 29th January is the national day of transgender citizens. In 2014 the Special Coordinator of Sexual Diversity in Rio de Janeiro confirms the graduation of the first class of transsexual students to work in cultural centers and public libraries in Rio de Janeiro city. The DAMAS project was created in 2004 by the Municipal Social Development in Rio de Janeiro. This project aims to guarantee spaces for education and professional training for transvestites and transgender citizens so that they can have a real chance to work, not being summarized into prostitution. In São Paulo, the Second Municipal LGBT Conference, in cooperation with the Municipal Council on Care for Sexual Diversity, recommended legal formalization of public policies for the LGBT population to the City Hall. With regard to public libraries in the city, the following recommendations were considered to start in 2014: Introduction of regular workshops: spaces for social interaction and access to cultural goods, public libraries and cultural centers, aimed at formation of critical media as well as the formation of collections of books and other media about the issues of sexual diversity, gender and gender identity. It also includes training of all librarians to comment on books and videos as well as training for excellence in service to LGBT people.

5 Discussion

The emerging role of the LGBT movement has been problematized in reference to sexuality as a human right. More specifically, the LGBT theme has been explored in the education agenda and demands of social and educational policies developed in partnership between NGOs and state. Among plans and formalized programs are: the National Program of Human Rights, the National Curricular Parameters and finally, the Brazil without Homophobia Program. Despite considerable progress on the inclusion and promotion of social values, the LGBT population still faces major challenges. Violence, prejudice and limitation of civil rights of LGBT people still constitute barriers to access to justice, the labor market and the cultural heritage of the nation. However, the Brazil without Homophobia Program is recent and is closely focused on educational base of the country. Thus, it is possible to predict the long term, the educational system will form a more tolerant and friendly society to peaceful coexistence with the LGBT population. In this process, public libraries in Brazil could become instances for contribution of education and tolerance to whole society and promote LGBT's visibility as well as their inclusion of values. Results of this research indicate that changes still are not enough to generalize the effects of actions of the LGBT movement around the country. But in the democratic context, this process is continuous and irreversible.

6 Conclusions

This research concludes that power and community of LGBT organizations have sensitized public libraries under news approaches of “Public Libraries” for all against homophobia as well have worked together with others educational and cultural goods. In this context, cultural and educational inclusion values for LGBT community have increased in the country. The main results of such actions in terms of accessing library by LGBT people still represent a beginning. In the most regions of North and South of Brazil, the organizational LGBT goals still remain in the base of first education against homophobia. However, LGBT NGOs frequently have promoted LGBT visibility in cultural events in every part of the country supported by Government and private Instances, for this reason, universities, companies, state and municipal units, documentation centers, cultural centers and public libraries have become major sources for dissemination and implementation of LGBT events and visibility actions. From the point of view of LGBT NGOs, this research indicates that there is an intense effort based on cooperation and inclusion of positive policies in conjunction with the Brazilian democratic state. In the context of changes within public libraries, most LGBT NGOs considers necessary to establish closer ties with librarian’s leaders to promote cultural actions against homophobia within public libraries. In turn, the results obtained with the responses indicate that public libraries in the country have shown the same interest. Currently, this research extends to analyze the point of view of libraries in major cities in the country to identify the role of NGOs in the context of cultural inclusion of LGBT people.

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