

# Blended genders in school



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# What do we know?

- Research: mostly from medical perspective: ‘wrong body’ metaphor
- No specific research data on trans young people
- Slowly changing in Belgium/Flanders: attention for transgender issues has grown in policy, research, activism ([www.t-jong.be](http://www.t-jong.be)), society, media, ...



# What are the problems?

Belgian research (Motmans, 2010) shows:

## Adults:

- Trans people are highly educated but unemployment rates are very high
- 62,3% suicidal thoughts, 22% suicide attempts

## Students

- Only 32% is open to close friends
- Negative experiences: mainly from other students

## Other research:

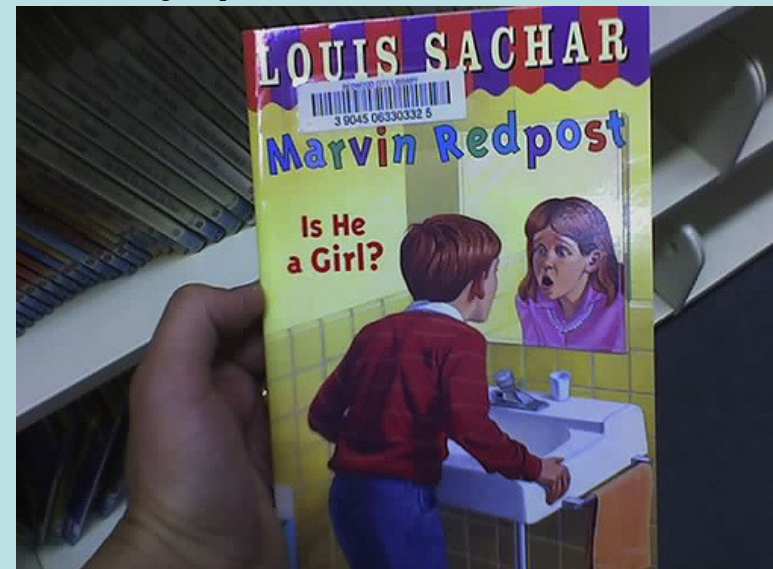
- Main problem = lack of community & empowerment



# What are the problems?

## Interviews / testimonies:

- Strong need for information for kids, youth, family & school
- Not many materials available: children/youth books, documentaries, websites...
- Lack of information: results in many problems and isolation
- Peer pressure to conform



# What are the problems?

- Schools only become aware of the problems when a situation occurs:
  - Sport: which dressing room?
  - School trips: where to sleep?
  - School passport: photo, name?
  - Exams, diplomas: name?
- Attitude teachers and school board is crucial!

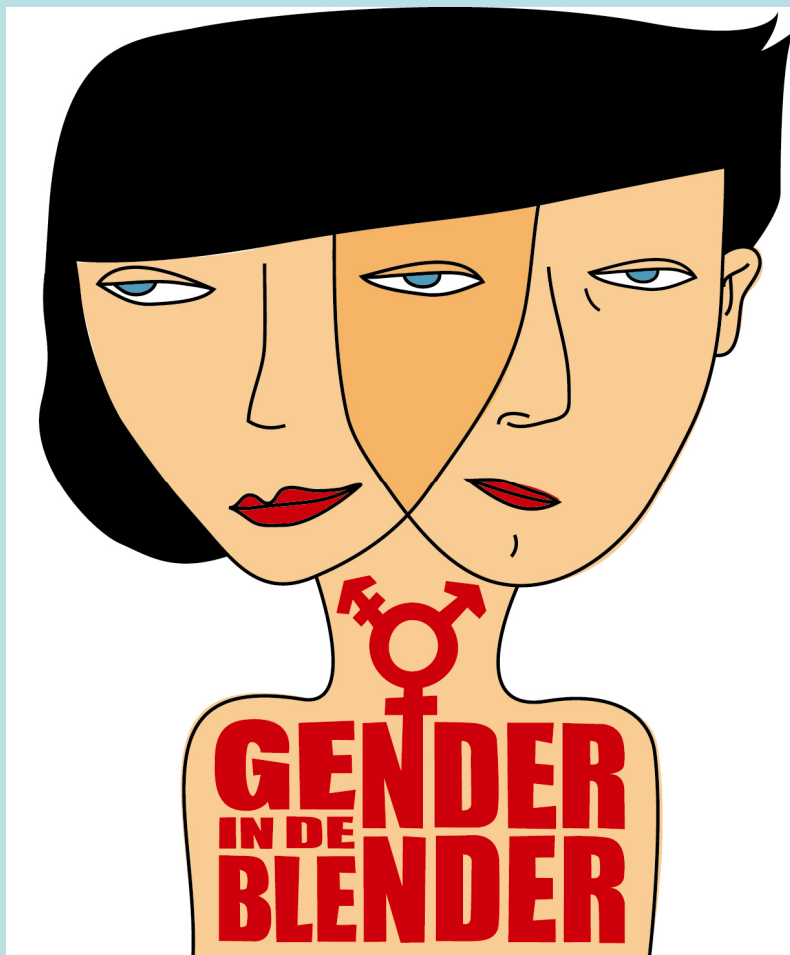


# What to do?

Project for secondary education on gender & gender diversity: to talk about gender diversity and gender variant identities in schools as an important theme for ALL young people

- there is more than only men and women
- attention for diversity *within* 'men' and 'women'
- combination of 4 aspects of sexual identity: sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, gender role
- idea of a 'blender': everyone has a personal mix of these aspects

# “Gender in the blender”



Partners: important stake holders:

-Province Flemish Brabant: coordinator

-Planet Gender

-Çavaria (holebifederatie)

-Wel Jong Niet Hetero

-Sensoa

-Rosa documentatiecentrum

-T-Werkgroep

-CAW Artevelde: genderstichting

-Policy Research Centre on Equal opportunities

+ Financial support of Flemish Ministry of Equality Policy + Flemish Ministry of Education

# The project =

## **1. Tool kit**

- Theoretical framework
- Work forms: 23 exercises (testimonies of gender variant youth)
- Distributed to all secondary schools
- For free on the website or in print

# Exercise 8

- The layers of sexual identity:
  1. Gender (biological)
  2. Gender identity
  3. Gender role
  4. Sexual orientation

# The project =

2. Informative **website** for youngsters:  
[www.genderindeblender.be](http://www.genderindeblender.be):

- To offer correct & relevant information on gender diversity and transgender issues for young people
- To create a safe environment



- implementation phase: 2010-2011: education & project guidance for organising a project day

# Conclusion

Recommendations to create an inclusive school:

1. awareness-raising among peers
2. educational activities and training for school staff in connection with young trans people
3. **specific policy and rules**