

# **SWISS LGBTIQ+ PANEL**



## **LGBTIQ+ YOUTH IN SWITZERLAND**

**OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATIONS, KEY ACTORS,  
POLICIES, AND PROJECTS**

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##### French-speaking region:

Alpagai, Fédération genevoise des associations LGBT, Fondation Agnodice, Le Refuge Neuchâtel, Office de la politique familiale et de l'égalité Neuchâtel, Person in charge of Lausanne's LGBTIQ+ strategic plan, Sarigai, Service Agenda21, Vaud's cantonal delegate for LGBTIQ+ issues, Vaud's cantonal delegate on issues of homophobia, and transphobia in educational settings, VoGay.

##### Italian-speaking region:

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"The LGBTI Youth Fund is a philanthropic fund based in Switzerland. The Fund aims to support local, regional and national initiatives responding to the needs of LGBTIQ youth in Switzerland, advocating for their rights and creating the conditions for changes towards an inclusive, equitable and safe society."



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>METHODOLOGICAL NOTES</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>LGBTIQ+ YOUTH SITUATION</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>National Level</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Regional Level</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>German-speaking Cantons</b>	<b>17</b>
Aargau	21
Appenzell Innerrhoden and Ausserrhoden	22
Basel-Landschaft and Basel-Stadt	23
Bern	25
Glarus	26
Graubünden/Grison/Grigioni	27
Luzern	28
Nidwalden	29
Obwalden	30
Schaffhausen	31
Schwyz	31
Solothurn	32
St. Gallen	33
Thurgau	35
Uri	36
Zug	37
Zürich	38
<b>Gaps and Needs: German-speaking Cantons</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>French-speaking Cantons</b>	<b>44</b>
Fribourg/Freiburg	46
Genève	47
Jura	51
Neuchâtel	52
Valais/Wallis	54
Vaud	56
<b>Gaps and needs: French-speaking Cantons</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Italian-speaking Canton (Ticino)</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Gaps and Needs: Ticino</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>70</b>

# INTRODUCTION

Despite recent legal changes toward greater LGBTIQ+ (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer) inclusion, LGBTIQ+ youth in Switzerland still face inequalities, rejection, and discrimination in several domains (ILGA-Europe, 2021; Eisner & Hässler, 2021; Hässler & Eisner, 2022). LGBTIQ+ youth frequently report feeling "safe nowhere", especially when the usual protective factors – in the school, family, and friendship spheres – are deficient (Dayer, 2022). Adolescents whose sexual and affective orientation is not exclusively heterosexual, who do not identify with their gender assigned at birth, or who are intersex are frequently the target of harassment-bullying and violence in the educational and recreational contexts (Hässler & Eisner, 2022; Weber & Gredig, 2018).

To avoid being exposed to violence and rejection, many LGBTIQ+ youth are still forced to live in the closet, which prevents them from developing their skills and being able to exist being themselves (Dayer, 2022). Further, experiences of invisibility, discrimination, and rejection (so-called minority stressors; Meyer, 2003) often result in negative health consequences for LGBTIQ+ youth, such as higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide (Bomolo et al., 2022; Ott et al. 2017, Testa et al., 2015). Swiss data collected in response to a mandate by the Federal Council also clearly indicate health disparities among LGBTIQ+ people living in Switzerland (Krüger et al., 2023). Besides negative health consequences, experiences of discrimination, and rejection can also negatively affect the academic performance of affected youth or even lead to school drop-out (Koswicz et al., 2013). To enable LGBTIQ+ youth to reach their full potential and become independent adults who can contribute to society and thrive more generally, it is therefore of uttermost importance to promote acceptance and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ youth.

Importantly, the LGBTIQ+ acronym consists of many different groups with common and unique challenges. For example, the data of our Swiss LGBTIQ+ Panel ([www.swiss-lgbtqi-panel.ch](http://www.swiss-lgbtqi-panel.ch)) indicate that forms of experienced discrimination might differ among subpopulations within the LGBTIQ+ community. Lesbian, bi- and pansexual women as well as trans and non-binary people are more often the victim of sexual harassment than gay or bisexual men (Eisner & Hässler, 2021). Also, bi- and pansexual people face more rejection and discrimination than homosexual people (Thöni et al., 2022). Further, trans, non-binary, and/or intersex people are a particularly vulnerable population: they experience more discrimination, less support, and report worse well-being (Eisner &

Hässler, 2021, Hässler & Eisner, 2022). Finally, LGBTIQ+ people who belong to an additional minority group(s) might experience discrimination both from outside and within the LGBTIQ+ community (Heilmann et al., 2023). These differences in needs and characteristics should be considered when aiming to empower LGBTIQ+ youth.

To identify existing services as well as gaps and needs and on behalf of the LGBTI Youth Fund, the Swiss LGBTIQ+ Panel team conducted a mapping process of the organizations, key actors, policies, and projects that aim to respond to the needs and promote the rights of LGBTIQ+ youth in Switzerland. The findings that emerged from this mapping process provide an overview of the range of available supports and services while highlighting the disparities between cantons. We conclude with general recommendations regarding particularly marked gaps or challenges to be addressed in the coming years to promote social change toward an inclusive, equitable, and safe society for all youth in Switzerland.

# METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

The main objective of this project was twofold. First, we aimed to conduct a mapping of associations, partners, donors, and other key actors (see sections organizations and key actors) that support and/or work with LGBTIQ+ youth. Second, we aimed to map policies and (research) projects (see sections policies and projects) that aim to respond to the needs and rights of LGBTIQ+ youth and create an inclusive, fair, and safe environment. In this report, we present an overview – organized by language regions and cantons – of existing organizations/key actors and policies/projects, followed by a discussion of the gaps and needs that we identified as well as recommendations. More detailed information regarding each listed association can be found in annex.

Please note that this mapping is based on information collected from February 2023 to the end of April 2023. Hence, this mapping depicts the current situation in April 2023, which might change over time, particularly as new initiatives develop. As a result, despite our commitment to being as inclusive as possible and the care given to researching and including the full range of organizations, policies, and projects in favor of LGBTIQ+ youth, some of them may not have been integrated, thus causing the mapping not to be totally exhaustive. Please consider, however, the purpose of this mapping, namely, to be able to make general recommendations. Below you find more information on the method used to prepare this document.

The team structured its work in four distinct phases. As a first step, we prepared a table mapping all organizations and other key actors that support or work with LGBTIQ+ children and youth. A strong emphasis was put on LGBTIQ+ organizations. To have an overview as complete as possible, we also included organizations that do not always have a direct/explicit link with LGBTIQ+ youth but can benefit them indirectly. Parties and other festive events were not listed in this section, although these events provide meeting opportunities for LGBTIQ+ youth.

As a second step, we prepared a table mapping policies and projects that address the needs of LGBTIQ+ youth. A strong emphasis was placed on regional, cantonal, and local policies. We also listed past and ongoing large-scale research projects that directly target(ed) LGBTIQ+ youth.

As a third step, we contacted key stakeholders and actors who are involved/know about LGBTIQ+ youth in Switzerland to discuss existing offers and needs. Steps 1 and 2 enabled the team to establish a list of contact people with expertise in the field of LGBTIQ+ youth. As far as possible, we tried to organize meetings with two people per canton in the French- and Italian-speaking part and several persons per region in the German-speaking part, either involved in associations or working at a more institutional level. Emphasis was placed on organizing meetings in cantons or regions with fewer resources or services for LGBTIQ+ youth. We further arranged phone calls and requested information via email. The information provided by these experts allowed us to complete our lists by ensuring that all the relevant elements had been included, inform us about policies or projects that are currently being developed, and collect the opinion of field actors regarding the specific issues and gaps related to LGBTIQ+ youth in the canton. We further completed our list by looking at answers to a question in the [2023 survey of our Swiss LGBTIQ+ Panel](#), asking people about their knowledge of specific projects targeting LGBTIQ+ children and youth in Switzerland.

After completing the three steps, we analyzed all the information collected and reported it by region/canton in this document. In this report, we present, firstly, the main organization, key actors (including donors and other key actors), policies, and projects (including research projects) related to LGBTIQ+ youth that exist on a national level. Secondly, we present the results sorted by the major language regions: i) the German-speaking region (including the multilingual Graubünden<sup>1</sup> and bilingual Bern), ii) the French-speaking region (including the bilingual Valais and Fribourg), and iii) the Italian-speaking region. For each region, we provide a description of organizations, key actors, policies, and projects both at the regional and the cantonal level. Finally, we summarize the main findings regarding the needs and challenges to be addressed in the coming years to promote the well-being and integration of LGBTIQ+ youth in Switzerland by formulating general recommendations.

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1 Please note that we use the spelling of the respective language region when referring to cantons and cities.

# **LGBTIQ+ YOUTH SITUATION**



# NATIONAL LEVEL

IN THE FOLLOWING SECTION, WE PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN ACTORS, POLICIES, AND PROJECTS RELATED TO LGBTIQ+ YOUTH THAT EXIST ON A NATIONAL LEVEL. WE FIRST PRESENT THE ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS (INCLUDING DONORS) AND THEN REFER TO CURRENT POLICIES AND (RESEARCH) PROJECTS.

# ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

## National LGBTIQ+ Organizations

Organizations at the national level are listed in alphabetical order. Many are more strongly represented in the German-speaking region than in the other regions.

**InterAction Suisse e.V.** supports intersex people in Switzerland. Their work indirectly targets LGBTIQ+ youth and children. Further, InterAction is in contact with Milchjugend to discuss possible collaborations. They are also discussing setting up a homepage and/or app to educate youth on intersex issues.

**LOS** (Lesbian Association Switzerland) supports lesbian and bisexual women in Switzerland and represents both the German- and French-speaking regions. LOS is not aimed directly at children and LGBTIQ+ youth. However, some of their work and offers are open to LGBTIQ+ youth. Their political work (e.g., actions aiming to promote LGBTIQ+ equality – such as their engagement in the marriage equality campaign, anti-discrimination law, and the ban of so-called conversion therapies at a national, if needed, cantonal level) – also has a direct or indirect positive effect on young people. They further participate in an LGBTIQ+ school project (LehrplanQ) together with PinkCross, Transgender Network Switzerland (TGNS), and other stakeholders aiming to empower LGBTIQ+ youth and promote LGBTIQ+ acceptance among their peers and teachers.

**PinkCross** (Gay Association Switzerland) supports gay and bisexual men in Switzerland. While they have a German- and French-speaking lead, they are more prominent in the German-speaking region. Their activities include advocating for equality at the national level (marriage for all, hate crimes, so-called conversion therapies, etc.), supporting schools in measures to promote inclusion, consulting, and awareness-raising, and supporting projects on LGBTIQ+ issues. They are further coordinating the LGBTIQ+ school project, LehrplanQ.

**RainbowScouts** is an LGBTIQ+ scouts association that is currently being established. The website and the association are still under construction.

**Regenbogenfamilien** promotes the social and legal equality of rainbow families in Switzerland. They are also committed to networking families with each other and with other interested persons and organizations at home and abroad. With information events and public relations work, the association contributes to

the visibility of rainbow families. An offer of services for the counseling of rainbow families and interested (specialist) persons is provided.

**TGNS** (Transgender Network Switzerland) maintains various counseling centers, offers networking opportunities for individuals and local groups, imparts knowledge about trans people, and advocates for the rights of trans people through political work and media presence. They also participate in the LehrplanQ project. **TGNS Jugend** is the youth section of TGNS. They offer monthly meetups in Zürich, led by young trans and non-binary people. They also offer chats for trans and non-binary youth where they can exchange advice, get to know, and support each other.

#### For young people

The **Swiss National Youth Council (SAJV – CSAJ – FSAG)** is an umbrella organization for many youth organizations. While not directly targeting LGBTIQ+ youth, its "Break Free" project aims to promote the integration/inclusion of young LGBTIQ+ people in youth associations.

#### Health

**AidsHilfe Schweiz** is the umbrella organization of the regional Checkpoints. It coordinates all campaigns for STI/HIV prevention for LGBTIQ+ people in Switzerland.

**CheckPoint** offers testing and counseling services related to sexual and gender health. Traditionally focusing on men who have sex with men, it now provides health-related services and counseling for trans people, and sometimes services for women.

**LGBT+ Helpline** is the first point of contact for all concerns about living as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, intersex, or queer person. It is a peer-to-peer counseling center (managed by PinkCross) and the reporting point for anti-LGBTIQ+ violence. Their counseling services are for all people who have questions and concerns about the LGBTIQ+ living environment – regardless of their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Opferhilfe Schweiz – Aide aux victimes – Aiuto alle vittime** offers counseling centers in Switzerland for anyone who has been the victim of physical, sexual, or domestic violence (although not specific to LGBTIQ+ people).

**Sexuelle Gesundheit Schweiz** promotes sexual health and respect for sexual rights in Switzerland.

**Tel 143 (Die Dargebotene Hand/La Main Tendue/Telefono Amico)** and **147.ch** (for youth) are anonymous emergency hot-lines for crisis situations, which can be contacted via phone or mail. While they offer services for all youth, they are not particularly trained on LGBTIQ+ issues.

#### Refugees

**Trans Safety Emergency Fund (TSEF)** supports trans refugees and trans people of color in need, who often do not benefit from support from other associations. They are led by trans and queer migrants who understand the particular needs of this vulnerable population better. TSEF is the only Swiss organization specializing in supporting trans refugees and trans people of color – besides more general LGBTIQ+ refugee support groups like QueerAmnesty.

**Queeramnesty Schweiz** works as part of Amnesty Switzerland specifically on the topic of "sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender development". They advocate for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers in Switzerland through letters, appeals, press work, high-profile actions as well as lobbying toward governments, institutions, and companies.

#### Donors and key actors

Most key donors (e.g., the Federal Office of Public Health, the Swiss National Science Foundation, the LGBTI Youth Fund, Health Promotion Switzerland, and the Mercator Foundation) operate at the national level. Donors/key actors that are only operating in one region (e.g., Maurice Chalmieu) are listed in the regional or cantonal sections. The main observation is that there are large disparities between the regions and no consistency in funding. Very few donors and other key actors specifically fund LGBTIQ+ youth programs or research.

