



## The International Family Equality Day (IFED) Network **Annual Report 2013**



IFED 2013 Zurich, Switzerland



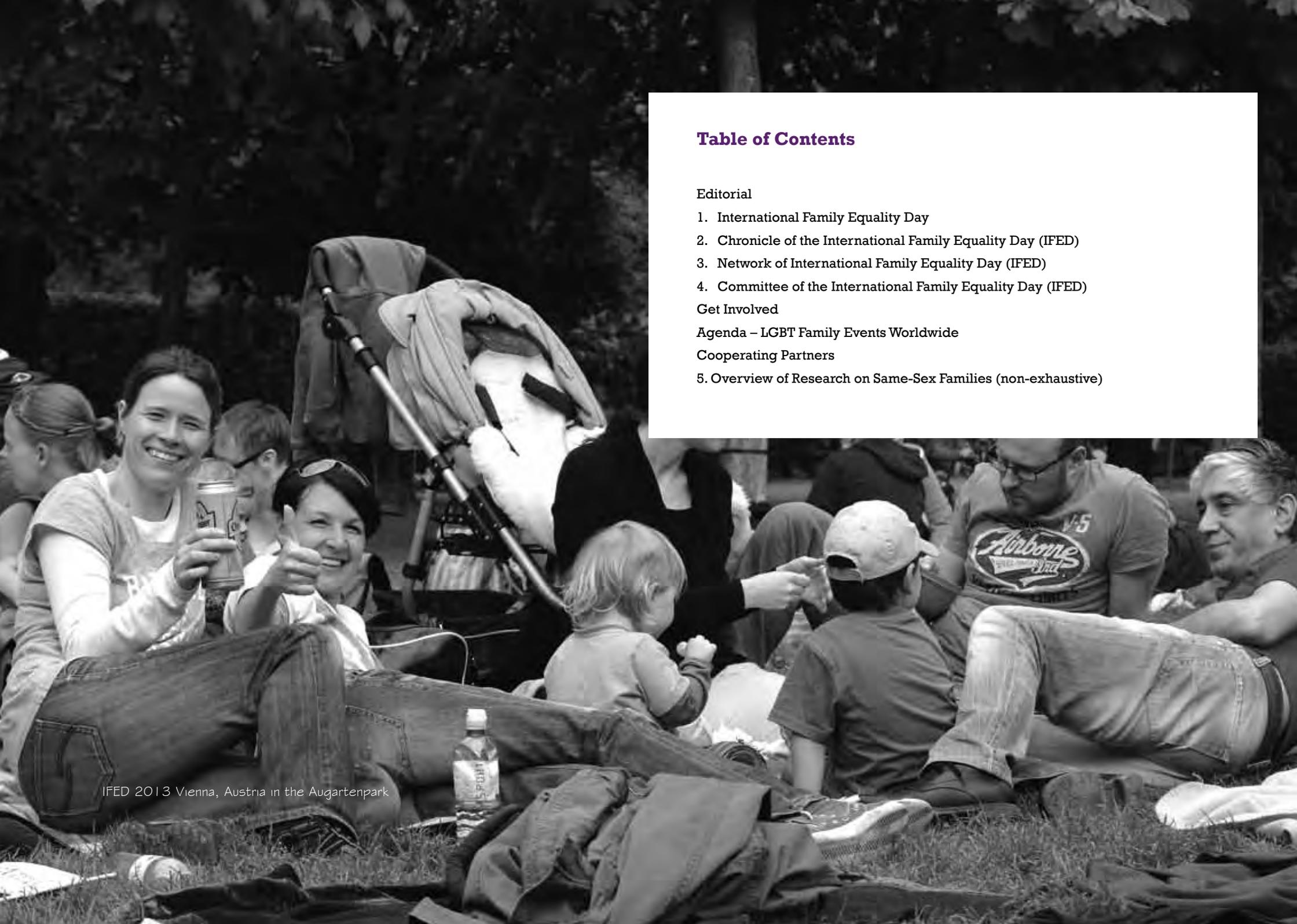
'A key challenge for our modern society is the appreciation and respect of diversity. Rainbow families can regard themselves as a powerful and vivid indicator of this societal development. Let's challenge society self-confidently!'  
Elke Jansen, DE



"Never underestimate the power of your story. I beg you to share it. If you are a family with LGBT parents, tell your story: use social media, speak publicly, or have a conversation with your own family and friends. If you are a straight ally, talk about LGBT families the same way that you would talk about any other family.

That will lead to change the minds of the people that you are friends with. It becomes personal, and that's when change happens."

Ash Beckham, US



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## Editorial

Regardless of different legal, political and social circumstances around the world, the dramatic increase in the numbers of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ) people choosing to raise children is a global phenomenon.

The **International Family Equality Day (IFED)** was launched as a sign of solidarity and strength and to promote equality for all families. On 6 May 2012, several events were held throughout Europe, Canada, Israel and the U.S. Families, friends, interested parties, experts from government agencies and other institutions as well as politicians and representatives of all parties were invited to celebrate the rainbow of families in our world.

