GENDER APPROVED

HANDBOOK FOR YOUTH WORKERS

GENDER APPROVED!
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YEAR: 2016
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Funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the handbook “Gender Approved!” for Youth Workers. It was created during the project “Gender Approved!” that was financed through European Union programme Erasmus+ and approved by Latvian National Agency “Jaunatnes Starptautisko programme aģentūra”. The main activity of the project “Gender Approved!” was the Training Course that took place in Riga, Latvia from November 28, 2015 until December 6, 2015. There were participants from 6 countries – Belgium, Denmark, Latvia, Lebanon, Jordan and Morocco. The Training Course aimed to raise competences of Youth workers on understanding and tackling gender inequality and oppression.

The handbook was made to multiply the knowledge with as many youth workers as possible because we all live in a society where gender inequality and oppression is reality. The book is suitable for beginner youth workers or people who are yet to start their work because it covers the basic topics that are needed to work with a group as well as gets into topics of theoretical part of oppression, gender inequality, and LGBT identities.

We hope you will enjoy this and feel free to contact us via Facebook and tell what you think: https://www.facebook.com/GenderApprovedYouth/?fref=ts

TYPES OF EDUCATION

Formal education is the education we get in formal setting and institutions like schools, universities. Formal education is often compulsory. It is typical for formal education to have externally set learning goals, the learning process is monitored and assessed, and given recognition at the end by certificates or diplomas.

Informal education is the knowledge that we get from our everyday experience, it happens in Everyday situations (family, work, travel) From the learners point of view there are no learning goals, the learning comes randomly, there are no certificates.

Non-formal education is voluntary learning that has specific learning goals and it can take place in a diverse environments and situations. The activities or courses that take place may be led by professional facilitators (such as youth trainers) or by volunteers (such as youth leaders). The activities and courses are planned, but are not structured by curriculum subjects. They usually address specific target groups, but rarely document or assess learning outcomes or achievements in conventionally visible ways. Non-formal education can be both short term like a week - long training course, or long term like participating in the basketball team.

PRINCIPLES OF NON-FORMAL LEARNING

Voluntary participation
Participation is based on free will. The participants of the non-formal education activities are voluntarily choosing to participate, they are free to choose the topics they want to learn and they are freely joining the activities.

Active participation
Active participation is a crucial part of non-formal learning. As a facilitator you have to make sure that your planned programme is relevant and interesting for the group and all the participants are able to participate actively because a lot of the learning points they will get will come through experiencing the situations, discussions, expressing their opinions and feelings and reacting to other participants.

Learning through experience
The process of non-formal education is based on experience but the experience alone often is not enough to provide the learning. To get the most out of experiencing different kinds of activities, it is important to discuss and reflect on them in the group, make conclusions and seek for real life examples where the participants can use the gained knowledge and insights.

Open communication
As a facilitator you have the responsibility to establish a safe environment for the group so that they can talk about their experience without fear of being judged or bullied, especially if you are talking topics related to person's identity. Open communication is also a way for the group to learn from each other.

Learning through group
Groups provide the chance for participants to meet their peers from different backgrounds with often absolutely different opinions, experiences, realities of life. The group gives insights of differences in the society of their own country and gives often a unique chance of meeting people from other countries with traditions they have never heard of and gives a great food for thought for thinking about their own life as a person, and the importance of the culture they have been surrounded by and how it has shaping the personality and the worldview.

Non-competitive environment
As a facilitator you should avoid creating competitiveness among the participants. Young people have to live up to expectations set by school and parents and feel pressure to compete with their peers on the daily bases. It creates a lot of anxiety. By creating an environment where the participants are not compared to each other they can look at themselves and search for their own development witch does not have to be related with the others in the group.

GROUP

THE IMPORTANCCE OF THE GROUP IN LEARNING

The group is a crucial recourse for learning process in non-formal education setting, especially if it is an international group. All activities are implemented through group and with the group. The activities in the group get a chance to learn from the others as well as help “unlearning” stereotypes by interacting with people from different countries, with differenct cultural, ethnic, religious, social, economic backgrounds.

The diversity of the group works as a resource but at the same time it makes the group members to actively remember to be respectful towards differences of others. In the process of learning with a group it is typical for a young person to experience various emotions - frustration, confusion, joy, surprise, fear. As a youth worker you should let the group members know that experiencing various emotions is a natural part of learning process.

In a non-formal learning process it is important not only to experience things and activities but also to reflect on those things to understand the learning points gained from them. The group helps to broaden the perspectives of the learning.

GROUP BUILDING

In an international training course setting, the group members don’t know each other, they may have existing stereotypes about some communities so that can work against having a safe and trusting environment for learning. So it is important to start the learning process in the group with trust building and group building exercises that will help the young people get to know each other, let go of their stereotypes, trust each other and make them feel safe to express themselves to the other group members.

At this stage it is also important to set clear guidelines for working together in order for the group members to agree on their own boundaries, rules to follow, ways to respect each other.

GROUP

STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

As a facilitator of non-formal learning activities or being a youth leader in your local realities, you have to be aware that groups have natural stages of development and it is normal to experience all of them and it is your role to help guide the young people through their learning in the midst of all stages of group development.