At the national level, some organizations are funded directly or indirectly by the **Federal Office of Public Health**. Also, the Federal Office of Public Health funds parts of the work of the Swiss Aids Federation/Sexual Health Centers, especially for their Aids prevention work. Most of this work also focuses on offers for the LGBTIQ+ community, like counseling services or testing. These organizations are also partly funded by the cantons.

The **Swiss National Science Foundation** supports some (but little) research on LGBTIQ+ topics. While many early career researchers are conducting LGBTIQ+ research, structural barriers make it hard to apply for funding at an early career stage. Unsurprisingly, therefore, most organizations and research projects

lack funding from governmental institutions and face barriers to funding their projects, leading to large amounts of volunteer and unpaid work as well as a lack of sustainability.

Other key donors and actors are foundations or private donors. While national or international foundations partially fund many organizations and some research projects, most do not specifically focus on LGBTIQ+ people and even less on LGBTIQ+ youth. Three donors, however, fund several organizations and/or projects in Switzerland. The first one is the **LGBTI Youth Fund**, an independent philanthropic fund hosted by the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation. Launched in October 2022 and of ten years duration, the fund's objectives are to foster the creation of an inclusive society where all young people can freely define and express their gender identities and sexual orientations and nurture healthy and respectful relationships. They partially finance LGBTIQ+ youth organizations in the French- and German-speaking parts of Switzerland. The second one is **Gesundheitsförderung Schweiz/Promotion Santé Suisse/Promozione Salute Svizzera**, a private foundation supported by cantons and insurers that initiates, coordinates, and evaluates measures to promote health and prevent disease. They have been supporting some large LGBTIQ+ youth organizations in the German- and French-speaking parts of Switzerland. The last one is the **Mercator Foundation**, which finances projects focusing on children and youth. The Mercator Foundation has been funding some research projects focusing on LGBTIQ+ youth and LGBTIQ+ youth organizations.

## POLICIES AND PROJECTS

### Policies

In the past few years, many legal changes in favor of LGBTIQ+ were implemented in Switzerland, and others are currently pending. In 2020, the Swiss population voted in favor of extending the anti-discrimination law to protect LGBTIQ+ people from discrimination based on their sexual orientation. Next, following amendments passed by the Swiss Parliament, the procedure to change one's name and (binary) gender marker in the official civil register has been facilitated since 2022. In addition, Swiss citizens voted in favor of legalizing marriage "for all", including joint adoption, artificial insemination, and facilitated naturalization.

Several further changes are currently on the table. A motion to ban harmful and unscientific conversion therapies is pending (see [the statement in favor of the ban of conversation therapies by the Swiss Psychological Association](#)). Next, blood donation

eligibility criteria will be updated to drop the exclusion of all men who have sex with men and focus on risk factors instead. In addition, the Swiss Parliament will decide on the criminalization of sex-changing surgeries on intersex infants, an initiative supported by InterAction e.v. Suisse. Furthermore, the Asylum Act will be revised in order to recognize gender-specific sexual and sexist violence as a reason for asylum. In addition, the Federal Council was commissioned to check possibilities to improve the situation of non-binary individuals, as a third gender option does not currently exist.

Finally, the government recently decided to create two new positions responsible for LGBTIQ+ equality issues at the national level. The two persons, hired within the Office for Gender Equality, will draw up a national action plan against LGBTIQ+-hostile hate crimes. They will further oversee coordinating the federal services and maintain contact with cantons and municipalities that address LGBTIQ+ issues from 2024 onwards.

### Research projects

Most research projects operate on the national or regional levels (e.g., German- and French-speaking parts of Switzerland) rather than focusing on one specific canton. Research projects that focus on LGBTIQ+ youth at the national level or that comprise more than one language region are listed here, while those only operating in one region or one canton are listed in the regional section. See annex for further information on the individual research projects and the involved researchers.

At the national level, few research projects directly or indirectly target LGBTIQ+ youth in all regions of Switzerland: the [Swiss LGBTIQ+ Panel](#), **the INPAQQ**, and **Trans at Work**. **The Swiss LGBTIQ+ Panel**<sup>2</sup> (2019-ongoing) is a project primarily consisting of [annual longitudinal surveys](#) offered in German, French, Italian, and English. It follows over 3,000 LGBTIQ+ people (aged 16 and above) from all Swiss cantons over time. The Swiss LGBTIQ+ Panel publishes annual reports and scientific work, provides scientific fact sheets, and gives talks for universities, cities, and companies. Furthermore, it is active on social media platforms. Other research projects are currently being developed at the national level, such as the **INPAQQ: An Interdisciplinary and Participative Approach to Improve the Quality of Life in Sex/Gender Questioning Individuals**<sup>3</sup>. The INPAQQ is a planned

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3 David Garcia Nuñez, Andrea Gurtner, Dana Mahr, and Johannes Scherr from the University of Basel, the University of Applied Sciences Berne, the University of Geneva, and the University of Zurich.

research project (2023-2027) aiming to assess the quality of life of sex/gender questioning persons in Switzerland over 16 years old in Switzerland. Another example is the **Trans at Work** project (2023-2025), which is a planned national project that aims to assess the working situation of trans and non-binary people over 15 years old in Switzerland.

Several projects focus on LGBTIQ+ youth from the German-speaking and French-speaking parts of Switzerland. One of them is the **Suicide Attempts by LGBT Adolescents and Young Adults in Switzerland – Contexts and Help-seeking Behavior: A Grounded Theory Study**<sup>4</sup> project (2021-2024). This project aims to better understand how (process) and why (subjective meaning, patterns of interpretation) LGBT adolescents come to (an) attempted suicide(s). Another planned project is the **Intra-Individual Factors for the Healthy Development of LGBTQ+ Adolescents and Young Adults**<sup>5</sup> project (2024-2027). This 2-year longitudinal study focuses on intra-individual aspects that foster positive identity development among LGBTQ+ individuals in Switzerland. It aims to target 16-17 years old and 18-19 years old LGBTIQ+ youth in German- and French-speaking Switzerland. Finally, the **Queer Kids. Die stille Revolution**<sup>6</sup> book project (2023-2024) aims to portray children and young people in Switzerland who move outside of classic gender stereotypes.

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4 Andreas Pfister (PI), Niolyne Bomolo, Raphaël Guillet, Tobias Kuhnert, Amaelle Gavin (until August 2022), and Nikola Koschmieder (until July 2022) from the Zurich University of Applied Sciences.

5 Beate Schwarz (PI) and Pirmin Pfammatter (research associate) from the Zurich University of Applied Sciences.

6 Christina Caprez.

# REGIONAL LEVEL

WE NOW PRESENT THE ORGANIZATIONS/KEY ACTORS AND POLICIES/PROJECTS RELATED TO LGBTIQ+ YOUTH THAT EXIST AT THE CANTONAL LEVELS. WE PRESENT THE RESULTS SORTED BY THE MAJOR LANGUAGE REGIONS: I) THE GERMAN-SPEAKING REGION (INCLUDING THE MULTILINGUAL CANTON GRAUBÜNDEN/GRISON/GRIGIONI AND THE BILINGUAL CANTON BERN), II) THE FRENCH-SPEAKING REGION (INCLUDING FRIBOURG/FREIBURG AND VALAIS/WALLIS), AND III) THE ITALIAN-SPEAKING CANTON. WITHIN EACH CANTON, WE THEMATICALLY GROUPED EXISTING LGBTIQ+ ASSOCIATIONS AND PARTNERS. WE CONCLUDE WITH IDENTIFIED GAPS AND NEEDS FOR EACH REGION.



# GERMAN-SPEAKING CANTONS

In the following section, we list organizations/ key actors and policies/projects related to LGBTIQ+ youth in German-speaking Switzerland. We first start with organizations, partners, policies, and projects at the regional level (i.e., German-speaking) and then present the findings by canton.

## ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

### General LGBTIQ+ associations

There are several LGBTIQ+ associations in the German-speaking region that offer services to the LGBTIQ+ community (also, but not specifically for LGBTIQ+ youth). **Aromantisches und Asexuelles Spektrum Schweiz** aims to connect people on the aromantic and asexual (Aro-Ace) spectrum and to represent the interests of the Aro-Ace spectrum to the outside world. The Aro-Ace Spectrum Switzerland organizes meetings once a month for people on the aromantic and asexual spectrum as well as for people who are still unsure whether they belong to it ("questioning"). **Bisexuell Schweiz** is an organization for bi and pan people. They raise awareness and provide information. **BiPanom Schweiz** is part of Bisexuell Schweiz and hosts various events in the German-speaking part. The **Romanescos** organize regular meetings for gender diverse people, and the homepage **non-binary.ch** provides insights into a personal story of a non-binary person and general information on this topic. **Transfem Dinner** is offering monthly affordable dinners and community spaces for transfeminine people. They are the only space of this kind in Switzerland and trans women and transfeminine non-binary people come from far to their meetups in Zürich.

### For young people

**Milchjugend** is a youth-led umbrella organization for LGBTIQ+ youth organizations in the German-speaking part, which organizes various events such as the Lila Festival, workshops as in

## German-Speaking Cantons

Milchuni, counseling, and camps such as the Milchreise. They further organize the **Milchbar** in several cantons, which aims to connect LGBTQ+ youth with their peers.

## Education

The school education programs **ABQ** and **GLL** (Gleichgeschlechtliche Liebe Leben) educate high school students, incoming teachers at the PH Luzern and Zürich, and youth organizations on sexual orientation and gender identity. Young people are given the opportunity to ask personal questions and are encouraged to reconsider norms. The two organizations will merge into one organization in the fall of 2023. This merger allows **the school education program** to cover most of the German-speaking regions in Switzerland (except for St. Gallen, Appenzell Innerrhoden, and Aargau, which are covered by **COMOUT** and Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft that are covered by **queeres ah&oh**).

**LehrplanQ** (which will soon replace the project **Eduqueer**) aims to empower LGBTQ+ youth and promote LGBTQ+ acceptance among their peers and teachers. The collaborative project involves PinkCross, LOS, TGNS, ABQ/GLL (Fusion 2023), COMOUT, Queeres Ah&Oh, du-bist-du, and Milchjugend.

LGBTQ+ youth and other minorities are still underrepresented in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths) fields. To close this gap, the **Queer Coding Camp** organizes a coding week camp aiming to empower LGBTQ+ youth by teaching them elementary coding skills.

**Du-bist-du** offers peer counseling, knowledge transfer, and workshops for professionals working with young people. They further aim to raise awareness among young people in heteronormative youth clubs, their own campaigns, and specific programs to promote exchange.

**Bunt lieben** engages in the legal safeguarding of multiple relationships and destigmatization of queer sexuality/relationships on a societal and legal level. They organize various events and demand in-depth training of (medical) professionals in the field of diversity of sexuality, relationships, and romance.

## Health

**Du-bist-du** (for more information, see education) is a youth-led association that offers counseling for LGBTQ+ youth addressing the mental and physical health of young LGBTQ+ people.

## POLICIES AND PROJECTS

In Basel-Stadt, Bern, St. Gallen, Zürich, and Lausanne, the **Queere Kantonstagung** (Queer cantons conference) was organized by TGNS, LOS, and Pink Cross in 2022 to educate cantonal politicians.

In the educational context, sexual orientation, gender roles, and the confrontation with one's own ideas and perception in society are part of the compulsory teaching content of lower secondary school in the German- and multilingual cantons according to Curriculum 21 (Lehrplan 21). Many teachers, however, lack specific expertise on LGBTIQ+ issues. The LehrplanQ project (see education section) aims to coordinate and standardize the work of several associations in the German-speaking part of Switzerland.

Several research projects directly target LGBTIQ+ youth in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. First, the **Z-PROSO: The Zürich Project on the Social Development from Childhood to Adulthood** project (2004-ongoing) examines associations between sexual orientation, suicidal ideation, and self-injury at 15, 17 and 20 years old in a community-based sample of 1,108 Swiss adolescents. Second, the **SOGUS (Sexuelle Orientierung, Geschlecht und Schule)**<sup>1</sup> project (2021-2024) investigates the perceived school climate and well-being of LGBTIQ+ youth (14-19 years old) in school. It also aims to introduce and evaluate an elective course in two schools on sexual and gender diversity to foster the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ students from within the schools. Third, the **Gender Diversity in Swiss Schools** project (2022-2026) studies what pupils and students (14-16 years old), teachers, and parents think about gender, what they know about transgender and intersex issues, and how they think and feel about transgender and intersex people. Fourth, the **LGBTIQ@Campus**<sup>2</sup> project (2022-2024) is a project that aims to promote the inclusion and belonging of LGBTIQ+ students. To this end, actors are strengthened in their task of making the university an inclusive and discrimination-free place. Finally, the **Role of Family and Non-family Relations for the Healthy Development of LGBT+ Young Adults**<sup>3</sup> project (2023) aims to

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2 Andrea Gurtner, Martina Becker, Dorian Mittner, and Adrien Ott from the Bern University of Applied Sciences, Pädagogische Hochschule PHBern, and FHNW University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland.

3 Pirmin Pfammatter, Yannic Soder, and Dr. Beate Schwarz from the Zurich University of Applied Sciences.

investigate the importance of friends and parents for LGBTIQ+ youth mental health. The project targets LGBTIQ+ individuals and cis-heterosexual people over 18 years old.

Finally, some projects indirectly focus on LGBTIQ+ youth (over 16 years old) living in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. For instance, the **ITES: Internalized Transphobia - Explorative Study**<sup>4</sup> (2013-2015) and the **Trans\*Swiss**<sup>5</sup> project (2017-2018) are two projects that consisted in looking at the situation of trans and non-binary people over the age of 18. Another example is the **Miteinander-Reden**<sup>6</sup> project (2021-2024), which is an intervention study that aims to bring LGBTIQ+ people and cisgender heterosexual endosex people into contact to reduce prejudice and foster people's support for changes toward greater LGBTIQ+ equality.

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4 David Garcia Nuñez and Laura D. Perler from the University of Zurich.

5 David Garcia Nuñez and Laura D. Perler from the University of Zurich.

6 Tabea Hässler (main PI) and Johannes Ullrich (main PI) from the University of Zurich.

## AARGAU

## — ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

There are few organizations offering services for LGBTIQ+ youth in Aargau.

**For young people**

**Milchjugend** organizes the **Milchbar Baden** – a frequented community event for and by LGBTIQ+ youth. The **Rainbow Squad** meets regularly in Brugg. **Queer Mittelland** also offers regular meetups and tries to promote the visibility of LGBTIQ+ people. Every other month they organize a meetup for LGBTIQ+ youth (+18).

