

《Tolerance to LGBT, not easy in China》

By Qian Ding, CCTV.com editor

Shanghai's 3rd annual LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) talent job fair was held recently, more than 900 LGBT employees registered online, with 600 attending the fair on June 17th. The number of people who discussed this event through social media reaches more than 100,000 in China's LGBT community. Some world leading companies engaged in the event with LGBT- friendly policies.



Participants at the 3rd Annual China LGBT Talent Job Fair in Shanghai. (Photo/ Global Times)

According to Paul Bielinski, founder of the organization WorkForLGBT which held this event, " All 43 companies who registered for our job fair this year again pledged support for LGBT employees." However, most companies which attended the fair are foreign ones that are operating in China, "After inviting more than 50 local companies this year including Alibaba, Baidu and Tencent, no top Chinese employers agreed to attend." he added.

LGBT condition in Chinas metropolises

Although back in 2001, homosexuality was removed from the official list of mental illness in China, most Chinese LGBT people are still facing pressure from family and society.

According to the survey by WorkForLGBT on 18,650 Chinese LGBT people, only 3% of the males surveyed and

6% of the female surveyed described themselves as "completely out" while about 80% had not come out to their families due to pressure.

Beijing LGBT Center and the Chinese Academy of Social Science Institute of Psychology released a report, saying half of the 1600 survey participants from LGBT community demonstrated elevated risk for depression, four times higher than the rest of the population. And they are more likely to have mental health problem, however, most of them never sought for psychiatric help due to concerns about confidentiality and cost.

Love Without Borders Foundation, an NGO based in China produced a report which surveyed 1,205 members of the LGBT community throughout 30 provinces, found that 46 percent of those interviewed said they received different treatment after telling doctors about their sexual orientation.

Furthermore, a survey conducted by German-based housing rental website Nestpic ranked Beijing, Chinese capital as the last of 100 international cities in terms of the tolerance towards LGBT community. It scored 9.14 out of 25, a far cry from the 23.56 scored by top-ranked city Madrid, Spain. China's financial hub Shanghai was ranked 89 and Hong kong was ranked 83.

For most people of Chinese LGBT community, keeping their sexual orientation secret is a way of life, they do so to prevent themselves from being discriminated by public and to save "face" for their family. China is a collective society, "coming out" is considered by many as a selfish thing to do. Especially when most of parents expect their kids to have offspring to extend the family, and kid adoption is not vastly accepted.

Negative influence of little tolerance

Little public tolerance towards LGBT community causes problems. For example, according to Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, men who have sex with men have become the group with the highest HIV/AIDS infection rate, around 8 percent of them in China are living with HIV/AIDS.

However, the real figure maybe even higher, as the collection of data is proved to be difficult because many homosexuals feel reluctant to reveal their identity. Apart from this, the marginalization of the LGBT community in the country makes the formal sex education for LGBT group almost impossible, it comes no surprise that the HIV rate in LGBT community gets higher and higher.

What can we do?

Sexual orientation is natural, but sex education is a choice. By ignoring or showing little tolerance towards LGBT community won't help, they would always be there no matter what happens.

What can be improved is to set up a proper formal education program in order to reduce the AIDS infection risk in LGBT community and to increase the public openness towards LGBT. It's not saying to make everybody love or promote LGBT, just to accept the difference and respect other groups. After all, sexual orientation is a personal thing, it does no harm on society as a whole.