This annual report introduces the organizations involved in IFED as well as the work done by the IFED Committee, and highlights the activities that were held in the different countries to celebrate this day. The annual report aims to serve as an inspiration for the Third International Family Equality Day, which will take place **4 May 2014**.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the countless activists who tirelessly champion the visibility and equality of rainbow families around the world!

Happy reading. Yours cordially,

The International Family Equality Day (IFED) Network



## Let the rainbow shine on our families!

Our realities are colourful as the colours of the rainbow. And our families reflect this diversity. In quite a few European countries we have already achieved respect and legal equality. But this is far from enough. For too long and still conservative and reactionary political and religious institutions have done everything to hamper the acceptance of same-sex families. This is culminating in laws that prohibit adoption and reproductive rights for lesbians and gays. Until now in still too many countries in Europe and more so worldwide, same-sex couples with children are discriminated against and children in Rainbow-Families are perceived and treated as second-class children.

This has to change! Representative international studies clearly show that children who are raised by two mothers or fathers do not develop differently from children who live with heterosexual parents. The children's welfare is guaranteed, they develop positively, their educational and professional careers are normal and there is no greater tendency to emotional insecurities. On the contrary: the observed differences rather speak in favour of Rainbow Families!

Furthermore there are legal arguments supporting the concept of same-sex families. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) emphasizes that the right to have a child is one of the rights protected by Article 8 ECHR. The desire to have a child, the Court confirms, is a particular important aspect for the existence or identity of an individual.

Therefore access to reproductive health for single lesbian as well as heterosexual women and for lesbian women in cohabitation or registered partnership or same-sex marriage has to be provided. All women, no matter which concept of life we choose, whether we want to be mothers and parents or not, must have the right to express their identity and attain their wishes.

Finally, the colourfulness of our families must not only be tolerated or accepted but also respected and appreciated. The rainbow has to be visible and shining everywhere, in the sky as well as in our societies.

Let the rainbow shine in and on our families!

### **Ulrike Lunacek**

Vice-President of the Greens in the European Parliament (Austria),  
Co-President of the Intergroup on LGBT Rights



IFED 2013 Stuttgart, Germany

## 2013 is a year of celebration

“This year we are happy to celebrate a truly historic ruling by Europe’s highest judicial authority in human rights.

On 19 February 2013 the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights delivered its judgment in the landmark case of *X et al vs Austria* (19010/07). The Court has held that same-gender couples must be accorded the same adoption rights as unmarried opposite-gender couples. The Court followed almost any of the arguments we have made and it stressed equal rights of rainbow families with strong clarifications:

- a. Same-gender couples (with and without children) enjoy “family life” under Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights.
- b. The Court rejected the comparison between a same-sex couple and two blood relatives who are not a couple. Austria compared the proposed adoption with the adoption of a boy by his aunt. The Court observed that “the relationship between two sisters living together (or an aunt and her nephew) is qualitatively of a different nature to the relationship of a couple, including a same-sex couple”.
- c. All three (mother, step-mother and the child) were directly affected by the difference in treatment and could claim to be victims of discrimination. All three (mother, step-mother and the child) were affected as a family and therefore the Court found it appropriate to make a joint award in respect of non-pecuniary damage.
- d. Differences in treatment on the basis of sexual orientation have to be necessary - out of particularly serious, convincing and weighty reasons – for the achievement of a legitimate aim.
- e. The protection of the family in the traditional sense has to be balanced against the Convention rights of sexual minorities, with the margin of appreciation for states being narrow.
- f. The burden of proof for the necessity of a distinction based on sexual orientation is on the government.
- g. There is not just one way or one choice when it comes to leading one’s family or private life.

h. There is no evidence before the Court that it would be detrimental to the child to be brought up by a same-sex couple or to have two legal mothers and two legal fathers.

Also the dissenting minority confirmed that the three applicants (two women and the child) enjoy the protection of family life and that the child received a proper upbringing from his mother and her partner.

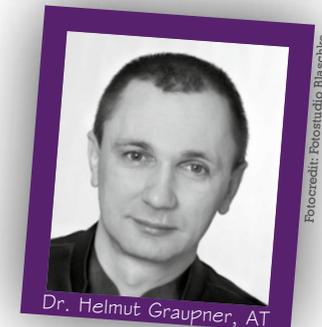
Children in rainbow-families deserve the same legal and social protection as children in traditional families. I am glad that I had the honor of representing the applicants in this historic case. A case which also highlights the benefits of international cooperation of LGBT- and other human rights NGO’s. The Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l’Homme (FIDH), the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA-Europe), the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), the Network of European LGBT Families Associations (NELFA), and the European Commission on Sexual Orientation Law (ECSOL) in a joint third party intervention supported the applicants, and so did Amnesty International with a separate intervention. The Attorney General of Northern Ireland, the European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) and the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), which intervened in support of the Austrian government, were not successful.

We however have to be watchful as our rights so hard fought for may be taken away from us again, as we so painfully must witness these days in Europe’s biggest country, in Russia. There is nothing in history like a point of no return. Thus our organizations will continue to closely work together as promoters in the advancement of our fundamental rights and as watchdogs of the successes we have achieved.”