**Education**

At the **Kantonsschule Baden**, an LGBTIQ+ youth school group organizes regular meetings. School education services are offered by **GLL/ABQ** (see ABQ in the German-speaking region section for more information).

## — POLICIES AND PROJECTS

The Socialist Party deposited an interpellation for a cantonal plan against LGBTIQ+ hate crimes, which was rejected in 2021. Two parliamentary items calling for police recording of LGBTIQ+ hostile violence and more protection against LGBTIQ+ hostility (2019, 2021) have been submitted. As a result, a systematic recording of aggressions against LGBTIQ+ people and training for police forces are envisaged.

# APPENZELL INNERRHODEN AND AUSSERRHODEN

## — ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

### Health

The **Aidshilfe St. Gallen Appenzell (AHSGA)** is the only organization covering LGBTIQ+ issues in Appenzell – though they have no explicit offers for LGBTIQ+ children or youth and focus mainly on St. Gallen. AHSGA further acts as a point of contact for LGBTIQ+ people experiencing discrimination and educates students on LGBTIQ+ issues (see COMOUT).

### Education

The school education program **COMOUT**, which is offered by **AHSGA**, aims to make diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities more visible and to set an example for greater LGBTIQ+ youth acceptance.

## — POLICIES AND PROJECTS

In the canton Appenzell Innerrhoden, we could not find any projects or policies targeting LGBTIQ+ people (youth and children). No parliamentary items related to LGBTIQ+ issues appear to have been submitted either. In Appenzell Ausserrhoden, the cantonal councilor Matthias Tischhauser successfully campaigned for the **protection of LGBTIQ+ people in the constitutional commission**, which is working on a new cantonal constitution. The status of this change is, however, currently unclear.

# BASEL-LANDSCHAFT AND BASEL-STADT

## ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

Basel is one of the three big cities/LGBTIQ+ centers in German-speaking Switzerland, although most bigger organizations are located in Zürich or Bern. Most activities are offered in Basel-Stadt, while there are few offers in Basel-Landschaft. **Habs Queer Basel** focuses on consultations, regular meetings, and discussions of political and social issues. **GayBasel** is a platform for queer culture and for all LGBTIQ+ and supportive straight people. They are committed to the visibility of and support of organizers of queer culture.

### For young people

**Anyway**, now part of **Milchjugend**, is the only LGBTIQ+ youth-led organization for LGBTIQ+ youth. They offer biweekly LGBTIQ+ youth meetups and cover different topics like LGBTIQ+ families, playing, cooking, and doing drag together.

### Education

The association **Queeres ah&oh** provides workshops on sexual orientation and gender identity in Basel-Landschaft and Basel-Stadt in schools with the aim of empowering LGBTIQ+ youth and fostering positive attitudes among their straight peers.

### Health

The **Aidshilfe beider Basel** focuses on sexual health, particularly among men who have sex with men. Lately, Aidshilfe has offered counseling services for trans and non-binary people and a trans talk group, which are used frequently by trans/non-binary youth.

### Religion

Die **Lesbische und Schwule Basiskirche Basel** (LSBK) offers church services for LGBTIQ+ people. They offer services in a Jewish Christian tradition in the Elisabethenkirche and organize events like concerts in the church.

### Refugees

**Inaya Basel** supports women, non-binary, intersex and trans refugees around Basel.

**Sport**

**Rheinbow Sports Basel** and the **Rhine Rebels Roller Derby** offer sports opportunities for LGBTIQ+ people.

**Events and Other Initiatives**

A lot of small organizations were founded after the outbreak of Covid-19 and specialize in meetups/support for certain sub-groups: **TINQ Café Basel** as a meeting point for trans and non-binary people and **LemonGingerBiscuitandTea**, which offers meetups and BarNights for the community. Also, **Basel tickt bunt** is a pride festival day in Basel, including a drag brunch, demonstration, and a panel discussion.

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## POLICIES AND PROJECTS

The Council of Basel-Stadt is currently discussing a new cantonal equality law (including LGBTIQ+ people; "**Ratschlag zu einem Kantonalen Gleichstellungsgesetz zu Geschlecht und sexueller Orientierung**"). Furthermore, a proposal has been made to fund an LGBTIQ+ department in Basel-Stadt, including funding requests for queer youth groups, queer youth counseling, workshops in schools, and youth emergency shelters. **Other objects have been submitted to Basel-Stadt, some of which are currently being processed.** These include a proposal for basic training for people working in the public service to deal with aggressions against LGBTIQ+ people, a better fight against discrimination and better integration of diversity in general at school, and **an initiative to ban so-called conversion therapies.**

As for Basel-Landschaft, a postulate requesting **statistics on anti-LGBTIQ+ aggressions** was submitted to the Council in 2019. The Council will wait for the results of the Swiss Crime Survey 2022 to decide on possible measures. Other parliamentary items presented in Basel-Landschaft, include, for instance, a request for data on rainbow families, more support for LGBTIQ+ young people at school, more protection against LGBTIQ+ hostility in the canton, and a postulate to integrate LGBTIQ+ issues into the mandate of the Equality Office. A postulate has also been submitted for a ban on so-called conversion therapies in the canton and is currently pending.



## BERN

## ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

Bern is one of the three big cities/LGBTIQ+ centers (Basel, Bern, Zürich) in German-speaking Switzerland.

## For young people

**Milchbar Bern** is an important place for LGBTIQ+ youth in Bern. The monthly evening is hosted by LGBTIQ+ youth and attended mostly by LGBTIQ+ youth. **Kunterbunt** also offers regular meetings for all LGBTIQ+ youth and young adults. **Hab Queer Bern** advocates for the full legal equality of LGBTIQ+ people in all areas of life. Finally, **Bern\*LGBT** is a web portal for queer topics.

## Education

**ABQ** (merging with GLL in fall 2023 into one association, name ABQ will be kept) offers school education from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. On request, ABQ also offers workshops for teachers, prevention officers, and educators or can refer them to appropriate agencies. At the university level, **Queer Students Bern** organizes events for LGBTIQ+ students and raises awareness on LGBTIQ+ issues. In Biel/Bienne, the **Mosaik** association, in collaboration with other local organizations, offers presentations in schools to teachers and parents on different topics (racism, sexism, discrimination against LGBTIQ+ communities, etc.).

## Health

**Checkpoint Bern** provides professional (health) counseling for LGBTIQ+ people. The **Children's Hospital of the Inselspital** offers counseling for gender diverse children (Sprechstunde Geschlechtervielfalt). The **Sexual Health Center of Biel/Bienne** may also provide services for LGBTIQ+ people.

## Sport

**Queersport Bern** organizes different sports for LGBTIQ+ people. Additionally, the **EuroGames**, an international LGBTIQ+ sports event, took place in the summer of 2023 in Bern.

## Events and other initiatives

Many LGBTIQ+ leisure activities take place in Bern, such as the choir **Sweet & Power**, the **Queersicht** film festival, or the **QueerUp Radio**. This summer, after six years, the **Bern Pride** took place again. In the region of Biel/Bienne, the association

**QueerBienne** organizes events and meetings to bring the community together. They also offer meetings and training opportunities to public and private institutions on LGBTIQ+ issues. **Queer Thun** offers activities for and connects LGBTIQ+ people living in Thun.

## POLICIES AND PROJECTS

In terms of parliamentary items, two questions focused on LGBTIQ+ issues (What is being done to improve health and lower suicide rate among young people? What is the canton doing to protect the LGB population?). At the cantonal level, a parliamentary initiative was filed asking the executive council to **report on existing measures to protect LGBTIQ+ people from aggression**. The executive council responded to this inquiry by listing existing measures and stating that no additional measures are currently planned. Regarding the **ban on so-called conversion therapies**, after a first unsuccessful interpellation, a second motion was accepted in 2021.

The City Council of the city of Biel/Bienne is running a campaign – **Divers Biel/Bienne** – against gender and sexual orientation-based discrimination. It does so by means of an informative website (overview of legal bases, referral to information, and counseling centers) and a reporting service for experienced or observed discrimination.

# GLARUS

## ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

To our knowledge, there are no active LGBTIQ+ organizations in Glarus.

### Education

School education services are offered by **GLL/ABQ** (see ABQ in the German-speaking region section for more information).

## POLICIES AND PROJECTS

In Glarus, the cantonal **equality office** sees LGBTIQ+ issues also as part of their work according to their action plan for 2021–2024. They also organized a presentation on trans issues. Besides that, there is no movement toward LGBTIQ+ inclusivity in the canton of Glarus.

# GRAUBÜNDEN/ GRISON/GRIGIONI

## ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

### For young people

**Treff LGBT+**, hosted by **Sozialwerk LGBT+**, replaced the previous LGBTIQ+ youth group (named whatever Graubünden).

### Education

The **Sozialwerk LGBT+** advocates for the interests of LGBTIQ+ people and their relatives in Graubünden. They offer counseling, networking, communication, cultural opportunities, and education, such as the **Queer macht Schule** program (which seems to be led by a single person). School education services are also offered by **GLL/ABQ** (see ABQ in the German-speaking region section for more information).

### Health

**Aidshilfe Graubünden** offers testing mainly for men who have sex with men and counseling for LGBTIQ+ people more generally.

### Events and other initiatives

The youth-led **Khurpride**, the first pride in Graubünden, took place in 2022. Among the 2,000 participants, the majority were LGBTIQ+ youth from the region, according to Khurpride. The Khurpride had to be reduced to biannual Prides due to their precarious financial situation. They will further organize a meetup for the LGBTIQ+ associations, members of the parliament, and cultural stakeholders. Finally, they will invite to a roundtable discussion with LGBTIQ+ associations in the canton to enhance collaborations between the different actors.

## POLICIES AND PROJECTS

The **equality office** of Graubünden has a very small budget and no official mandate to support LGBTIQ+ youth but is, generally, perceived as supportive of LGBTIQ+ issues. Pascal Pajic, the only openly LGBTIQ+ politician in the Graubünden parliament, handed in three initiatives in the Graubünden parliament concerning LGBTIQ+ rights, including a request to compile statistics on aggressions against LGBTIQ+ individuals. Two of them (**against so-called conversion therapy and demanding a pride day in schools**) specifically targeted LGBTIQ+ children and youth. Awareness of disparities among LGBTIQ+ youth is, however, low, and all inquiries were rejected by the parliament.

## LUZERN

## ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

### For young people

Every second Thursday, the **Milchbar Luzern** offers an evening for LGBTIQ+ youth to get to know each other, learn more about LGBTIQ+ topics, and have a good time. Except for that, there is, to our knowledge, no group specifically targeting LGBTIQ+ youth.

### Education

**Queer Unity Luzern** is an InfoPoint at the University of Luzern informing LGBTIQ+ students. **S&X Sexuelle Gesundheit Zentralschweiz** offers workshops on sexual health in schools, trying to include LGBTIQ+ sexual health topics. School education services are offered by **GLL/ABQ** (see ABQ in the German-speaking region section for more information) and partly subsidized by S&X Sexuelle Gesundheit Zentralschweiz until the end of 2023.

### Health

**S&X Sexuelle Gesundheit Zentralschweiz** (used to be Aids Hilfe Luzern) is a sexual health counseling center working on behalf of the cantons Luzern, Obwalden, Nidwalden, Uri, and Zug. They offer testing on sexually transmitted infections and counseling on sexual health. Furthermore, they offer counseling for LGBTIQ+ youth and their parents in Luzern.

**Events and other initiatives**

After 17 years, **Pride Zentralschweiz** organized a pride festival again last year. The surrounding **pride goes country** event tried to host an LGBTIQ+ bar meetup in every bigger city/village in the region. Together with the **PinkPanorama Film Festival**, those two are the most visible LGBTIQ+ events in Luzern. **Queer Lozärn** organizes events aiming to unite LGBTIQ+ people from Luzern. Finally, **Queertopia** is a youth-led radio show for LGBTIQ+ people.

## — POLICIES AND PROJECTS

In 2017, the city of Luzern was asked to become part of the **"Rainbow Cities Network"**, but the parliament of the city rejected the request. On their website, they point to LGBTIQ+ associations and research projects. Furthermore, the **cantonal report on equality** refers to the situation of LGBTIQ+ youth. A certain number of parliamentary items addressing the rights and protection of LGBTIQ+ people have been submitted since 2018. Among these, one asking to guarantee more integrity for "vulnerable refugees" and another for the police to report aggressions against LGBTIQ+ people were rejected. A planning report on promoting "gender and lifestyle equality" was accepted in 2022. Other proposals – **for a ban on so-called conversion therapies, for better protection against discrimination in schools** – are being examined/processed or pending.

# NIDWALDEN

## — ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

In Nidwalden, we could not find any meetings/activities for LGBTIQ+ youth besides one "Pride goes country" bar evening by **Pride Zentralschweiz**.

**Education**

**GLL/ABQ** offers workshops in schools, subsidized by S&X Sexuelle Gesundheit Zentralschweiz. Contrary to the other cantons in the Zentralschweiz region, there are still subsidized workshops available.

**Health**

**S&X Sexuelle Gesundheit Zentralschweiz** (used to be Aids Hilfe Luzern) is a sexual health counseling center working on behalf of the cantons Luzern, Obwalden, Nidwalden, Uri, and Zug. They offer testing on sexually transmitted infections and counseling on sexual health. Furthermore, they offer counseling for LGBTIQ+ youth and their parents in Luzern.

## — POLICIES AND PROJECTS

A **brochure from the Bildungs und Gesundheitsdirektion** for sex education mentions LGBTIQ+ identities. Apart from that, a one-time workshop on the mental health of LGBTIQ+ youth was offered during the campaign "Wie geht's dir?". Besides that, there is no cantonal policy or strategy on LGBTIQ+ issues. No parliamentary items related to LGBTIQ+ issues appear to have been submitted either.

# OBWALDEN

## — ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

**For young people**

**QueerKaff**, the first and only LGBTIQ+ organization in canton Obwalden, organizes monthly meetups. They are newly part of the Milchjugend.

**Education**

**S&X Sexuelle Gesundheit Zentralschweiz** offers workshops on sexual health in schools, trying to include LGBTIQ+ sexual health topics. School education services are offered by **GLL/ABQ** (see ABQ in the German-speaking region section for more information). The limited contingent of partly subsidized workshops is, however, already booked.

