LGBTQ YOUTH IN OUR SOCIETY

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The mission of every Pride celebration is to educate the world, commemorate heritage, celebrate culture and liberate people. The Philippines appears to be one of the more liberal ASEAN countries when it comes to the LGBTQ community but as another pride march comes this year, would the society accept or tolerate homosexuality?

It is very much likely to see Manila as the mainstream LGBTQ advocacy however in many parts across the country, it is still a safer bet to keep the rainbow furled and tucked away for many people. How does this notion affect today’s youth?

Our country has stories to tell where you will hear young LGBTQ children being told that their souls will burn in hell, should be crucified or worse case their own family disowning them for who they are. Identifying one self and self-expression remains muted in such places whether it is within or outside Manila’s walls. In contrast to other countries who had embraced heritage and accepted gay culture, you hear stories that will make you think again on your choice of waving the rainbow flag in front of many unfamiliar faces and people of the old times. Keeping the flag furled and tucked away is still the safer choice. When it comes to youth our nation in these instances, their potential is being muted to conform to the norms of the society and their well-being, identity and self-expression are all shattered to pieces and shaken out of stability. This brings draining exhaustion to both mentally and emotionally. The LGBTQ youth continues to suffer from these stressors including but not limited to forms of discrimination and exclusion from being different and gender-based violence due to hatred towards the community. Many LGBTQ youth are living under a rock or in the dark because of these reasons. They are
afraid to come out because of the feedback and repercussions they will get not only from their own families but also from the society they belong to.

Schools should be a safe place for everyone. It has an aura of fun-loving, welcoming teachers and a place for learning. But in the Philippines, how are the LGBTQ students treated? You will hear stories of these students that their schooling experience is flawed by bullying and discrimination by their fellow peers, lack of access to LGBTQ-related information and in other instances, these LGBTQ students faced physical or sexual assault. These abuses at an early onset mark a deep and unforgettable harm that impedes students’ right to education. With policies that implement rules and regulations that specify sexual orientation and gender identity as outlawed basis for bullying and harassment, if not adequately enforced is nothing. Without strong implementation and monitoring, many LGBTQ youth in school will continue to experience bullying and harassment.

A school can address issues of bullying and discrimination by providing educational resources to students, teachers and staff to become cognizant with LGBTQ people and concerns. We need more positive information and resources regarding sexual orientation and gender identity since the messages we learn in the classroom about LGBTQ people and concerns are typically negatively immoral, rejects same-sex relationships and gender identities as unnatural. When students are faced with these challenges, the school they are in becomes a hostile environment. With a mix of physical, emotional and psychological harm, LGBTQ students lose concentration, skip classes or seek to transfer to a different school. This then impedes their right to education.

Legal recognition and protection of LGBTQ people especially the youth at a nationwide level remains absent. In addition, school administrators should take to advocate LGBTQ students’ right to a safe and more inclusive as well as be an affirming educational environment to learn.
Reference:


https://www.huffpost.com/entry/lgbt-philippines_n_5614f92fe4b021e856d2d870