Sincerely yours,

**Dr. Helmut Graupner** (Co-Coordinator)

European Commission on Sexual Orientation  
Law (ECSOL)



## 1. International Family Equality Day

The first International Family Equality Day took place on 6 May 2012. Fifteen organizations from nine countries participated. Some snapshots and short reports of the events can be found throughout this brochure on the purple pages; additional information and impressions (videos, personal reports of the events) can be found on the IFED website.

[www.internationalfamilyequalityday.org](http://www.internationalfamilyequalityday.org)

## 2. Chronicle of the International Family Equality Day (IFED)

In terms of legal protection and political and social equality, rainbow families are faced with different circumstances around the world. In many countries these families have no protection at all, a fact which entails massive social, financial and legal uncertainty.

In July 2011, LGBTQ family activists from around the world gathered for the first ever International Symposium of LGBTQ parenting organizations. The symposium provided an opportunity to establish ongoing international cooperation in areas such as research, visibility and advocacy, and the development of resources and programs for LGBTQ families worldwide. The goal of the symposium was to help foster a sense of global community among the families, to increase the visibility and raise awareness about the challenges that rainbow families are faced with for social and legal acceptance.

As a key outcome of the symposium the involved family organizations from the U.S. (Family Equality Council), Canada (LGBTQ Parenting Network) and Europe (NELFA) took the opportunity to launch an official day for equality and recognition of all types of family: the International Family Equality Day (IFED), which will take place every year on the first Sunday in May.

IFED aims to highlight the diversity of family structures and to strengthen solidarity among families. At the same time it calls on administrative, institutional and political representatives to support equality and recognition for all families.



IFED 2013 New York, US

[www.internationalfamilyequalityday.org](http://www.internationalfamilyequalityday.org)



Australia



Belgium

LGBT families in Brussels, Belgium got together on 5 May 2013 to celebrate IFED. Isabelle Maistriaux, founding member of Homoparentalites, and her family hosted the informal gathering at her house. Luis Amorim, Board member of NELFA, also attended with his family. We thank Isabelle and her family for their initiative.



Austria

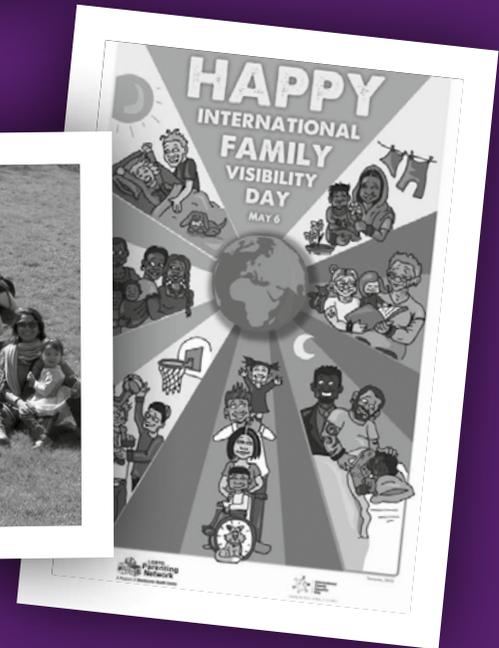
On the 5th of May, Austrian LGBT families & friends gathered together at the beautiful Augartenpark in the middle of Vienna to celebrate the IFED, this special day of diversity with a picnic.

It was a wonderful day with lots of joy and laughter and it was a pleasure to see that the Austrian rainbowfamilies community is growing. We're looking forward to IFED 2014!



Canada

On Sunday, May 5, 2013, about 250 people from LGBTQ and allied families came together at Christie Pits Park from across the Greater Toronto Area for our Family Visibility Day BBQ, an International Family Equality Day event. We had hot dogs and burgers on the grill, and many families brought a salad or dessert for the pot luck table. Some people knew about the event ahead of time, other folks just happened to be in the park and saw what was going on and decided to join us. The kids had a great time on the play structure, and with the giant bubble maker, the food, and the parachute games. When the adults weren't chasing after kids, they were able to chat and catch up, and meet other LGBTQ-identified and allied parents. For next year, our event is already booked - 11:00 AM on Sunday, May 4, 2014 at Christie Pits Park, Toronto. Thanks for coming out to our event, we hope to see even more of you next year!





Finland

In Helsinki, Finland 150 children and adults gathered to celebrate IFED in a huge gay night club. The club was transformed into a buzzing hub of clowns, music, arts, choirs and FUN!  
 In Turku, Finland a photograph exhibition was opened with grace on IFED. The photos of rainbow families in the exhibition were taken by the children of the families themselves. A great success!



France

APGL, the French organization for lesbian and gay parents and future parents (Association des parents et futurs parents gays et lesbiens) - participated in the 2013 edition of IFED.

APGL organized an evening on the theme homoparental families, in Montpellier, France, on the Tuesday 30th of April, with the screening of several films including the documentary Right2Love, produced by the Organization for rainbow families of Catalonia, Spain.

A round-table discussion closed the evening. A member of the French parliament, Christian Assaf, the vice-chairwoman of the CNAFAL (National council for secular family organizations) a partner of APGL, Mane-Oaïle Pelle-Printanier, a psychiatrist from the University hospital of Montpellier, Guillaume Fond, and a representative of the Mayor of Montpellier, all participated in the debate and answered the questions of the audience.