**Health**

**S&X Sexuelle Gesundheit Zentralschweiz** (used to be Aids Hilfe Luzern) is a sexual health counseling center working on behalf of the cantons of Luzern, Obwalden, Nidwalden, Uri, and Zug. They offer testing on sexually transmitted infections and counseling on sexual health. Furthermore, they offer counseling for LGBTIQ+ youth and their parents in Luzern.

## POLICIES AND PROJECTS

At the political level, there is no movement toward greater LGBTIQ+ inclusivity. The canton does not support or fund projects for LGBTIQ+ youth.

# SCHAFFHAUSEN

## ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

**Queerdom** organizes regular meetings and advocates for the rights of LGBTIQ+ people. They are showing their presence in Schaffhausen with information booths. Furthermore, they occasionally organize walks, tournaments, and other events.

### For young people

**Andersh** offered LGBTIQ+ youth meetings, but they seem to be no longer active.

### Education

School education services are offered by **GLL/ABQ** (see ABQ in the German-speaking region section for more information).

## POLICIES AND PROJECTS

The only project or policy we could find was a cantonal brochure about implementing the Istanbul convention in Schaffhausen mentioning LGBTIQ+ topics. No parliamentary items related to LGBTIQ+ issues appear to have been submitted.

# SCHWYZ

## ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

**Mythengay** organizes leisure activities (hiking, going to the cinema, and to prides together) but has no explicit youth offers.

### For young people

**Queerpuzzles** organizes monthly youth meetings. They started at their school but are also open for all LGBTIQ+ people under 26.

**Education**

School education services are offered by **GLL/ABQ** (see ABQ in the German-speaking region section for more information).

**Events and other initiatives**

After 17 years, **Pride Zentralschweiz** organized a pride festival again last year.

## — POLICIES AND PROJECTS

Three interpellations regarding LGBTIQ+ topics were handed in (so-called conversion therapies in canton Schwyz, protection from hate crimes for sexual minority members, and establishing an LGBTIQ+ office). All inquiries were perceived as unnecessary and rejected by the council. Finally, there seems to be an LGBTIQ+ working group within the cantonal equality office.

# SOLOTHURN

## — ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

**Queer Mittelland** formed during the marriage equality campaign and organizes LGBTIQ+ hangouts, which take place in Solothurn, Baden, Aarau, and Olten on an alternating basis. Further, they produced and distributed education and awareness materials. Besides QueerMittelland, the only other active group for LGBTIQ+ people is **Solesch**. They meet weekly and organize an LGBTIQ+ party. They have no focus on LGBTIQ+ youth and are not aware of any LGBTIQ+ youth group in Solothurn but are partly LGBTIQ+ youth-led.

**Education**

School education services are offered by **GLL/ABQ** (see ABQ in the German-speaking region section for more information).

## — POLICIES AND PROJECTS

In Solothurn, Queer Mittelland was invited to Kids and Youth Days 2022. Besides that, there are no services offered by the canton. The canton decided not to apply for the LGBTI-Label for the workplace. While the Commission of Justice asked the Executive Council of the canton to change police practices to **record**



**and analyze anti-LGBTIQ+ aggressions**, the Executive Council declined this request. In response to an interpellation requesting an overview of the situation in the canton with regard to so-called conversion therapies, the canton stated having taken disciplinary measures, although a formal ban does at present not exist. Another question submitted to the parliament concerned the implementation of the non-discrimination penal norm based on sexual orientation.

## ST. GALLEN

### ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

The platform **Queer Lake** informs LGBTIQ+ people about LGBTIQ+ issues and current events in the Lake Constance region. **Sozialwerk LGBT+** advocates for the interests of LGBTIQ+ people and their relatives in St. Gallen. They offer counseling, education, networking, communication, and cultural opportunities.

#### For young people

**Offener Queer Treff Wil** offers meetings for LGBTIQ+ people and allies from 16 to 20 years old. **Treff LGBT+**, hosted by **Sozialwerk LGBT+**, offers meetings for LGBTIQ+ youth. LGBTIQ+ youth are further using the offers by **Otherside** and **AHSGA**.

#### Education

The school education program **COMOUT**, which is offered by **AHSGA**, makes the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities visible and, thus, sets an example for greater LGBTIQ+ youth acceptance. The **Sozialwerk LGBT+** offers parallel the **Queer Macht Schule** program, which seems to be led by one person.

At the university level, there are several LGBTIQ+ initiatives. **Unigay St. Gallen** is a student association that organizes events for LGBTIQ+ students. Since 2020, Unigay has organized a **pride month** in close collaboration with numerous university bodies. Finally, **Get Connected**, a student-led initiative, brings LGBTIQ+ students with young and senior professionals together. They offer a mentoring scheme and organize events twice a year, which take place in Zürich.

**Health**

The **Aidshilfe St. Gallen Appenzell (AHSGA)** offers counseling about sexual health, particularly among men who have sex with men. They further act as a point of contact for LGBTIQ+ people experiencing discrimination.

**Sport**

**Queerfussball Ostschweiz** meets every other Tuesday to play soccer among LGBTIQ+ people and allies.

**Events and other initiatives**

**Otherside** organizes events for the LGBTIQ+ community around St. Gallen, while **trans Treff Ostschweiz** connects trans people. The **Prinz Bar** is an event location for LGBTIQ+ people in St. Gallen. In 2023, a **St. Gallen Pride** will take place for the first time.

## — POLICIES AND PROJECTS

Several interpellations on LGBTIQ+ rights have been submitted recently. The request to establish a cantonal action plan against aggressions against LGBTIQ+ people (including recording of aggressions and information in schools) was not accepted. A proposal to **create shelters for LGBTIQ+ youth and adults in the canton is currently being examined, while another to create hate crime statistics has been adopted** (mandate to draft a legislative bill). Furthermore, the cantonal council wants to expand LGBTIQ+ counseling services and **prohibit so-called conversion therapies**.

**Gender Matters: "Let's Talk About Sex – Sexualaufklärung und Gleichstellung"** – a series of events on gender and equality – was organized by the Competence Center for Integration and Equal Opportunities (Equality Office) of the canton.

Finally, as part of a collaboration between the specialist office for AIDS and sexual issues and the office for equality of the canton, an ongoing project aims to offer **workshops for parents of trans children** to sensitize them on trans issues.

## THURGAU

## — ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

**Queer Thurgau** offers a safe space for LGBTIQ+ people, and promotes the visibility of and equal rights for LGBTIQ+ people. **HOT Thurgau** hosts meetups for gay and bisexual men and friends.

#### For young people

To our knowledge, there are no LGBTIQ+ youth groups.

#### Education

**QueerThurgau** as well as **GLL/ABQ** (see German-speaking region) offer education training on LGBTIQ+ issues in schools. These workshops empower LGBTIQ+ youth and foster positive attitudes among their straight peers.

#### Health

**Perspektive Thurgau** (Aidshilfe network) offers sexual health counseling, particularly for men who have sex with men and sex workers.

#### Religion

The "**AG Kirche**" of Queer Thurgau connects religious LGBTIQ+ people and aims to promote more tolerance among the Catholic, Protestant, and Free Churches in Thurgau.

#### Events and other initiatives

In Thurgau, **CSD am See** organizes in Thurgau and Konstanz (Germany) a political CSD demonstration. The "**AG Freizeit**" of Queer Thurgau organizes monthly events for the LGBTIQ+ community and represents Thurgau at pride. Finally, the **PinkApple Filmfestival** is screening both in Frauenfeld and Zürich. The PinkApple Festival is the biggest annual LGBTIQ+ film festival in Switzerland, aiming to represent LGBTIQ+ and queer artists.

## — POLICIES AND PROJECTS

Thurgau has no cantonal equality office and no office for LGBTIQ+ issues. The annual conference from the middle school teachers focused on the LGBTIQ+ topic, where they invited LGBTIQ+ students to give talks. **Frau & Arbeit by Frauenzentrale Thurgau** is a counseling service founded partially by canton Thurgau

concerning women and topics such as sexual harassment at work. Sometimes they have LGBTIQ+ clients, especially trans clients, but are not specialized. Regarding policies targeting LGBTIQ+ youth, a motion was filed in 2020 asking to **record hate crimes** against LGBTIQ+ people. Yet the cantonal Executive Council rejected the motion as they saw no need to take any action.

## URI

### ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

In Zentralschweiz, there are fewer LGBTIQ+ organizations compared to Zürich or Bern.

#### For young people

In Uri, we could not find any meetings/activities for LGBTIQ+ children and youth besides one "**Pride goes country**" bar evening by Pride Zentralschweiz.

#### Education

School education services are offered by **GLL/ABQ** (see ABQ in the German-speaking region section for more information).

#### Health

**S&X Sexuelle Gesundheit Zentralschweiz** (used to be Aids Hilfe Luzern) is a sexual health counseling center working on behalf of the cantons of Luzern, Obwalden, Nidwalden, Uri, and Zug. They offer testing on sexually transmitted infections and counseling on sexual health. Furthermore, they offer counseling for LGBTIQ+ youth and their parents in Luzern.

### POLICIES AND PROJECTS

There is no movement toward more LGBTIQ+ inclusivity in Uri. The official documents by the **Kommission für die Gleichstellung von Frau und Mann** or, any other cantonal office do not mention LGBTIQ+ issues. An action plan regarding (youth) mental health does mention LGBTIQ+ youth as a vulnerable group, though.

## ZUG

## — ORGANIZATIONS/PARTNERS

**Queer Zug** is an LGBTIQ+ association. They offer for all members under the LGBTIQ+ umbrella a biweekly community meetup. Additionally, Queer Zug informs and educates LGBTIQ+ people and others with their newsletter and social media activities.

**For young people**

To our knowledge, there are no LGBTIQ+ youth/children's groups.

**Education**

**GLL/ABQ** (see German-speaking region) offers education training on LGBTIQ+ issues in schools. These workshops empower LGBTIQ+ youth and foster positive attitudes among their straight peers.

**Health**

**S&X Sexuelle Gesundheit Zentralschweiz** (used to be Aids Hilfe Luzern) is a sexual health counseling center working on behalf of the cantons of Luzern, Obwalden, Nidwalden, Uri, and Zug. They offer testing on sexually transmitted infections and counseling on STIs. Furthermore, they offer counseling for LGBTIQ+ youth and their parents in Luzern.

**Religion**

Although there are no active LGBTIQ+ churches/working groups in Zug, to our knowledge, Irène Schwyn is a priest and church council member at the Reformierte Kirche Zug. She works on the rainbow indexes for churches in Europe and gives interviews on topics such as being LGBTIQ+ in church.

## — POLICIES AND PROJECTS

A postulate for **better protection against hate against sexual minorities**, including demands for an LGBTIQ+ counseling service, education in schools, police, and victim support services in canton Zug, was recently filed. Yet, the parliament decided in June 2022 that no action was needed in schools, police, and victim support services, but agreed that a general discrimination counseling service with a focus on LGBTIQ+ issues should be founded (but no new discrimination counseling has been founded so far).

Additionally, an interpellation requesting the cantonal council about the course of action regarding **hate crimes** was deposited in 2022. The council rejected the interpellation seeing no need to act.

## ZÜRICH

The canton of Zürich, particularly the city of Zürich, benefits from a dense network of associations aiming to promote and defend LGBTIQ+ rights. A lot of them are gathered in the house of colors (**Regenbogenhaus**), a place for the community to read, gather, discuss, create, and come together.

### ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

#### For and by young people

**Milchjugend** is the central organization in Zürich (and German-speaking Switzerland) for LGBTIQ+ youth. In Zürich, they are present with parties/evening activities like Milchbar, Milchball, and Lila Festival. Every third month, they publish the Milchbuechli, a magazine written by and for LGBTIQ+ youth. They further organize the **Milchbar Zürich** – a frequented community event for and by LGBTIQ+ youth. Other meetings explicitly for LGBTIQ+ youth include **Queertreff im Jugi-4**, **Rainbow Teens** for 11–14 years old (haz), and **spot25** for youth under 27 years (haz). **Du-bist-du** has been launched by Sexual Health Zürich SeGZ and Checkpoint Zürich and is based on a peer approach. Du-bist-du promotes the mental and physical health of young LGBTIQ+ people. They further engage in awareness raising events to reduce prejudice among straight youth (for more information, see German-speaking region).

**HAZ – Queer Zürich** is one of the largest LGBTIQ+ organizations in Switzerland. They advocate for the respect of fundamental and human rights and the full legal equality of LGBTIQ+ people in all areas of life. Many smaller groups are part of Haz Queer Zürich – such as the bi group, aspec (aromantic/asexual spectrum) group, queer migrants, and trans group – and offer regular meetups for subgroups of the LGBTIQ+ community.

#### Education

Some schools also have their own LGBTIQ+ youth organizations, like **Reallygay** (Gymnasium Rämibühl) and **KFR Queer**. The **SGIS PRIDE Educators** group is a network of LGBTIQ+ and ally

educators working in international schools in Switzerland. School education services are offered by **GLL/ABQ** (see ABQ in the German-speaking region section for more information). At the university level, **PolyUniQue** is the LGBTIQ+ student association of all universities in Zürich. The two former associations L-Punkt and z&h merged to create one more inclusive student organization. PolyUniQue offers a safe space for LGBTIQ+ students and organizes various events. **Queer\*z** is another association for university students in Zürich with a political, feministic, and colorful agenda, which advocates for LGBTIQ+ rights at the university level. They did, for example, a campaign for a more trans inclusive university. **Get Connected** (based in St. Gallen) organizes networking events between LGBTIQ+ students and LGBTIQ+ professionals twice a year, which take place in Zürich.

### Health

Zürich has many services related to LGBTIQ+ health, although traditional services might be less tailored to and frequented by LGBTIQ+ women. **Checkpoint Zürich** offers a wide range of medical, nursing, psychological, and social services. Its **Dr. Gay** campaign focuses on promoting sexual health particularly among men who have sex with men. The **trans Fachstelle Zürich** (by Checkpoint) offers free trans walk-in counseling, which is used frequently by trans and non-binary youth. Finally, **SeGZ** informs, advises, and treats people in the canton of Zürich with questions about sexually transmitted infections and questions about their sexual health.

