



# SOGIESC WORKSHOPS & EDUCATION

Beautiful Life Organisation (BLO) has been educating about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sexual characteristics (SOGIESC) since our inception in 2017. We have a general workshop that goes through each letter of the LGBTIQ+ acronym and explains the difference between gender, sexuality and sex. It is often tailored to suit different recipients' needs and has been delivered at various organisations, cafes, hotels and institutions throughout the years.

PEPY Empowering Youth is an education and youth-leadership organisation based in Siem Reap. They first invited BLO to teach their beneficiaries about gender and sexuality in 2018. In 2022 and 2023, they sent their new cohorts (approximately 120 youth) to see our drop-in space and learn about our services and diversity in general.

PEPY's Youth Empowerment Project Coordinator, Kim Ann, says they had their workshop for 2023 scheduled for later in the year, but after witnessing some concerning behaviour from their new cohort of youth, decided to push it forward. "We were playing spin-the-bottle and would ask a question to whoever the bottle landed on. One of the last spins landed on one of our male youth and the question asked was, 'Are you gay?' It was only meant in a playful way, but the boy felt very embarrassed by this, and I thought, our youth need to have this workshop ASAP."

## On how they heard about BLO [ BLO runs a drop-in centre called A Place to be Yourself (APTBY) ]

I first heard of APTBY a few years ago when I was researching organisations who were working on promoting gender equality. As I started talking to people, they started referring me to APTBY.

- Kim Ann

I know APTBY a very long time ago when it was operating from Purple Mango. I used to contact for a counseling service for a PEPY student. Since then, I noted that this is a cool place where people freely identify and value themselves as who they actually are.

- Kev Channa, Learning Centre Program Manager



BLO Director, Jason Argenta, teaching the first workshop with PEPY in 2018

\*name has been changed to protect the identity of the individual

# On why it's important to teach youth about gender and sexuality

It is a great chance for youth to learn. It is like a flower. If there is only one colour, it is not beautiful as many colours in a garden. It makes the world beautiful when they know more about gender equality.

- Kev Channa

Raising people's awareness about gender and sexuality encourages self-exploration and discovery. It also allows people to understand and celebrate diversity. Everyone should feel included, accepted and empowered. This is how we achieve a safe and thriving community.

- Kim Ann

## What did the students think?

My favorite part of the workshop is how it makes me felt that everyone is accepted and included. I am informed of how I can be a supporting system for LGBTQ people and Jason's presentation skill is wonderful.

During the tour to BLO, I had the opportunity to learn deeper to what I had already know about Gender and Sexuality and about case of the challenges that LGBTQ people faced when living in a country (Cambodia) where the rights of LGBTQ hasn't realized.

I think it is very important to teach people about Gender and Sexuality. People should understand and accept it as a diversity; no discrimination and this understand will also help to decrease number of LGBTQ people infected by Sexually transmitted diseases. They feel safe to access life-saving information, opportunity and service.

Student #1 (18 year old male)

This is my first time learning that there is organization working to improve life and well-being of LGBTQ people, the activity they host weekly and understand more about the needs and difficulty of an LGBTQ person living in a place where gender is descriminated.

I think it is important to teach about gender and sxuality, because it helps individuals realize and indentify who they are, understand others, being respectful and living as themselves. I will share what I know about gender and sexuality to people I know as many as I can.

Student #2 (19 year old female)