Germany



More than two hundred rainbow families in nine cities through-out Germany gathered to celebrate the Second International Family Equality Day. In the cities of Stuttgart, Hamburg, Freiburg, Düsseldorf, Göttingen, Jena, Berlin and Bochum we organized big picnics with barbecues in the city parks. Our rainbow flags waving, we made sure that we were a visible and colourful community. In Munich, we visited the Zoo while families in Berlin took part in an afternoon full of games, handicraft work and other fun activities in Germany's first Center for Rainbow Families.



Greece



On Sunday, April 28, 2013 the NGO "Ouranio Tokso Families" (Rainbow Families) held at the Academy of Plato Park the "Celebration of Families", a new institution that goes beyond any social stereotype that appeals to all kinds of families. The young and old ones that responded to the call started to set up tables and chairs, to inflate balloons and to decorate the space with colors. The "family" became bigger and bigger as the time passed by. There were moms and dads, aunts and godfathers, friends, nephews and godchildren. We played various interactive games, watched theatrical events, we left our palm imprints in our banner, and we ate a colorful cake, drank refreshing juices and cheerfully wrote and sang just-for-fun rhymes. At the end, all families became a single and big one and we cut a colorful cake celebrating the first year of our group.  
 See you next year!

### 3. Network of International Family Equality Day (IFED)

As a sign of solidarity and strength and to promote equality for all type of families, the LGBTQ family organizations LGBTQ Parenting Network, Family Equality Council, NELFA and Coalition des familles homoparentales took the opportunity to establish ongoing international cooperation in areas such as research, visibility and advocacy, and the development of resources and programs for LGBTQ families worldwide.

Each organization puts forward representatives for the IFED Committee. The organizations and their respective representatives are introduced below:

#### Coalition des familles homoparentales

With over 1200 families the LGBT Family Coalition (Coalition des familles homoparentales) is the largest LGBT organization in Quebec. The media has become increasingly focused on alternative families, as adoption, surrogacy and assisted procreation have become “hot” issues. But even as we have increasingly gained legal recognition, society’s institutions still remain closed to our families and ignorant of our particular needs.

Over the years our role has broadened to one not only of support and information exchange for families with LGBT parents, but also to one of social activism.

The LGBT Family Coalition works for the legal and social recognition of our families in collaboration with government bodies and the media. We work to increase our visibility and to raise public awareness about our diverse realities. Another mandate of the LGBT Family Coalition is to create new resources that can be used in primary and secondary schools, day-care, doctors’ offices, community organizations and social services to sensitize the public about the diversity of family structures, as well as the impact of homophobia, heterosexism and gender-based harassment. Our training sessions have reached out to thousands of professionals across Quebec.



[www.familleshomoparentales.org](http://www.familleshomoparentales.org)

#### Family Equality Council



Over the past 30 years, Family Equality Council has become a leading advocate in the United States for the three million parents who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) and their the six million children. We are changing attitudes and policies to ensure that all families are respected, loved, and celebrated – including families with parents who are LGBT.

A significant focus of current efforts revolves around Family Equality Council’s commitment to empowering LGBT families to share their story. We do this by creating both local and national level opportunities for LGBT parents to advocate for equality through programs like our Outspoken Generation – a program in which young adults with LGBT parents are given platforms to tell what it was actually like to grow up in their family. Another of these programs, our Pearls of Wisdom program, celebrates the grandparents in our community, encouraging them to share their experiences and their wisdom regarding the importance of supporting our families.

This summer marked the 18th year of our signature annual event, Family Week. It is the largest gathering of the LGBT family community in the United States and takes place in the iconic setting of Provincetown, Massachusetts. Family Week features unique opportunities for LGBT parents and their children to come together in an affirming community, creating life-long connections. Family Equality Council helps support and foster similar experiences for LGBT parents at the local level, such as through our work with Parent Groups around the country. For Parent Groups we provide programming tools and a community space for LGBT parents and for those considering parenthood to connect with one another. In our Policy department, we strive to educate the American public on issues relevant to the LGBT community in a way that is accessible and genuine – changing as many hearts and minds as possible along the way. We work to ensure that the laws that govern our country best recognize all individuals who have made the commitment to be parents.

Through all of these initiatives, Family Equality Council is hoping to create a better world - a world where all loving families are recognized, respected and celebrated equally.

[www.familyequality.org](http://www.familyequality.org)

## **LGBTQ Parenting Network**

The LGBTQ Parenting Network is a program of Sherbourne Health Centre, an innovative health centre located in downtown Toronto, Canada.



The LGBTQ Parenting Network promotes the rights and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer parents, prospective parents and their families through education, advocacy, research, social networking, and community organizing. In 1997, Dykes Planning Tykes (DPT), a course for lesbian/bi/queer women considering parenthood, was born in Toronto. This course is now part of a set of family planning courses that we continue to offer in partnership with Queer Parenting Programs at The 519 Church Street Community Centre. Together, these courses offer family-creation learning, exploration, and community building opportunities for up to 200 LGBTQ people every year.

The work of the LGBTQ PN grew from and was informed by the content of these courses, and we strive to bring the same community development model to our research, advocacy, resource, and program creation.