### Religion

**Mosaic Church** and **Kreuz und Queer** offer services for Christian LGBTIQ+ people.

### Sport

**Rainbow Sport Zürich** offers about ten different LGBTIQ+ sports activities for over 400 LGBTIQ+ people. **Zürich City Roller Derby** is also known for their LGBTIQ+ inclusion in sport, especially for trans and non-binary people.

### Events and other initiatives

**Zürich Pride**, the biggest LGBTIQ+ event in Switzerland, takes place annually in Zürich. They organize a demonstration, a festival, surrounding information campaigns, and events. The pride attracts thousands of LGBTIQ+ people and supporters every year. The **Antikapitalistischer CSD Zürich** organizes an alternative pride demonstration, which takes place right after Zürich Pride.

The **PinkApple Filmfestival** is the biggest annual LGBTIQ+ film festival in Switzerland, aiming to represent LGBTIQ+ and queer artists. **Chor Rosa** invites LGBTIQ+ and other people to sing in a choir together; at least once a year, they organize concerts. Zürich has several LGBTIQ+ friendly bars and parties, which are listed on the du-bist-du Instagram page. Finally, the **Regenbogenhaus** offers many cultural events for the LGBTIQ+ community, space for counseling, and a shared office used by different LGBTIQ+ organisations.

## — POLICIES AND PROJECTS

Several initiatives were handed in at the cantonal council and the city of Zürich (**i.e., assessing the existing support system of LGBTIQ+ youth, the situation of LGBTIQ+ refugees, and a request for the compilation of statistics on aggressions against LGBTIQ+ individuals**). The cantonal council stated that there is enough support for LGBTIQ+ youth and, therefore, is not planning further measures on a cantonal level.

An interpellation was filed in the city council about the **situation of LGBTIQ+ refugees in Zürich**. Other objects submitted concerned further training in dealing with aggressions against LGBTIQ+ individuals, the demand for effective protection against discrimination (promotion of equality for LGBTI people, development of measures against hate communication), the ban on so-called conversion therapies, and the coverage of costs for the assistance and treatment of intersex children and their parents. These three objects are currently pending. Further, inquiries requested the city of Zürich to report on the **measures taken to prevent anti-LGBTIQ+ violence**. The city council refers to their "Gleichstellungsplan 2019–2022". Finally, there is a **guideline for teachers** in the canton of Zürich to address sexual health in middle schools and vocational schools.



# GAPS AND NEEDS: GERMAN-SPEAKING CANTONS

The results of the mapping as well as the interviews/email exchanges with representatives<sup>7</sup> from different regions, highlight important disparities within the German-speaking region: there are almost no activities and services for LGBTIQ+ children, and most activities for LGBTIQ+ youth and educational services are offered in bigger cities – Zürich offers most activities, followed by a lesser extent by Bern, Basel, Baden, Chur, and Winterthur – while rural areas have a lack of educational training, often no specialist's health centers, and little or no offers for LGBTIQ+ youth.

Indeed, most services for LGBTIQ+ youth are offered by the cantons of Zürich, Bern, and Basel. Zürich alone offers six meetups for LGBTIQ+ youth and one for LGBTIQ+ children, while other cantons/regions usually have one or no youth groups. For the "Ostschweiz" region, a divergent picture emerges: Schaffhausen and Thurgau provide some services for LGBTIQ+ people (although none with a specific youth focus), while there are no offers in Appenzell Ausserrhoden and Appenzell Innerrhoden. In general, there are little to no offers for LGBTIQ+ youth in smaller cantons in the periphery (Uri, Nidwalden, and Glarus in the "Zentralschweiz" region; Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Appenzell Innerrhoden, or Graubünden in the "Ostschweiz" region). One exception is QueerKaff, a youth-led organization in Obwalden. A group of LGBTIQ+ friends started a youth meetup in a region where no LGBTIQ+ organization existed. While this effort increases the visibility of and provides a sense of belonging for LGBTIQ+ youth in Obwalden, the organizers and their families have faced discrimination and violence.

There are not only differences between cantons/regions but also within individual cantons and/or regions. Most services are provided in the bigger cities (Basel for its surrounding regions, Bern for the "Mittelland", St. Gallen for the "Ostschweiz" region, Luzern for the "Zentralschweiz" region, and Zürich and Winterthur for the canton of Zürich). Further, while some cantons such as Aargau and Graubünden are conservative in terms of LGBTIQ+ services and initiatives toward greater LGBTIQ+ inclusion have been rejected by the cantonal Parliaments, the cities of Baden (Aargau) and Chur (Graubünden) provide some offers for LGBTIQ+ youth. Given empirical evidence that rural areas are often less accepting of LGBTIQ+ people, there is a need to establish a better support system for LGBTIQ+ youth in peripheral cantons and rural regions within all cantons.

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7 We consulted with experts from the following associations/organizations (listed in alphabetical order): Aidshilfe of Basel-Landschaft and Basel-Stadt, Fachstelle für Sexualfragen (AHSGA) - Comout, GLL (soon merged with ABQ), Inter-action-suisse, LOS, Milchjugend, PinkCross, Queeres ah&oh, QueerKaff, Queer Mittelland, QueerPuzzles, Queer Students Bern, trans Fachstelle Zürich (Checkpoint), Trans Safety Emergency Fund, and TGNS.

Indeed, this uneven distribution of services stands in stark contrast to the needs of LGBTIQ+ youth in rural areas, who experience pronounced discrimination, bullying, and marginalization while receiving little support. Although some youth from rural areas rely on (online) support structures from other cantons, in-person services are central to supporting struggling LGBTIQ+ youth and connecting them with trained professionals and supportive peers. On a positive note, several LGBTIQ+ associations in smaller cantons were founded during the marriage equality campaign, where Switzerland was divided into seven big regions (e.g., Queer Mittelland) and are filling the gap in the rural regions. In general, but particularly in rural areas, more support structures, educational training, community meetups, and counseling services are needed to empower LGBTIQ+ youth and change existing social norms toward an inclusive and safe environment. Providing training on LGBTIQ+ issues for youth workers might also be a powerful tool to provide more targeted services to LGBTIQ+ youth living in rural areas (as proposed by the ASHGA). Programs for emergency shelters and temporary housing are also needed.

While LGBTIQ+ youth continue to be particularly vulnerable, many associations offering LGBTIQ+ youth-related services have limited funding, rely on volunteering, and struggle to offer the services required to address the needs of LGBTIQ+ youth. Initiatives led by youth additionally face the challenge of frequent change of members due to aging and or relocation. Applying for funding often requires specific knowledge, is time-consuming, and has an uncertain outcome. It does not only bind many resources that could be used to help LGBTIQ+ youth but creates an additional barrier among smaller associations often located in rural areas. More funding is needed, it should cover different activities aiming to support LGBTIQ+ youth and educate the general population, and barriers to applying (e.g., time, expert knowledge) for funding should be reduced.

Another theme that emerged during the mapping is the specific needs and disparities faced by trans, non-binary, and intersex youth. Overall, the situation for trans, non-binary, and intersex youth is clearly unsatisfactory. There is a lack of knowledge, training, and services offered for trans, non-binary, and intersex youth – a particularly vulnerable group within the LGBTIQ+ community (Eisner & Hässler, 2021; Hässler & Eisner, 2022). Intersex youth are hardly considered at all, do not feel like they belong to the LGBTIQ+ community, and many LGBTIQ+ associations have no specific knowledge on intersex people. Further, free counseling services for trans and non-binary youth are overbooked, and there is a lack of specialist therapists. This problem is particularly pronounced in rural areas. While there are some positive structural developments, there is an increasingly strong media and political discourse specifically against trans and non-binary children that can negatively affect their health and well-being. Professional (paid) advice centers, training for people working with LGBTIQ+ youth, specific shelters, adequate medical care of good quality accessible to all, and trained media experts are needed.

Further challenges on specific needs and disparities within the LGBTIQ+ community emerged during the mapping. First, while recent initiatives like Lyp-sinc by LOS have aimed to educate and promote health-enhancing behavior among women and/or people with vulva who have sex with women and/or people with a vulva, many medical services have traditionally been offered for men who have sex with men. Queer women are further underrepresented in LGBTIQ+ associations and have less access to resources. Second, experiences of multiple discrimination – such as LGBTIQ+ youth who are also, Black, a person of color, belong to an ethnic and/or religious minority, have a disability, or are poor – are seldom addressed. Existing services should be extended, collaborations between different associations strengthened, and specialist services created to better target the different needs of the whole LGBTIQ+ community.

Finally, there is a lack of support for and educational training on LGBTIQ+ issues. External educational training has been shown to increase empathy and knowledge and, therefore, reduce prejudice and discrimination. It further can be an important source of support for LGBTIQ+ youth who often feel invisible, experience discrimination, and do not know who to turn to in case of experiencing discrimination and open questions (Hässler & Eisner, 2022). Yet, external educational training in schools and universities is often based on the engagement of individual teachers or lecturers and might face resistance in areas with less tolerant social norms. At the school level, external educational training in schools is partly covered in some but not all German-speaking cantons and depends on volunteer engagement, which might limit access to external education among students most in need. At the university level, while the equality offices of the universities have increased their engagement for LGBTIQ+ students, systematic diversity training among students and staff are not existing. Therefore, securing funding for external educational training seems advisable. This training should not only educate students but also train teachers, lecturers, and technical staff.

To conclude, while LGBTIQ+ youth continue to be particularly vulnerable and disparities within the LGBTIQ+ community exists, many organizations offering LGBTIQ+ youth-related services have limited funding, depend on volunteering, and struggle to offer the services required to address the needs of LGBTIQ+ youth. The situation is even more precarious among LGBTIQ+ organizations offering services for those most vulnerable in the LGBTIQ+ community (e.g., trans, non-binary, and intersex people, LGBTIQ+ refugees) and in smaller cantons.

# FRENCH-SPEAKING CANTONS

In the following section, we list organizations/ key actors and policies/projects related to LGBTIQ+ youth in the French-speaking cantons of Switzerland. Please note that Bern is listed in the German-speaking section.

## ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

Several organizations or projects target, or operate in, the entire French-speaking part of Switzerland.

### For young people

The **Fondation Agnodice's** mission is to support the integration and foster the well-being of young trans, non-binary, and gender questioning people (under 18 years old) and their families. To this end, they offer them counseling and support in the social, educational, family, psychological, and medical fields. The foundation also provides awareness-raising and specialized training on these issues to professionals who work with trans people (youth and adults).

Other organizations active in the French-speaking part of Switzerland provide different services that can also benefit the younger public: the **Fédération Romande des Associations LGBT**, for example, aims at allowing an efficient collaboration between several associations. **Ektivock** aims to bring together the non-binary community in French-speaking Switzerland through various services. **Epicène** works in favor of trans people, offering resources, individual support, training, and legal advice to concerned people, their families, and businesses. Les **Klamydia's** provide information in the field of sexual health for women who love women, services and/or events for teenagers and young adults; while the professional network **LWork** aims to bring together homosexual women who work or are following training through regular meetings. Through different actions, **BeYouNetwork**, for their part, "engages people to create a world where gender norms no longer define who we can be, who we can love, and what we can achieve".

Two generalist platforms target young people by offering them information organized by theme, a discussion forum and a space to ask questions to specialists anonymously and free of charge: these are **ciao.ch** (for 11-20 years old) and **ontécoute.ch** (18-25). Although not exclusively related to LGBTIQ+ issues, these matters are also widely addressed on both sites. The **Blues Out site**, an initiative of **Dialogai**, offers information and resources for mental health promotion specifically for the LGBTIQ+ community.

It should also be noted that **various libraries** in the French-speaking part of Switzerland are actively working, via initiatives (events, cafés, exhibitions), to promote inclusion and to provide a welcoming space for LGBTIQ+ people. This, for instance, is through the **Bibliomedia** Foundation.

Finally, let us mention the **magazine 360°**: the only French-speaking Swiss media that follows LGBTIQ+ news.

## — POLICIES AND PROJECTS

Several projects directly target LGBTIQ+ youth from the French-speaking part of Switzerland. One of them is **The Mallette Pédagogique**<sup>1</sup>, which consists of a variety of books aimed at children with different themes around rainbow families. The project targets children in general (10-15 years old). Another one is **the Formation I-CARE pour les Professionnel-les de la Santé par Apprentissage en Ligne**<sup>2</sup> (2019-2023), which aims to develop an online training course for primary healthcare professionals and for medical and nursing students.

As for current developments, it is worth mentioning that, under the impulse of the person in charge of PinkCross for the French-speaking part of Switzerland, a first meeting bringing together different associations which are active in the field of LGBTIQ+ youth was organized in April, with the aim of sharing information (challenges, good practices) and facilitating future collaborations.

1 Thomas Méchineau from the Rainbow families association.

2 Raphaël Bize, Patrick Bodenmann, Erika Volkmar, Zoé Blanc-Scuderi, Arnaud Merglen, and Céline Brockmann from Unisanté (University of Lausanne) and the University of Geneva.

# FRIBOURG/FREIBURG

## ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

### For young people

In the canton of Fribourg, **Sarigai association** (French-speaking), in addition to their other activities and services (e.g., trans group, particular events), specifically addresses young people (up to 25 years old) by offering discussion groups and activities. Other cantonal associations - run by young people and addressed at young people - aim to bring the community together and to provide safe spaces. This is the case of **LAGO**, which organizes different events throughout the year, and **Friqueeers** (more recent, mainly German-speaking), which provides meeting opportunities. In connection with gender identity matters, the **Association trans\*nonbinary** has just been created in the canton.

### Health

**Empreinte**, a center of competence in sexual health, offers (in collaboration with Sarigai) individual counseling to assist, advise, and guide LGBTIQ+ people in need and their families. Empreinte has also established a list of LGBTIQ+ friendly doctors and therapists in the canton.

### Partners and other initiatives

Other offers in the canton include a bookstore related to LGBTIQ+, feminist and ecological issues (**Librairie L'art d'aimer**), and organizations that may also offer, but perhaps less specifically or systematically, services or events related to LGBTIQ+ issues (**Service égalité, diversité et inclusion UNIFR**, **Office familial Fribourg**, **Centre fribourgeois de santé sexuelle**, **Association Mille Sept Sans**, which deals with street harassment prevention).

