

# THE WATCHDOG



## A New Year, A New Look, A New Initiative

By Pamela Pizarro, Editor

For those of you that have been long time readers of the Watchdog and subscribers of the YCNEWS, we are introducing a new initiative from the Youth Coalition. To keep up with the demands of our readers we are making the Watchdog a bi-monthly newsletter focused on different themes and issues that we as an organization are currently working on.

As well in the YC Spotlight, we will be highlighting international conferences, sending out calls for applications to both YC and Non-YC events, as well as any other important information for our readers.

In the coming months you will see articles from our members on different activities that we are involved in planning or attending, as well as articles on the issues affecting youth today, and how we can all fight for youth rights.

The Watchdog can always be found on our website for download as well.

## Nuevos Cambios al Watchdog

By Laura Villa Torres, Mexico

La Coalición de Jóvenes (Youth Coalition), con la intención de siempre renovarse y aportar información útil y de actualidad a otras personas jóvenes y a personas trabajando para y con jóvenes en el área de Derechos y Salud Sexual y Reproductiva, estamos renovando nuestro Watchdog (Perro guardián). Ésta que ha sido nuestra publicación periódica para informar sobre nuestras actividades y para mostrar algunas reflexiones de las personas jóvenes que somos parte de la Coalición de Jóvenes, tiene ahora algunos cambios importantes.

A partir de esta edición, el Watchdog saldrá bimestralmente de manera electrónica, podrá ser consultado en nuestro sitio [www.youthcoalition.org](http://www.youthcoalition.org), además de ser distribuido a través de nuestra lista contactos. Pero el cambio más importante es que estas ediciones bimestrales estarán dedicadas a un tema específico en el área de los Derechos y la Salud Sexual y Reproductiva de las personas jóvenes, con el fin de concentrar información de actualidad sobre un tema específico. Por supuesto, nuestras ediciones extraordinarias seguirán apareciendo, producto del seguimiento de nuestras actividades en distintos espacios.

Esperamos, como siempre, apoyar procesos de reflexión y discusión sobre nuestros derechos y nuestra salud sexual y reproductiva, y cada día tener un mundo más respetuoso de nuestra diversidad como seres humanos. Les invitamos a disfrutar estas páginas preparadas con mucho cariño para todas (os) ustedes.

## Another future – the LGBTQ issue

By Cristian Nita, Romania

During November and December of last year across Poland there were several peaceful "tolerance demonstrations" meant to support the LGBTQ community in Poland and called upon civil society and politicians to stop the discrimination against minorities.

At the marches:

- Most of the demonstrations were forbidden by the authorities from the very start
- In Poznan 60 participants at the marches were arrested because they joined the demonstrations
- In Warszawa, Krakow and other cities the participants were attacked and beaten by anti-gay groups and police as well
- In all the situations the civil society attitude escalated from passive hostility to verbal violence and bullying against the participants slogans such as "Gas the gay!" and "Send dykes to Auschwitz!" we repeatedly shouted at demonstrators.

With Poland joining the EU and signing the Human Rights charter, these events are even more worrying and puzzling and make me wonder if we are going back to the stone age? The Polish situation is not an isolated one. In countries such as Russia or in Islamic countries the same discrimination and hatred is felt. LGBTQ people are continually denied access to their human rights including the right of assembly and freedom of expression.

For centuries the LGBTQ communities had been discriminated against, abused and marginalized across the world. In many cases members of these communities are forced to forget who they are and pretend to be something they are not born to be, simply to live their lives. Living a lie and sometimes in terror, these individuals never integrate fully into the societies they are living in and never reach their full capacities.

The stakes are even higher for young people because they are growing up in societies that consider their feelings and desires abnormal and deviant from the norm. As they grow they learn not how to live their true lives, but how to hide and deny themselves.

The time has now come to ask our societies and our politicians not only to tolerate, but also to fully support and integrate LGBTQ communities into their lives and policies. Tolerance is not closing your eyes and imagining that the issue will disappear, it means actively supporting, understanding, and caring for the issue and for the people that are affected by it, whether they are part of this group, or supporters, or family or friends of them.

Indeed it takes courage to take this battle on. I look for example at the case of my own country, Romania, were I believe that there is tolerance but nobody is present to ask for it and use it. The LGBTQ community has no representatives and hence has no "face", except the misleading image that is perpetuated from culture to culture from generation to generation. With no one asking for these rights who is to blame for not giving them to someone that does not exist?

"Nothing is to be feared, but to be understood," said Marie Curie. Let us break old patterns and try to open our minds and souls to build a new future.

## Volume I, Issue I, March 2006



The YC at the Annual General Meeting in Delhi, India

## YC SPOTLIGHT

### Up Coming Events:

- Next issue of the Watchdog will be in May focusing on HIV/AIDS and the UNGASS review in New York.
- Have an event or conference you would like to share? Email us at [outreach@youthcoalition.org](mailto:outreach@youthcoalition.org) and we will get the word out.
- Check out this exciting new website for young women in Latin America [www.jovenesciudadanas.org](http://www.jovenesciudadanas.org)



YC members Ariel Gonzalez Galeano (Paraguay), Yara Jarallah (Palestine), Laura Villa Torres (Mexico), and Joana Chagas (Brazil) meet up in New York City



YC member Maiden Manzanal (Philippines) at the EnGendeRights National Workshop on SRHR for Legal Advocates in cooperation with the Center for Reproductive Rights. Maiden helped to document the entire process.

To remove your name from our mailing list, please visit <http://list.web.net/lists/listinfo/yc-news>.

Questions or comments? E-mail us at [outreach@youthcoalition.org](mailto:outreach@youthcoalition.org)

Articles in The Watchdog express the views of the individual authors and not of the Youth Coalition.