The goal of the LGBTQ PN is to counter historically entrenched, and often internalized, negative ideas about LGBTQ-led families, and to foster the attitude that LGBTQ people not only have the right and the ability to be parents, but that LGBTQ families provide children with unique and interesting opportunities.

We affirm the existence and visibility of LGBTQ families through events, workshops, and the development of resources. We add to knowledge of LGBTQ parenting by conducting community-based research that informs our practice, and we advocate for LGBTQ parents and prospective parents, individually and systemically, in areas such as assisted human reproduction, adoption, family recognition and schools.

[www.lgbtqparentingnetwork.ca](http://www.lgbtqparentingnetwork.ca)

## **NELFA**

The Network of European LGBT Families Associations (NELFA) was created on 1 May 2009 to unite European associations of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents and their children under one umbrella organization representing Rainbow Families at the European level.



NELFA was incorporated under Belgian law as an international non-profit association (AISBL) on 12 March 2012. The official NELFA headquarters are located in the Rainbow House in Brussels. With the incorporation of NELFA aisbl, thirteen NELFA founding members from Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland took a major step towards further consolidating NELFA's work on behalf of LGBT families in Europe.

With 21 associations representing 14 European countries and thousands of LGBT families, NELFA promotes the exchange of information among its members and assists in creating and developing LGBT families associations in Europe. NELFA works to ensure that children raised in LGBT families in Europe are granted the same rights as children from other families. NELFA encourages European governments to adopt legal systems and equal opportunity policies that do not discriminate against LGBT families, whether it be legally, financially, educationally or socially. NELFA also works to ensure the freedom of movement of LGBT families within the European Union without their family life being compromised by entering or settling in another Member State.

[www.nelfa.org](http://www.nelfa.org)

#### **4. Committee of the International Family Equality Day (IFED)**

The IFED Committee is composed of representatives from the various LGBTQ family organizations (Family Equality Council, LGBTQ Parenting Network, Coalition des familles homoparentales und NELFA). Communication takes place via a mailing list (listserv) and quarterly video conferences, during which cooperation and joint projects are discussed.

A website serves as a common platform. It introduces the involved organizations as well as ongoing and completed projects in connection with IFED and provides opportunities for networking.

##### **Goals & Future Projects**

The IFED Committee encourages families to join the IFED network by starting their own traditions in celebration of their family pride and ongoing efforts for full family equality. To that end, the Committee strives to identify and connect existing LGBTQ family organizations worldwide.

Workgroups are generating an international inventory of legal and social situations of LGBTQ families.





Juha Jämsä, FI

Juha Jämsä is the Executive Director of Finnish Rainbow Families Association (Sateenkaariperheet). He has studied sociology of family and conducted numerous studies in the field of gendered parenthood, gay fathers and the welfare services of Finnish rainbow families. Mr. Jämsä has three teenagers with his husband.



Rachel Epstein, CA

Rachel Epstein has been an LGBTQ parenting activist, educator and researcher for close to 20 years and coordinates the LGBTQ Parenting Network at the Sherbourne Health Centre in Toronto, Ontario. She has published on a wide range of issues, including assisted human reproduction, queer spawn in schools, butch pregnancy, and the tensions between queer sexuality, radicalism and parenting. She is editor of *Who's Your Daddy?* And *Other Writings on Queer Parenting* (Sumach Press, 2009) and is the 2008 winner of the Steinert & Ferreiro Award (Community One Foundation), recognizing her leadership and pivotal contributions towards the support, recognition and inclusion of LGBTQ parents and their children in Canada.



Maria von Känel, CH

"With visibility we will be able to break down prejudices." Maria von Känel - wife of Martina, mother of 2 children and General Manager of the Swiss Rainbow Families Association.



Catalina Pallas, ES

"Democratic States should not deprive LGBT people of their right to marry, as there are no social or legal reasons to go against it. LGBT families do exist and so do their children, therefore policies to protect them should be developed urgently."



Mona Greenbaum, CA

As LGBT parents, many challenges lie ahead of us in terms of the social recognition of our families. Even though we have increasingly gained legal recognition, certain institutions in society still lack knowledge about our families and are not aware of our particular needs. Social service employees, as well as health care practitioners, must be made aware of the diversity of family structures. Myths and stereotypes about our families need to be exposed. Combating homophobia in primary and secondary schools is the major area where we need to apply our efforts, because this is where our children experience exclusion.



## International Family Equality Day

*Celebrating the Rainbow of Families in our World!*



Andy Inkster, CA

Andy is the Health Promoter for the LGBTQ Parenting Network. He is a proud trans single papa by choice to Elise. Andy has pursued projects related to trans parenting since participating in the creation of the first course for transmasculine people considering parenthood in Toronto in 2005.



Vicky Schul, IL

Mother, grandmother and a Family Therapist specializing in gay, blended and alternative families and currently leading the "Keshetfamilies" (Israeli Rainbow families Organization).



Lisa Herrmann-Green, D

"Even rainbow families are affected by separation and divorce. I live alone with my children. But this does not make us any less a rainbow family!"