## POLICIES AND PROJECTS

At the institutional level, there is no cantonal policy or strategy on LGBTIQ+ issues. Recently, a motion was filed at the municipal level to **fight against street harassment**, studying its extent, and suggesting measures to address it. In the same vein but at the cantonal level, a platform to fight against discrimination and harassment was established in 2020 - also following a mandate asking to compile statistics on aggressions against



LGBTIQ+ individuals, which had been accepted by the Grand Council the previous year. These initiatives are not, however, specific to LGBTIQ+ people. As for other parliamentary items, a motion to protect LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers from being sent back to hostile countries was rejected in 2014. In 2021, a question was asked about the application of Article 261bis, while a mandate requested for the ban on the construction of gender-neutral toilets to be abolished.

In collaboration with Sarigai, some other measures are under preparation in relation to the sexual health of LGBTIQ+ people. Collaboration is also currently taking place between Sarigai and REPER – an association whose mission is the promotion of health and the prevention of addictions and risk situations among young people – with the aim of organizing future workshops in educational contexts that specifically focus on LGBTIQ+ issues – these matters being currently only addressed within the framework of the sexual education program.

# GENÈVE

## ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

The canton of Genève benefits from a dense network of associations aiming to promote and defend LGBTIQ+ rights.

### For young people

Two main organizations target young people: **Le Refuge Genève** and **Totem**. **Le Refuge Genève**, an initiative of Dialogai, is a professional social service that aims to help young LGBTIQ+ and/or questioning people up to the age of 30. The work carried out by the Refuge Genève includes several axes: counseling, temporary housing possibilities, groups, and activities for young people; counseling, parenthood support, discussion groups for relatives; collaboration and awareness-raising opportunities for professionals. **Totem**, an initiative of the Fédération Genevoise des Associations LGBT, is a support, welcoming and meeting space for young LGBTIQ+ people up to the age of 25. The group meets twice a month, with a program including debates, films, and themed evenings.

**The Fédération Genevoise des Associations LGBT** is responsible for providing awareness-raising workshops for students and training for teachers in Genève schools to prevent prejudice against LGBTIQ+ people, on behalf of the Département cantonal

de l'Instruction publique, de la Formation et de la Jeunesse. The Fédération Genevoise des associations LGBT includes some other main actors in Genève, which target more or less directly young people. Among their member associations, the **Association 360** offers support, legal advice, and groups (e.g., trans, elders, families); while **Asile LGBT** provides guidance for LGBTIQ+ refugees. Another major actor, **Dialogai**, offers listening and social support and organizes community activities. Dialogai is also responsible for the **Checkpoint Genève**, **Le Refuge**, and the mental health promotion site **Blues Out**. Other members include **Hug a Rainbow**, the association of University Hospitals of Genève's LGBTIQ+ employees/allies; **Lestime**, a lesbian and feminist association – a place of welcoming, listening, counseling, and a community and cultural space for lesbian, bisexual, trans, and queer women; **ThinkOut**, the LGBTIQ+ student association of the Genève University, which organizes various events for the community.

Other associations in the canton include **Amnesty LGBTI Genève** – which campaigns for human rights related to sexual orientation and gender identity – and **TransParents** – a collective of parents and relatives of transgender, non-binary, or gender identity questioning people

#### Education

In addition to **ThinkOut**, University of Genève also has two services that address LGBTIQ+ issues: the **Service égalité & diversité**, which conducts awareness-raising and information activities, and the **Law Clinic sur les droits des personnes vulnérables**.

#### Health

Many services also exist in the area of (sexual) health for both young and adult people. **Checkpoint Genève** is an LGBTIQ+ center that offers a wide range of medical, nursing, psychological, and social services. The **Genève Health Group** is active in the fight against HIV and sexually transmitted infections. Their group **Trajectoires Non-binaires** provides meeting opportunities and activities for non-binary people and those questioning their gender. **PVA-Genève** acts in the field of prevention and the fight against HIV/AIDS and STIs through their actions and, in particular, presentations for young people. Finally, the **Unité Santé Jeunes** and the **Unité de Santé Sexuelle et Planning Familial** also work to promote health.



### Religion

Some offers in the canton focus on the relationship between religion and sexual or gender identity. The **Antenne LGBTI de l'Eglise Protestante de Genève**, for example, is a platform providing information and resources on LGBTIQ+ issues and spirituality; the **C+H group** brings together individuals "at the intersection between faith and homosexuality" by organizing inclusive meetings and celebrations; finally, **Le Lab** defines itself as a progressive, activist, and inclusive community of young adults (16 – 45 years old).

### Events and other initiatives

The **Marche des Fiertés**, a major LGBTIQ+ event in Genève, is organized by the Genève Pride association. At the cultural level, the **Filigrane** library specializes in issues related to equality, gender, and feminism; **Everybody's Perfect** organizes and promotes events (e.g., conferences, film festival, performances) aiming to support the community and its artists; the **Fesses-tival Festival** proposes a varied program (e.g., films, performances, round tables, exhibitions) with the aim of promoting a positive and inclusive vision of sexualities. Finally, among the collectives: **CRAQ**, a non-mixed militant collective, was created with the wish to bring together and think about the construction of space by and for LGBTIQ+ people.

### Sport

In terms of sports activities, **H20 Genève** is an LGBTIQ+ swimming club.

### Key donors

The **Centre Maurice Chalumeau en sciences des sexualités** at the University of Genève supports research and training in the sciences of sexuality (i.e., "arts and knowledge on sexualities", "sexual rights", and "sexual health"). Several research projects directly or indirectly targeting LGBTIQ+ youth have been supported by this center.

## POLICIES AND PROJECTS

At the municipal level, the **City of Genève** has had a **position specifically dedicated to LGBTIQ+ issues** since 2012, the year in which it began to develop action plans<sup>3</sup>. The current strategy – **Stratégie Municipale LGBTIQ+ 2020 – 2030** is divided into seven main axes and includes various awareness-raising actions, also aimed at young people (considered a "fragile audience"). Through the **Service Agenda 21 – Ville Durable**, the city finances various projects and subsidizes several associations (360, Asile LGBTIQ+, Fédération genevoise des association LGBT + groupe Totem, le refuge Genève, Lestime, Everybody's Perfect, Antenne LGBTI de l'Église protestante de Genève). It should also be noted that the city's LGBTIQ+ staff and allies have formed an association: **Rainbow Ville**.

At the cantonal level, the **Bureau de la promotion de l'égalité entre femmes et hommes et de la prévention des violences domestiques (BPEV)** has also been, since 2016, responsible for the prevention of discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity. To this aim, the BPEV works with – or supports – different partners to develop measures of information, awareness, and prevention of prejudice against LGBTIQ+ people as well as to defend their rights.

Regarding the prevention of prejudice against LGBTIQ+ people in educational settings, the **Fédération Genevoise des Associations LGBTIQ+** has been mandated by the **Département de l'Instruction Publique (DIP)**, de la Formation et de la Jeunesse of the canton of Genève to set up a program of training and awareness-raising actions in this regard. This program is done in partnership with the DIP, le Service Santé de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse and the schools.

In March 2023, the **Grand Council of Genève** approved a **legislative bill to promote equality between people and to fight against violence and discrimination** based on sex, affective and sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics, making Genève a pioneer canton in this area. The different chapters of the text deal with many points. The law includes, notably, prevention measures through the training of civil servants in all areas, information, and awareness-raising on these topics through specific campaigns, and the establishment of a system for receiving complaints from victims and witnesses of discrimination against LGBTIQ+ individuals. The law also

3 Within this framework and since 2013, it has conducted an annual campaign, among other things. In 2015, this campaign specifically targeted young people.

requires the development of cantonal action plans that will be submitted to the Grand Council. Some incentive measures are also aimed at the private sector. Various other items have been presented to the parliament over the years (ranging from respect for the rights of trans people in detention, to workplace health for LGBTIQ+ people in the public sector, ...). Among these items, we can find a motion to ban so-called conversion therapies, which was adopted.

In terms of projects, **Santé Gaie** (from Dialogai) is an action research project that provides answers to the desire of gay people to live better. Another ongoing research project, **les Parcours de Formation Professionnelle au Prisme du Genre et de l'Orientation Sexuelle** project (2019 – 2023) aims to investigate how experiences of sexism or homophobic discrimination impact students' (16 – 25 years old) desire to continue or discontinue vocational training. Finally, the **WE ARE EVERYWHERE. Revendications et Réappropriations de l'Espace et de la Citoyenneté par les Minorités Sexuelles en Contexte de Ville Néolibérale**<sup>4</sup> project (2021– 2023) and the **Accès à la Procréation Médicalement Assistée des Personnes Trans**<sup>5</sup> are two research projects conducted by researchers at the University of Geneva.

# JURA

## ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

**Juragai** is the only LGBTIQ+ association of the **Arc jurassien**, which objectives are to provide support, information, and meeting opportunities. Although they do not specifically target young people, they organize activities in which they are likely to participate, including events at its premises about once a month.

### Health

In terms of sexual health, two other bodies in the canton are likely to offer services that benefit LGBTIQ+ people: the **Centre de santé sexuelle** and **the Groupe Sida Jura**, which fight against AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

4 Karine Duplan.

5 Delphine Gardey and Solène Gouilhers.

## POLICIES AND PROJECTS

At the institutional level, there is no cantonal policy or strategy on LGBTIQ+ issues. There also seems to be a total absence of projects related to these matters.

At the parliamentary level, a motion has been submitted (and approved) to **ban so-called conversion therapies** in the canton. To this aim, a law will soon be drafted.

# NEUCHÂTEL

## ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

### For young people

In terms of organizations specifically targeting LGBTIQ+ youth, the **Refuge Neuchâtel**, founded in 2021, aims to provide a place of welcoming, sharing, and support. While maintaining a "generalist" character, it is a center of competence, in particular, for trans people. Among their services for young people: individual counseling, mediation, support for administrative and medical procedures, and discussion groups. Refuge Neuchâtel is also a center of expertise for health and social professionals, schools, and institutions: they provide them with training and workshops.

**QueerNeuch** provides support and counseling for LGBTIQ+ people over the age of 16. They offer discussion groups, events, and community activities, such as a meeting in different places in Neuchâtel twice a month.

### Education

Cantonal offers include organizations that may also offer – but perhaps less specifically or systematically – services or events related to LGBTIQ+ issues (**Bureau égalité et diversité de l'UNINE, Service égalité et diversité de la Haute Ecole Arc**).

### Health

**Générations Sexualités Neuchâtel** (GSN), for its part, is the partner association of the **Service de la santé publique** (SCSP) for sexual education at the cantonal level. As part of this mandate, it also works to ensure prevention and health promotion among LGBTIQ+ populations, and to fight against prejudice against LGBTIQ+ people and discrimination within the canton. Among their services that also benefit young people in this regard

are individual counseling (coming out, support for parents and professionals) as well as awareness-raising workshops in schools and institutions.

#### Religion

The **Arc-en-Ciel association** gathers Christians who wish to "deepen their faith in relation to their sexual and gender identity", offering them support in the form of discussion groups and organizing inclusive celebrations.

#### Migration

The Neuchâtel branch of **Asile LGBTIQ+** assists LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers.

#### Events and other initiatives

Other associations in the canton benefit young people, although they do not offer them specific activities. The **Sui Generis collective**, specialized in trans-identity issues, provides support, and organizes events for trans people and their relatives in order to bring people together, share, and inform. Also of note is the association **Les Dragâtelaises**, which organizes drag shows, and the feminist queer collective **Le Bûcher**.

## POLICIES AND PROJECTS

No specific policy or strategy for LGBTIQ+ people exist in the canton of Neuchâtel. However, a service contract is in place between **the Service de la santé publique (SCSP)** and **Généralités Sexualités Neuchâtel (GSN)** – mainly in the area of sexual education within schools – but with prevention and health promotion activities targeting LGBTIQ+ populations as well.

In 2021, a **postulate asking for multifactorial protection of LGBTIQ+ individuals** was accepted by the Grand Council. As part of the work related to this subject, the **Office de la politique familiale et de l'égalité (OPFE)** has been asked to prepare a report – expected this fall – presenting the current situation and needs of LGBTIQ+ people in the canton<sup>6</sup>. In connection with the response to this postulate, measures focusing on young people should be proposed by the State Council. Between 2021 and 2023, several other **parliamentary questions or objects related to the rights and protection of LGBTIQ+ youth** were

6

A survey was also launched with the aim of understanding the challenges that LGBTIQ+ individuals face on a daily basis.

submitted. In early May 2023, following a motion, the Grand Council decided to **ban all practices aimed at changing sexual or affective orientation and gender identity**. Three other objects concerning LGBTIQ+ refugees and the issue of gender-neutral toilets in state/public facilities are currently being dealt with by the relevant departments.

Also of note is the creation, in 2021, of **an LGBTIQ+ commission within Neuchâtel's Socialist Party**, with the aim of informing, educating, and creating safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ people.

# VALAIS/WALLIS

## ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

### For young people

**Alpagai** is one of the main associations in the canton of Valais that (also) targets LGBTIQ+ youth and aims to offer a warm welcome and a space for meetings and discussions. Among their services are a youth group (for people up to the age of 25, twice a month, once in Sion and once in Monthey), a trans group, a parents' network, and a permanence.

Based in Martigny, **QlubQueer** aims for their part to support, bring together, and make visible the LGBTIQ+ community of the Bas-Valais. They offer a permanence and a space where events are regularly organized. The association also offers a youth (up to the age of 25) and a parent group.

**QueerWallis** aims to be the contact point for the LGBTIQ+ community of the Upper Valais, relatives, and friends. It offers, for instance, support on the coming out or transition journey. Even though they do not have their own premises, they organize an event once or twice a month.

In the French-speaking part of Valais, **Fondation Agnodice** also assists young people. Within the framework of individual support, they sometimes give presentations in educational settings.

### Health

The **SIPE**, sexual health centers, also offer counseling on "sexuality"-related issues. They are responsible for providing sex education in schools. These are the only official and systematic presentations in educational settings in which LGBTIQ+ issues are (normally) also addressed.

The **AIDShilfe Oberwallis** is a specialized center for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. They inform and advise on issues related to sexually transmitted infections. They advocate for people with HIV, for LGBTIQ+ people as well as for sex workers.

