

Vietnam has a long way to go, say LGBT students

One student said: 'The other boys often tie me up and beat me; some even grope me and say that's a favor'



Youtube

A screen of My Best Gay Friends, a web series depicting the lives of nonconforming homosexual men in Vietnam

High school is never easy, and infamously difficult if you're gay, lesbian or bisexual. In Vietnam, the experience can be especially traumatic.

In a new report [Thanh Nien News](#) published some of the personal testimonies of schoolchildren in Vietnam.

One boy, Le Minh Triet, attempted suicide because of consistent bullying. He was verbally abused and beaten. 'Nobody helped me,' he said.

'When they beat me, they insulted my parents names for having a gay son.'

'That day I felt my life didn't matter anymore. So I ran around searching for all the drugs I could find. I took a handful. I knew I was going to die.'

His parents saved him: who took him to hospital, and he is now in a new school.

Another boy said every day makes him feel 'disgusted and desperate.'

'The other boys often tie me up and beat me. Some even grope me and say that's a favor.'

A trans boy says his teachers and other students call him 'a pervert.'

Vietnam is a progressive country in LGBT rights. Same sex activity has always been legal in country, and there is an equal age of consent.

Last year the Law on Marriage and Family went into effect, which legalized gay weddings in Vietnam, but does not grant legal recognition of those unions.

Discrimination is still a big problem. A Vietnamese study said 44% of local LGBT students aged 14-22 experienced stigma, discrimination and violence because of their sexuality. Another report from UNESCO found 19% of students thought it 'harmless' to bully LGBT classmates – 70% of parents polled in Hanoi said they would ban their children from talking with gay students. Some parents believe damaging reparative therapies could help 'cure' their children.

While schools can integrate new classes to help integrate LGBT students, few do. Teachers do not pay attention to recommended solutions to homophobia, and a member of Hanoi-based group iSEE told Thanh Nien News it had offered to organize seminars in schools, but had mostly been turned down.