Angelo Berbotto, UK

"LGBT families are changing perceptions of parenting and the notion of family worldwide because they create alliances everywhere they go, be at school, their neighbourhood, with health service providers, etc and this is due to their VISIBILITY and their openness. They have left the closet behind and their VISIBILITY means

opportunities to educate others and to dispel prejudice in their communities. LGBT families and their children are a positive contribution to society."



Ono-Haru, JP

Founder and Representative of Nijirokazoku. Raising 3 children with my same sex partner. All of them are now in their in puberty and it's not easy, but I'm very grateful to be with my family.



Brent Wright, US

Director of Programs, Family Equality Council



Claire Wood, UK

Wife, mother and 'out & proud' secondary school teacher. Claire is also the co-founder and creator of www.LGBTparents.net which helps to connect LGBT parents throughout the world and helps to show our children they are not alone.

IFED 2013 Freiburg, Germany

# Get Involved

Hold a local event as part of the International Family Equality Day! Community organizations who wish to participate please contact the IFED Network by email.

[info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org](mailto:info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org)



Maria von Känel, CH



Nadine Riedrich, CH

Maria von Känel (coordination) and Nadine Riedrich (graphic design) invite all families across the globe to enjoy this wonderful day and feel the empowerment of this global event. See you in 2014!

[nadine@dfine.ch](mailto:nadine@dfine.ch)



Italy

On May 4th Rete Genitori Rainbow held a conference in Florence Townhall to give evidence to authorities and professionals of living situations of lgbt parents who had children from heterosexual relationships, further on May 5th and following days in main Italian towns RGR arranged "family meetings" for parents and children to meet and spend time together.



The Israeli LGBT and alternative families celebrated today together, having a great picnic this morning in Yehoshua Park, Tel-Aviv. Fathers and mothers danced together and gathered for the traditional group portrait. Here are the results...

We send you our love and wish you all around the world a very happy celebration tomorrow.

We are with you at heart, Vicky Schul and the Keshetfamilies (rainbowfamilies).



Israel



Japan

Yoyogi, Tokyo. It was also held as a collaborated event with "Rainbow Week", which is one of the biggest LGBT events in Japan. More than 50 people, including LGBT families, people hoping to have children, and LGBTQ and the friends got together and enjoyed the picnic in the wonderful weather. It was a great opportunity for the families to interact with one another, and to help their children (aged 1 to 17) to connect with others in the same community.

Since it was our first International Family Equality Day picnic, not many people knew about our event here in Japan. However, it was encouraging to know that many LGBT families around the world were gathering for this event on the same day. We hope that many more people will know about this day and come out to celebrate with LGBT families both here in Japan and globally.



Even though Japanese laws are behind and still ignore the existences of LGBT individuals, the number of LGBT families who are raising children is increasing and gradually becoming more open about it in Japan.

We had our first International Family Equality Day picnic in



Lithuania

The first Sunday of May, 2013 Lithuania celebrated the first ever International Family Equality Day (IFED) organized by the team of House and Diversity and Education (NGO). The purpose of this event, which took part in one of the public parks of Vilnius, was to emphasize and to celebrate the diversity of families. Majority of family related organizations in Lithuania are neglecting the full range of different aspects reflecting families nowadays - ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, religion. Family Equality Day was an official announcement for all kind of families saying - "You are valuable". Everybody was welcomed to the celebration: single moms and dads, mixed families (spouses of different race or religion), same - sex families, unmarried couples, grandmothers

and grandfathers, families raising disabled kids, families with adopted

kids, and everybody, who is open to the broader understanding of family. "It wasn't a wide event but a significant one", - commented the initiator and coordinator of the project Diverse families ([www.ivainseima.lt](http://www.ivainseima.lt)) Vilma Gabrielute. I'm so proud and happy for everyone who joined in with their strength, ideas, and time voluntary organizing such an important event. We'll hope to organize IFED next year as well so it becomes a tradition and involves more families and supporters."



Spain

At GALESH, [www.galesh.org](http://www.galesh.org), we always support activities for IFED. Therefore we were happy to organise two activities in order to underline our commitment.

The first one was a stand during the "Trobada de Escola Valenciana", Meeting of Valencian Schools, in Mislata (Valencia) in May 2013.

GALESH organised this stand together with AMPGYL, Association of parents of LGBT people. We distributed teaching material and information about our associations to teachers and families in a party committed to the education of children.

The second and most important one was a weekend in Segart (Valencia) were GALESH, with LGBT parents and AMPGYL, families with LGBT children, enjoyed nature and children and where our families shared projects and had a very great and large paella.



5 May 2013, International Family Equality Day (IFED) We celebrated the 2nd International Family Equality Day (IFED) at the

Community Centre Wollishofen in Zurich under a clear blue sky. Parents and children went on treasure hunts, painted and danced, chatted, laughed and ate - everybody had a great time! We can't wait for next year, when we'll be celebrating IFED in the Ticino in collaboration with Imbarco Immediato. We look forward to many families and an unforgettable weekend.



Switzerland



UK

LGBT families in the UK enjoyed spending a sunny day having fun and getting to know other LGBT families. The event was held in the glorious surroundings of Roundhay Park in Leeds. The children all enjoyed playing together and finding out that they were not alone in having LGBT parents. The parents also enjoyed a relaxing day meeting new people and making new friends.