#### Events and other initiatives

Other organizations targeting, more or less directly, the LGBTIQ+ (youth) population include **Pride Valais/Wallis**, organizer of the pride in Martigny in 2024.

## POLICIES AND PROJECTS

In Valais, the **Office Cantonal de l'Égalité et de la Famille (OCEF)** is a place of coordination and information for all issues related to gender equality, families, LGBTIQ+ people, and domestic violence. A **cantonal Action Plan to fight against discrimination toward LGBTIQ+ individuals** was established in 2022, under the responsibility of the Département de la santé, des affaires sociales et de la culture (DSSC). Within the framework of this action plan, a new position dedicated to LGBTIQ+ issues has also been created at the OCEF. The OCEF is also in charge of conducting a cantonal campaign against discrimination toward LGBTIQ+ people every year.

Among the offers at the institutional level, **PREMIS**, the program for the prevention of rejection of sexual minorities in the canton of Valais (Promotion Santé Valais), was created to inform and fight against discrimination of LGBTIQ+ people. The program is mainly aimed at the education, teaching, and health sectors. Furthermore, it offers awareness-raising training for professionals on LGBTIQ+ issues and counseling for LGBTIQ+ people.

In terms of parliamentary items, the adoption of the action plan for LGBTIQ+ people provoked two negative attacks from opponents questioning its legitimacy. With regard to the rights and protection of LGBTIQ+ people and youth, on the other hand, it is possible to report the request to record violence against LGBTIQ+ people (rejected), to ban so-called conversion therapies (adopted, but no protection in the law at present), to improve the inclusion of trans and non-binary pupils in educational settings (in process), and to take action against crimes against LGBTIQ+ individuals (in application of article 261bis, in process).



Regarding the projects, "**LGBT\* Valais – An Oral History of Queer Sexualities in Valais**", a collaboration between the Institute of Social Work and EDHEA of the HES-SO Valais, QueerWallis, and Alpagai, aims to document the experiences of queer life of different generations in Valais by gathering LGBTIQ+ testimonies.

# VAUD

## — ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

### For young people

**VoGay**, Vaud's association for sexual and gender diversity, organizes a wide range of activities (recreational, informative, sports, etc.) and provides different services (i.e., legal advice) for the community. They also provide information, resources, and tools to professionals active in health, education, or other relevant fields. They specifically address people from 15 to 25 years old through a youth group (discussion group and various activities, with the aim of offering them safe spaces, and meeting opportunities) and systematic presentations to prevent prejudice against LGBTIQ+ individuals in educational settings.

The association **Lilith** offers, for their part, various social and political actions for women who love women, including several activities per month at its premises or outside. Among its groups, "**Queer Girls**" is conceived as a space of support and sharing twice a month for all young bi, a, pan, sexual, queer persons from 13 to 25 years old.

### Education

At UNIL and EPFL, **PlanQueer** association provides support to LGBTIQ+ students and organizes events for better recognition, visibility, and protection of queer students. Further, **Queermance** offers confidential listening space for queer people on the university campuses of UNIL and EPFL. EPFL's **safe space** group supports the queer community through help, mentorship, and proposals for a more inclusive campus. The **Bureau de l'égalité de l'EPFL** and **Service de l'égalité de l'UNIL** also offer services or events related to LGBTIQ+ issues. Finally, **Amnesty LGBTQ HEL** offers resources for LGBTIQ+ students at applied universities in Lausanne. In addition, many higher education institutions (e.g., HEP, Ecole de la Source) have established groups dealing with issues related to sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics.



### Health

In the area of sexual health, **PROFA Foundation**, present throughout the whole canton, has as its general mission to promote the quality of emotional, relational, and sexual life. They target LGBTIQ+ people through: "**Santé sexuelle**", screening, and counseling services on sexual and gender health; "**Checkpoint Vaud**", which offers a wide range of medical, psychological, and social services to men who have sex with men, transgender people, and their partners, and more specifically the **Pôle trans** (counseling for trans and non-binary people aged 18 and over); "**L-Check**", a counseling, prevention, and health promotion center dedicated to women who have sex with women. Profa's **Georgette in Love** program provides peer-based sexual health prevention through workshops and booths in post-compulsory schools, community centers, and festive environments. The **Division Interdisciplinaire de Santé des Adolescents** (DISA), which also collaborates with the Fondation Agnodice, offers free consultations to teenagers for any questions related to sexual orientation and gender identity. Finally, the **Pôle Agression Violence** (PAV) provides help and support to LGBTIQ+ people who are victims of violence.

### Religion

Among other organizations active on LGBTIQ+ issues (not directly with a "youth" focus but that can benefit them as well), the **Plateforme des inclusivités of the Eglise Évangélique Réformée Vaudoise (EERV)** offers discussion groups, individual support, and activities related to the issues of inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people in religious settings. In particular, EERV's group "**A bras ouverts**" meets once per month in Lausanne to bring together LGBTIQ+ people between 15 and 45 years old.

### Migration

The **Rainbow Spot** association informs and supports LGBTIQ+ migrants in their social, legal, and administrative procedures.

### Sport

**Aquarius Lausanne** is an LGBTIQ+ swimming club for swimmers of all levels over 18 years old. For their part, the **S.T.I.N** association provides sports activities for trans, intersex, and non-binary people.

### Events and other initiatives

The **Fête du Slip** festival presents artistic projects "around sexualities and genders that disobey norms".

## POLICIES AND PROJECTS

At the municipal level, the **City of Lausanne adopted an LGBTIQ+ strategic plan (2021– 2026)**, which includes actions along three axes (open and welcoming public space; inclusive public services; non-discriminatory staff policy toward LGBTIQ+ people). A person was hired to implement and coordinate the measures related to this plan. Also of note is the "**Jeunes vs. Homophobie**" exhibition (set up in 2012, updated in 2017 and 2023), a project created by the Lausanne Youth Council.

At the cantonal level, there is, since 2016, a **project manager position "Respect de la diversité à l'école"**, part of the **Unité de promotion et de la santé et prévention en milieu scolaire** (Unité PSPS, Direction générale de l'enfance et de la jeunesse), which incorporates LGBTIQ+ issues. Since 2012, VoGay has been working in partnership with the Unité PSPS to give presentations in secondary schools.

In 2020, the canton of Vaud created the **position of a cantonal delegate for homophobia and transphobia issues in educational institutions**. Within this framework, the Département de la formation, de la jeunesse et de la culture (DFJC) presented, a year later, **an action plan for the prevention and treatment of homophobia and transphobia in all mandatory and post-mandatory schools**. The plan focuses, first of all, on equipping professionals in the school context. Subsequently, schools apply to the Unité PSPS for validation and funding to organize presentations to students, which are given by Vogay. The Agnodice Foundation also offers, in school settings, support to gender minority members who are transitioning<sup>7</sup>.

In 2022, the canton created the **position of a cantonal delegate for LGBTIQ issues**. The person in charge is **currently developing an action plan** (expected in 2023), which will be submitted to the State Council and serve as the basis for the development of a public policy allowing for better inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people in the administration and in society more broadly.

In terms of parliamentary items, several related to the rights and protection of LGBTIQ+ people have been submitted. Since 2016, these have included a postulate calling for a report to be drawn up outlining the measures taken by the State to fight discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people (report published and accepted), an interpellation to enquire on young LGBTIQ+ people's health,

<sup>7</sup> In response to requests from the field, one of the measures of the plan concerns the inclusion of trans and non-binary students. A directive was presented in this regard to answer frequently asked questions, avoid unequal treatment, and harmonize practices at the cantonal level.

requests to prepare a legislative bill banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (rejected), to take action against crimes against LGBTIQ+ individuals (in application of article 261bis, in process), and to ban so-called conversion therapies (in process, a law should soon be voted in this regard).

Finally, there are several research projects that were conducted in the canton of Vaud, but only a few specifically focus on LGBTIQ+ youth. One project worth mentioning is the **Etudes Populationnelles de Victimisation et Délinquance dans le Canton de Vaud – Volet sur les Populations LGBT<sup>8</sup>** (2014, 2017, 2022), which consists of several population studies on victimization and delinquency among adolescents in the canton of Vaud. This project has been carried out on samples of young people (15, 17-18 years old) in the last year of compulsory education and/or in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of post-compulsory education (2003/04, 2014, 2017, and 2022). With the aim of promoting the 2022' study and public awareness of the issues that it raises, Vogay has produced six videos with concerned young people.

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Sonia Lucia, Sophie Stadelmann, Robin Udrisard, Julien Vonlathen, Lachlan Jaccoud, Michael Amiguet, Denis Ribeaud, and Raphaël Bize from Unisanté (University of Lausanne).

# GAPS AND NEEDS: FRENCH-SPEAKING CANTONS

As it is the case in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, almost no activities and services specifically targeting LGBTIQ+ children exist in the French-speaking part of the country either. The results of the mapping as well as the interviews/email exchanges with cantonal representatives<sup>9</sup>, highlight important disparities within the French-speaking region: some cantons (Vaud, Genève) benefit from a denser fabric in terms of services for LGBTIQ+ youth compared to other cantons. In particular Jura seems to completely lack (aside from Jura-gai) any services, projects, and policies for LGBTIQ+ youth and LGBTIQ+ people more generally.

Disparities regarding the existence (or not) of institutional action plans concerning LGBTIQ+ issues as well as a position specifically related to these matters at the cantonal level have an impact, notably, on aspects related to the prevention of prejudice against LGBTIQ+ people in educational settings. The possibilities for action are hindered in cantons where there is an absence of policies in this regard (i.e., Fribourg, Jura, Neuchâtel, and Valais<sup>10</sup>). Currently, presentations in schools specifically addressing LGBTIQ+ issues are indeed only punctual, under the impulse of professionals (e.g., teachers) voluntarily choosing to devote time to the topic. This leads to evident major problems in terms of non-systematization. As a result, no guarantee exists that every pupil will be sensitized to LGBTIQ+ matters at least once in their lifetime. This is problematic both for LGBTIQ+ students – who lack an authority figure recognizing and validating their identity – and pupils having negative prejudice against LGBTIQ+ people – fostering more positive attitudes for them being hampered.

The present lack of a legal framework also raises difficulties for associations when they organize workshops – for instance, no conditions regarding the payment of these contributions are established – as well as logistical concerns – such as a lack of trained people to run these workshops (evaluating the relevance of training more individuals being a challenge since it is difficult to assess in advance the number of requests that will be received).

Except for Genève and Vaud, where institutional partnerships are in place in this regard, LGBTIQ+ matters are only partially addressed in sexual health education courses in French-speaking Switzerland, which contributes to maintaining confusion regarding LGBTIQ+ issues. Hence the need to make a clear-

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9 We consulted with experts from the following associations/organizations/bodies (listed in alphabetical order): Alpagai, Fédération genevoise des associations LGBT, Fondation Agnodice, Le Refuge Neuchâtel, Office de la politique familiale et de l'égalité Neuchâtel, Person in charge of Lausanne's LGBTIQ+ strategic plan, Sarigai, Service Agenda21, Vaud's cantonal delegate for LGBTIQ+ issues, Vaud's cantonal delegate on issues of homophobia and transphobia in educational settings, and VoGay.

10 The canton of Valais has an action plan, but it does not involve the education/teaching department, which hampers the financing of specific workshops in educational settings.

er distinction between sexual health and sexual orientation/gender identity/sex characteristics issues. Systematic presentations tackling specifically the prevention of prejudice against LGBTIQ+ people are a prominent need and not only desired but also desirable. Especially since a significant proportion of reported discrimination takes place in the educational setting and considering that the general observation is one of a greater radicalization, with many more pupils openly expressing negative prejudice against LGBTIQ+ people compared to the past. The requests received by the associations from professionals on these topics are also a clear indicator of the existence of strong needs and gaps in this regard.

Finally, in cases where an action plan exists, the challenge remains to reach out to audiences who have dropped out of the classical education system – "disaffiliated" youth who often have more problems in connection with LGBTIQ+ issues. The desire to hold workshops in places where these youth gather is often hindered by the lack of money in these structures to finance potential workshops.

In all our contacts with representatives of the different cantons, it appeared that gender identity-related issues are becoming more and more prevalent among young people<sup>11</sup>, while the services to meet the related needs are clearly insufficient or inadequate. While services have recently been developed to address these matters (e.g., Le Refuge Neuchâtel, Association trans\*nonbinaire in Fribourg), these are often lacking resources, and do not benefit from the necessary institutional legitimacy (e.g., no recognition by the canton). Hence, the need to provide more professional services to meet the expressed needs remains strong.

Trans and non-binary people face specific challenges and are particularly vulnerable to discrimination. One remaining challenge concerns the strengthening of their integration in public spaces and activities, which currently appears to be rather deficient. Various points related to their accessibility in extracurricular activities – e. g. sports: changing rooms, swimming pools, etc. – are a source of crystallization. To improve the situation, awareness-raising workshops for professionals working in these places are advisable.

More generally, gender-identity related issues seem to be causing more and more tension in society. While politicians slowly recognize these issues, the backlash that ensues is pronounced – for example, in terms of questioning the trans-affirmative approach, a position of some associations/parents being unfortunately much more resonant, although it is a minority opinion. The often "scandal-driven" media coverage contributes to this phenomenon. One challenge is, therefore, to strengthen and make more visible positive parenting approaches. Progress being slow, the work done by associations in the field to support gender minority members is and will remain essential. In summary, concerning gender minorities, the focus should be on strengthening training

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11 This observation arises from the requests that associations have been receiving as well as from the actions they carry out in the educational setting.

opportunities for professionals working with young people and in public bodies as well as on fighting against misinformation (by having clearer statements, informing, and raising awareness among parents and the general public with scientifically validated and easily accessible content).

The (mainly) volunteer-led nature of most of the associations consulted sometimes hampers the fact of ensuring a presence and continuity and affects the possibilities and the scope of carrying out projects (challenges and difficulties regarding the availability and skills of volunteers). Professionalization is often desired to be able to count on a (more) competent, trained, and available team as well as to "dynamize" things to increase attendance to LGBTIQ+ youth groups/events. Meeting the related needs in terms of communication – e. g. being more present in the digital spaces frequented by young people (TikTok, forums, etc.) – requires, however, specific availabilities and skills, features that are not necessarily compatible with the volunteer-led nature of the associations. Being more present online seems to be even more important for the 14 – 15 years old, a cohort for which issues related to sexual or gender identity are prominent, and for which it is often more complicated to commute within the canton (compared to "older youth").