USA

If we wait for legislators to pass laws that mandate acceptance, we miss a huge opportunity to be the change ourselves. Everyday, LGBT parents, their children, their families, and their friends are helping somebody see that there is a need for equality. You are helping people go from apathy to empathy because you're living your life with integrity, authenticity, and honesty. You have the greatest trump card of all: love for your children.

We are all here today to celebrate a word, a concept, and an institution that we believe in so greatly. That is the power of family.

## Agenda – LGBT Family Events Worldwide

Date: Sunday May 4th 2014

### Worldwide, International Family Equality Day

All countries that have held events to celebrate the IFED 2013 will do so again in 2014. **Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and USA** are all already planning their IFED 2014 events.

Make sure to join us next year by organizing your own event!



Date: Thursday, May 1st 2014 – Sunday, May 4th 2014

### Germany, 3rd European meeting of LGBT families: “Different Families, Same Schools: Bringing the Rainbow into the Schools of Europe”

We look forward to welcoming you at the 3rd European meeting of LGBT families in Germany in 2014.

Hosted by LSVD (Lesben und Schwulenverband Deutschland) and NELFA aisbl (Network of European LGBT Families Association).

[www.lsvd.de](http://www.lsvd.de) and [www.nelfa.org](http://www.nelfa.org)

## Cooperating Partners

### ILGA-Europe

ILGA-Europe is the European region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association.

[www.ilga-europe.org](http://www.ilga-europe.org)



### European Parliament Intergroup on LGBT Rights

The LGBT Intergroup gathers 140 elected Members of the European Parliament from 22 European countries and 6 political groups. They are committed to upholding the fundamental rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

[www.lgbt-ep.eu](http://www.lgbt-ep.eu)



### ECSOL

The European Commission on Sexual Orientation Law (ECSOL) is a non-governmental and non-political network of legal experts. Its origins lie in the European Group of Experts on Combating Sexual Orientation Discrimination which appointed by the Commission of the European Communities operated between 2002 and 2004.

[www.sexualorientationlaw.eu](http://www.sexualorientationlaw.eu)



### TGEU

TGEU is a European umbrella organization working to advance the equality and human rights of all transgender people through advocacy, collaboration, empowerment and research. Founded in 2005, today, the organization counts over 70 member organizations and over 120 individual members in 35 countries.

[www.tgeu.org](http://www.tgeu.org)



## 5. Overview of Research on Same-Sex Families (non-exhaustive)

by Martine Gross

Research on children raised by homosexual parents has been conducted for close to 40 years, the first of which taking place in the 1970s in the United States. Charlotte Patterson published a summary of this research in 1996, which was updated in 2005. The first studies covered women who became mothers within the context of a heterosexual couple prior to entering into a lesbian relationship. The objective of these studies was mainly to address two concerns: first, whether these children were stigmatized by their peers, leading to the development of psychological issues, and second, whether they suffered from gender identity or behaviour disorders. The results of these studies are highly consistent: children of lesbian mothers do not develop any pathology in their psychological development, do not experience difficulties in their relations with friends, do not suffer from gender confusion, and do not behave differently from boys and girls brought up by heterosexual parents. A longitudinal study from early childhood to adulthood conducted on young adults raised by lesbian parents demonstrates that they continue to do well as adults (Tasker & Golombok, 1997).



More recent studies on children raised since birth by lesbian mothers who were either single or living in a couple found no difference between these children and those of heterosexual parents in terms of gender development, relations with peers and psychological well-being (see, e.g., Bos, 2004; MacCallum & Golombok, 2004; Maria Gonzales, 2003). An extensive longitudinal study conducted in particular by Henny Bos and Nanette Gartrell from 1995 to 2012 in the United States on children raised from the time of birth to legal age by lesbian mothers confirms these results and explores other topics, such as the effect of stigmatization and remedial strategies (Bos & Gartrell, 2010). This longitudinal study indicates that girls are more likely to have a bisexual experience (Gartrell, Bos & Goldberg, 2010).

Setting aside sexual orientation, a recent meta-analysis by Biblarz and Stacey (2010) demonstrates that the parents' gender has no "measurable effect" on the psychological adjustment of children and their social success.

Significantly fewer studies have been performed on children of gay fathers, who are outnumbered by lesbian mothers. However, a few studies suggest that children of gay fathers do as well as others. Recent research demonstrates that young children adopted by gay fathers are no different, in terms of psychological adjustment from those adopted by heterosexual parents (Mellish et al., 2013). Note, however, that most studies related to children of gay fathers focus on children born into a heterosexual environment, with the painful experience of their parents' separation, or adopted children who suffer from

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abandonment-related trauma. There are few studies on gay fathers who have raised their children since birth. Michael Lamb, Suzanne Golombok, Henny Bos, Olivier Vecho and I recently received a grant for a study on the parental behaviour of gay fathers with very young children born of gestational surrogacy and oocyte donation, and the relationship quality during the child's first year. This will be the first study on children brought up from infancy by gay fathers.