Differences persist between the city centers and the rural areas/outskirts – the latter being relatively deprived of services for LGBTIQ+ youth (and LGBTIQ+ individuals more in general) and often still suffering from more conservative mentalities (where negative prejudice against LGBTIQ+ people is strong and queer identities often invisible). In the absence of systematic awareness-raising workshops, queer people in the outskirts appear to be less likely to be able to do their coming-in as well as get the help they need. As a result, several associations mention the challenge of finding ways to reach the more remote areas of the canton. However, being more present/active in these areas is also often hindered by the lack of "sufficiently safe" spaces. The lack of places dedicated to the LGBTIQ+ community indicated for some cantons (Neuchâtel, Jura) prevents the satisfaction of needs in terms of a sense of belonging and community life, thus being a source of loneliness and isolation. To avoid the risk of being "too visible", young people seem to look for support and information in places that enable them to remain more anonymous or to move outside the canton.

More broadly, in the general system, it should be noted that young people experience difficulties in finding adequate support, as the care provided is often not well managed. Misgendering episodes appear to be frequent. Assisting young LGBTIQ+ people who have been kicked out by their familiars seems particularly delicate. Apart from Genève, no structure/facility taking into account the specific vulnerability associated with LGBTIQ+ identities is currently available in the other cantons.

Significant challenges concern more vulnerable populations who combine other disadvantages in addition to their queer identity (e. g. refugees, elders, poor people, people with disabilities). These groups rarely benefit from appropriate integration in general services, nor from measures tailored to their specific needs.

Finally, the current lack of collaboration with parents of LGBTIQ+ children is often regretted, especially considering that many things are at stake at the family level. Information for parents is also considered as a point for which actions should be prioritized, particularly since few structures and services currently specifically support parents. The desire to work with them on a broader scale, through specific sessions with a view to inform and train them, was often mentioned.



# ITALIAN-SPEAKING CANTON (TICINO)

## ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY ACTORS

### For young people

In terms of organizations, **Imbarco Immediato** is the only existing association that offers events aimed at creating meeting opportunities and providing spaces for the LGBTIQ+ community. The association is under the impression of satisfying the "minimum necessary": its main activities include **aperitifs** (once a month) and parties (especially in summer). Other activities include a few presentations in educational contexts, always upon request of individual students or teachers, or collaborations on specific projects (e.g., exhibitions).

### Education

The **Ticino branch of Amnesty International** also gives occasional presentations on LGBTIQ+ issues in educational settings.

The **Deep Nest association**, for their part, creates audiovisual products on life stories related to sexual orientation and gender identity to raise awareness and inform the public (especially young people).

### Health

In Ticino, **Zonaprotetta** benefits young people by addressing sexual health matters, with a focus on those most likely to experience discrimination, including the LGBTIQ+ population. For the latter, Zonaprotetta acts through GayTicino MSM, a project providing support, counseling, information, and training workshops on sexual orientation, gender identity, and sexual health. Zonaprotetta is in contact with different school managements and the Dipartimento dell'educazione, della cultura e dello sport (DECS), and gives presentations in educational settings in a formal way. In the absence of a cantonal institutional strategy, these workshops are, however, not systematic but essentially based on voluntary requests from schools.



Other offers in the canton include either more general services (e.g., concerning sexual health – **Consultori salute sessuale**, or equality matters – **Servizio pari opportunità USI**), which sometimes, but not specifically or systematically, address LGBTIQ+ issues.

## POLICIES AND PROJECTS

No specific policy or strategy specifically addressing LGBTIQ+ issues exist in Ticino. Sexual orientation and gender identity matters should normally be covered within the frame of the sexual education program – for instance, during presentations in secondary schools, a booklet is distributed with a dedicated chapter.

The only institutional document mentioning the "promotion of young people's sexual identity" is the **cantonal program for the promotion of rights, prevention of violence and protection of children, and youth (0 – 25 years old)** and, more precisely, its article 18. In this regard, the Association **The Deep Nest** has been mandated to raise awareness and inform the public on issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity through audiovisual and cultural products based on life stories. At the parliamentary level, a single object related to LGBTIQ+ people was handed in (calling for statistics to be compiled on aggressions against LGBTIQ+ individuals) but was not adopted.

In terms of direct support for young people, **Zonaprotetta's "GayTicino MSM" project** provides support and counseling on issues related to self-acceptance, coming out, and prejudice. The project also offers sexual health counseling as well as information and training presentations on sexual and gender identity issues – aimed at schools, students and teachers as well as professionals in general.

Also worth mentioning is the **"Generando" project**, which consists of initiatives and events aiming to foster a dialogue on the theme of gender in a more general way (not exclusively on LGBTIQ+ issues).

Starting in 2023, a new project – **Identitàplurale** – will specifically address LGBTIQ+ youth with the ambition to offer more structured listening and counseling services. They will also focus more on their rights as well as on helping them in case of discrimination.

# GAPS AND NEEDS: TICINO

We consulted **Imbarco Immediato** and **Zonaprotetta** on the current gaps and needs in Ticino. The lack of institutional policies on LGBTIQ+ issues as well as a position at the cantonal level dedicated to these matters greatly limits the capacity for actions. Current presentations/workshops on these topics result essentially from individual and voluntary initiatives by students, teachers, or companies.

Moreover, at Imbarco Immediato, there is sometimes a feeling of lack of legitimacy to give presentations due to a lack of training of volunteers. Benefiting from training in this regard (they cannot finance a training themselves since their only source of money comes from members' contributions) would allow them to provide workshops by feeling more legitimate. More generally, volunteer-led functioning hampers the possibility of having sufficiently active, competent, and willing people. It affects, among other things, the ability to move further with (new) projects, to stay informed, and to respond adequately to medias' questions.

In a canton where the first "openly LGBTIQ+" bar has just been created, the lack of gathering and meeting points at the cantonal level is pronounced, and is a much-voiced need of the members of the community. In this regard, Imbarco Immediato's events meet the "minimum necessary"; furthermore, the association does not have its own premises. The only organization with a venue, able to "physically receive" people, is Zonaprotetta.

The needs in terms of gender identity-related issues are increasing. Imbarco Immediato receives more and more questions in connection with, for instance, the transition process. Most of the time, they lack experience in these issues (only one trans person being active in the association) and experiences great difficulties in orienting people toward appropriate services.

In general, the impression is one of underfunding of the existing services at the cantonal level, whether in terms of support, guidance, violence prevention, and sexual health. Resources are scarce to deal with these issues – even in the field of sexual health as no "real" checkpoints exist. Strengthening the already-existing offers would allow to meet the needs in a more appropriate way.

In some respects, Ticino finds itself isolated from the rest of Switzerland: for instance, language barriers in benefiting from Swiss-wide services or support groups for specific population such as asexual people, which is a "non-issue". It also has a very conservative culture. Consequently, the consulted organizations believe that they would need and deserve more resources and initiatives in all areas.

# OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the results of the mapping process and our years of research on LGBTIQ+ issues in Switzerland, several points can be raised in the perspective of projects and actions to be prioritized in the future in terms of assistance and support to LGBTIQ+ youth.

First, the multilingual nature of the country is sometimes difficult to address. At the national level, many umbrella/main associations and some larger initiatives (such as LehrplanQ) tend to be German-speaking. Similarly, many research projects focus only on one language region (partly because it is hard to acquire funding for translation services). This does not favor the integration of other linguistic regions and creates a barrier to nationwide knowledge exchange and collaboration. Gaps are particularly significant for Ticino, as the websites of the national associations are not systematically translated into Italian (nor to Romansh). Access to information and services is therefore hampered, for a canton in which the needs of the LGBTIQ+ community are strong. Also, within the associations of bilingual cantons, providing "linguistically inclusive" services is not always evident (e.g., Sarigai in Fribourg is only French-speaking, Habs Queer Bern only German-speaking). Thus, the inclusiveness of minority language regions and collaboration across language divides appear to be an area that needs to be strengthened.

Second, significant disparities exist between the language regions and within cantons/regions in terms of available services, associations as well as their funding sources. Cantons in rural areas seem to have little to no funding and mostly rely on volunteers. In cantons where the associations are essentially volunteer-led and not institutionalized (i.e., do not receive funding from public bodies), the lack of time and resources inevitably has an impact on the possibility of carrying out projects. In these areas, services or activities specifically dedicated to LGBTIQ+ youth are mostly lacking. Being able to reach rural and remote areas remains a challenge in several cantons. Therefore, areas where LGBTIQ+ people miss role models and support and where mentalities are more conservative often face a lack of services for LGBTIQ+ youth. As a reaction, LGBTIQ+ youth tend to migrate to the cities. Yet, some emerging LGBTIQ+ youth associations in rural areas like QueerKaff bring hope, as pointed out in an interview with SRF (2022): "We are the first generation of LGBTIQ+ people who don't have to move away." Funding is needed to establish and extend (youth-led) services for LGBTIQ+ youth in rural areas to promote an inclusive, equitable, and safe society throughout all areas of Switzerland.

Third, there are large cantonal disparities in institutional support and cantonal policies. In some cantons and language regions (particularly the Italian-speaking part), there are no policies and generally a lack of institutional support for LGBTIQ+ youth. In several German-speaking and French-speaking cantons, many motions, postulates, or interpellations have been recently filed, but most of them have been rejected by the cantonal councils. This is particularly the case in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, where most cantonal councils see no need for additional changes. Yet, legal changes promoting LGBTIQ+ rights are essential steps toward reducing existing disparities. Furthermore, they are important facilitators of societal change toward greater equality for all (Eisner et al., 2020; Tankard & Paluck, 2017). The past and future legal changes promoting LGBTIQ+ rights should, therefore, foster a more inclusive Swiss society in which youth can thrive regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics, and/or biological sex.

Fourth, there are several disparities within the LGBTIQ+ community. Intersex youth still face human rights violations and often feel ashamed to search for support within the LGBTIQ+ community. At the same time, most LGBTIQ+ associations offer no services tailored to intersex youth and have little to no expertise on intersex issues. Thus, funding for intersex associations and training of LGBTIQ+ associations, medical staff, and education staff on intersex issues in close collaboration with InterAction Suisse seems advisable. Further, gender identity concerns and related needs/questions are becoming increasingly prevalent and pronounced, with significant gaps in services. To meet these needs, training for people working with LGBTIQ+ youth, professional advice centers, and adequate medical care are needed. Particularly in the French-speaking part, debates around trans issues seem to become more heated, polarized, and partly affected by misinformation, following destructive patterns in other countries. To counteract this development, communication experts trained on trans issues are needed. Asexual (and partly bi- and pansexual) people are often faced with an almost absolute lack of specific information/services and partly face stigmatization within the LGBTIQ+ community. LGBTIQ+ women are also marginalized within the LGBTIQ+ community, services, and the media. Finally, there are also significant needs for individuals who suffer marginalization due to multiple characteristics – such as LGBTIQ+ people of color, LGBTIQ+ people belonging to an ethnic and/or religious minority, or LGBTIQ+ people with a disability – who currently often do not benefit from appropriate services.

Fifth, there is an unequal distribution of services, research, and funding among the different groups within the LGBTIQ+ community. While many youth associations are inclusive of all genders, many national associations and research projects focus only on a small fraction of the LGBTIQ+ community. In general, associations in the French-speaking region and smaller cantons seem to be less segregated. Despite recent developments toward more inclusivity within LGBTIQ+ organizations (e.g., mergers of L-Punkt and Z&H to PolyUnique to represent all LGBTIQ+ students, the merger of GLL and ABQ to become more inclusive of trans issues), many associations are still led by men and tailored toward the need of (gay) men. If LGBTIQ+ organizations aim to foster diversity

beyond their specific subgroup, an increase in the diversity of the representatives seems desirable. Further, stronger collaborations between organizations and language regions as well as potential mergers should be discussed.

Sixth, there is a lack of services for LGBTIQ+ youth and particularly LGBTIQ+ children, who very rarely seem to be the target of specific services by LGBTIQ+ organizations and institutions – even in cantons with more services for LGBTIQ+ people in general. The lack of service for children might pose a particular problem to trans, non-binary, and intersex people since people's biological sex and gender minority identity could become apparent at an earlier life stage compared to people's sexual orientation (Eisner & Hässler, 2019). Consequently, more offers for LGBTIQ+ youth and children need to be established, particularly in rural areas. Importantly, LGBTIQ+ youth sometimes feel that they are not taken seriously by existing organizations and/or institutions. It is, therefore, essential that actors listen carefully to the voices of LGBTIQ+ youth and establish trust-based relationships.

Seventh, awareness-raising of LGBTIQ+ issues through specific workshops for professionals, in classrooms, and at universities is still in its preliminary stages. Educational trainings are, however, essential as they help to change social norms and increase acceptance of LGBTIQ+ people. The Lehrplan21 includes education on LGBTIQ+ topics in the German-speaking and multilingual cantons, but teachers are not systematically trained. Paradoxically, the integration of LGBTIQ+ topics in the curricula made it harder for some educational programs to get funding for community-led workshops or for schools to invite LGBTIQ+ experts. Associations, however, often receive requests from teachers asking for training on these topics, which indicates strong needs and gaps in this respect. Apart from Genève and Vaud, where institutional partnerships in this regard exist, the topic is currently only partially addressed in sexual health education courses. Systematic trainings and workshops dealing specifically with the prevention of the dynamics of discrimination related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics are thus not only desired but also desirable.

Finally, there is, in general, a lack of funding for LGBTIQ+ youth groups, organizations, and research projects. Applying for funding, however, often requires specific knowledge, is time-consuming, and has an uncertain outcome. It does not only bind many resources that could be used to help LGBTIQ+ youth but creates an additional barrier among smaller associations often located in rural areas. More funding is needed to cover different activities aiming to support LGBTIQ+ youth and educate the general population, and barriers to applying (e.g., time, expert knowledge) for funding should be reduced.

We would like to conclude by thanking all the consulted organizations for their responsiveness and availability to discuss the needs of LGBTIQ+ youth. We hope that the present report provides a resource for LGBTIQ+ associations, institutions, stakeholders, funders, and individuals aiming to foster an inclusive, equitable, and safe society for all youth in Switzerland.

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