A large number of studies have sought to demonstrate the innocuousness of homosexual parenting in the face of homophobic prejudice and heteronormative biases. In so doing, research has neglected for too long many issues that can only be studied among these families, like a sort of social laboratory (Stacey & Biblarz, 2001). Many questions merit the attention of researchers but have not been the subject of a great number of studies: the impact of invisibility on spousal and parental relations, the effects of homophobia and related child-protection strategies, the sharing of household and parental tasks, family functioning and dynamics, intergenerational relations, how to deal with donor anonymity, the passing on of values and religious identity. Today, the research is leaning somewhat less towards the future of children brought up by same-sex parents and more towards the functioning of families. In particular, the distribution of household and parental tasks – as gender no longer in and of itself assigns household and parental tasks to women and bread-winning to men – has been the subject of an increasing number of publications over recent years.

With regard to the effects of homophobia and related child-protection strategies, one of my recent studies (Gross, 2011) on lesbian mothers indicates that the most effective strategies seem to be openness with early childcare personnel and teachers; parental involvement in school life, in particular the involvement of the social mother; and finally, welcoming the child's friends into the child's home. The visibility of same-sex parents, at least in early school years, is very effective in eliminating homophobic comments.

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### Special Thanks

Thank you to all the people who are actively involved in bringing visibility to the diversity of family forms in society, to all who are prepared to stand up for the rights of every one of these diverse families.

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## Grundtvig partners

**Famiglie Arcobaleno** leads the Grundtvig project. The organisation was built in March 2005 in Italy.

Famiglie Arcobaleno is an important player in contemporary civil society in Italy. Its overarching aim is to educate society at large about Rainbow Families (families with one or two parents who identify as LGBT). It encourages acceptance of LGBT families by the wider community by tackling prejudices and stereotypes against families with same sex parents in the Italian society.

[www.famigliearcobaleno.org](http://www.famigliearcobaleno.org)



The **Swiss Rainbow Families Association** was created in September 2010 and is one of the partners.

The association represents the interests and needs of rainbow families in policy, administrative and public matters, and is a contact and resource for all questions on the topic. Advice and counselling for rainbow families and interested parties; contact information for medical, legal and mental health experts; social activities for rainbow families; resource for books, movies and documentation on the topic.

[www.regenbogenfamilien.ch](http://www.regenbogenfamilien.ch)



**ILGA-Portugal, Familias arco-iris** was created in 1995.

ILGA Portugal is the oldest and the largest Portuguese NGO striving for equality and against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender and gender identity. It represents the interests and needs of rainbow families in policy, administrative and public matters, and we are a contact and resource for all questions on the topic. Advice and counselling for rainbow families and interested parties; contact information for medical, legal



and mental health experts; social activities for rainbow families; resource for books, movies and documentation on the topic.

[www.familias.ilga-portugal.pt](http://www.familias.ilga-portugal.pt)

**Kosmos Horis Polemous Kai Via** from Greece.

The NGO "World without war and Violence" has the main aims below: To make a reality the idea of "a world without wars" To denounce and fight against any form of violence exercised by the superpowers regardless of physical, economic, religious, racial, sexual or age-related type of violence. To disseminate the active non-violence as a useful methodology to deal with the increasing violence we experience in our daily lives. To stand up against discrimination and fight for the human rights, like LGBT rights and families. To disseminate the ideas and teach people and activities of the New Humanism i.e. to spread the ideas of non-violence, tolerance, non-discrimination and all ideas that are inspired by the New Humanism, and form nuclei of people interested in studying and overcoming its personal and social violence by organising activities in the environment that each and everyone acts.

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**Sateenkaariperheet** is the Rainbow Families Association from Finland.

The association provides information to the public and partakes in political discussion regarding the status of LGBT families and their children in Finland, and aims to affect family legislation. The main areas of the association's work include regular meetings in various cities, annual family camps and training services.

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### Special Country Feature: Italy

**Famiglie Arcobaleno, the Italian association of homosexual parents, made IFED coincide with the 5th edition of its main annual event, the Festa delle Famiglie: a day-long jamboree of games, tales, music and street theatre, held in public parks and gardens throughout Italy, with the aim of celebrating all families. Because there is not just one single kind of family.**

The event took place on Sunday, May 5, 2013 in nine Italian cities: Ferrara, Genova, Milan, Naples, Palermo, Perugia, Rome, Turin and Venice. It was a great chance to play, paint, and assemble toys; to attend workshops and street concerts and theatre performances; to discover nature and biodiversity, to discuss democracy and civil rights; and especially to meet all kinds of families and thus see that they are all similar, and are all happy together.

This year the Festa delle Famiglie was an extraordinary meeting point between very different groups and agencies, brought together by a shared approach: an open, respectful and progressive view of family, education, environment and society. Our partner organizations were some of Italy's major progressive organizations: Legambiente, Italy's foremost environmentalist association, which already was our partner last year; Amnesty International, which has always shown an active interest in our issues; and Coordinamento Genitori Democratici, the only major lay association of parents in Italy, which provided public readings, printed matter, and more.

The Festa delle Famiglie was a huge success and got extensive media coverage, on tv, radio, press and web. It is beginning to stand out as a significant moment in Italy's civil rights movement calendar.