There is a widely accepted theory that considers that there are 5 stages of group development – Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, Adjourning(or Unforming). Psychologist Bruce Tuckman first published the phrase "forming, storming, norming, and performing" in his 1965 article, “Developmental Sequence in Small Groups”. He used it to describe the path that most teams follow on their way to high performance.

Forming In the Forming stage people are concerned about questions about what is going to happen, wondering who are the other people and what is going to happen in the group. “Where are we? What is going to happen? Who are these other people? What is going on in the group?” There is a lot of uncertainty and group members are fearing of rejection or being misunderstood. In the forming stage the members of a new group are usually polite and try not to argue even if they disagree with each other. Group members are looking for common rules of being together. Group members do not want to take responsibility but wait for guidance from the group leader. In this stage the group leaders or facilitators have to show a clear structure, encourage the group members to introduce themselves, try to eliminate their worries and offer them a positive experience in a new group. The goal of the group leader is to minimize the existing uncertainty.

Storming At this stage group members feel calmer, they know each other’s names, and can express opinions more freely. The group starts working together. It gets easier to express personal opinions, which can differ considerably among different members. Group cooperation norms become more relevant, the group feels a need for clarity regarding members’ interrelations, decision taking and aspects of leadership. Group members often express their dissatisfaction with the group work, they criticize the behaviour of other members. People who can take decisions stand out in the group and they become recognized as non-formal leaders. Each group member has influence on the development of the group. At this stage the programme, structure and rules of behaviour in the group are often revised. The group leader should help the group to find out and name what helps them to work together.

Norming At this stage group members are glad about every meeting. It is nice to see each other again and it would be a shame to miss something. The feeling of closeness increases, interrelationships become more intense – talks become more open and communication flows naturally. ‘WE’ are in a good mood and the ideas are sky-high. Frequently group members start ‘going crazy’ – they do not sleep at night, they joke with the group leaders, enjoy each other and think of numerous ways to express it. The confidence of the group grows. Group members learn to differently evaluate and tolerate each other. In this group atmosphere, needs are expressed openly and different opinions are exchanged. Group members develop different ideas and are able to decide on their interests and protect them.

Performing The group’s will to act is unstoppable. If difficulties arise, the group looks for solutions together. Each group members finds their place in the group. Group members acknowledge one another as different personalities having individual abilities that are all significant. The group communicates fluently, personal and group interests become equally important, the group is efficient. Self-organisation between members arise.

Adjourning In an international training the adjourning (or unforming, mourning) stage is foreseen from the start – there is a set time for the end of activity. When the group members return to their realities of home, studies, work, the group stops having the same meaning and significance it did when they were all together. The parting of the group is emotionally hard, because separation is related to sadness. Often group members try to delay the “good bye” stage, nobody speaks about it, they try not to think about it, but they can feel separation coming. The task of the group leader is to create conditions for the constructive process of disintegration. The group leader has to make a subject of the group’s separation.

SITUATION OF GENDER EQUALITY

LATVIA

Research by the Central Bureau of Statistics in Latvia on working conditions and time use indicate that people in Latvia work long hours, are involved in several jobs and spend little time with their families. An important concern are the low birth rates and small families that is seen as a consequence of poor work-life balance. This has particular significance for women, who are still seen as the primary carers of children.

While Childcare arrangements are generous and expanding, Latvia still needs to address the unequal working conditions of men and women. Although all legislation includes Gender Equality principles, Latvia has no specific legislation prohibiting discrimination between men and women. Women ranks 15th in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report conducted by the World Economic Forum

Both male and female same-sex sexual activity are legal in Latvia, but households headed by same-sex couples are not eligible for the same legal protections available to opposite-sex couples.

The democratization process in Latvia has allowed lesbians and gays to establish organizations and infrastructural elements such as bars, clubs, stores. Cultural, educational and other events can be held, and lifestyles can be freely developed but society has not reached a high level of tolerance.

BELGIUM

Since the 1980s, Belgium has implemented legal measures to promote gender equality and equal opportunities at federal and regional levels, in both private and public sectors.

While the employment and pay gaps are one of the lowest in the OECD, there remains considerable horizontal segregation and discrimination in the workplace. Belgium ranks 10th in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report conducted by the World Economic Forum

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) rights in Belgium have been seen as some of the most progressive in Europe and in the world. Same-sex sexual activity was legalized in 1795 and the age of consent was equalized in 1985. After granting same-sex couples domestic partnership benefits in 2000, Belgium became the second country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage in 2003.

The previous Prime Minister of Belgium, Elio Di Rupo, is an openly gay man and was one of the only three Prime Ministers in the world to identify as LGBT.
Pascal Smet, the former Flemish Minister of Education (in the Peeters II Government) and current Brussels minister, is also openly gay.

SITUATION OF GENDER EQUALITY

DENMARK

Denmark, like its Scandinavian neighbours, boasts an impressive record on gender equality, ranking 5th in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report conducted by the World Economic Forum. Gender equality is enshrined in legislation affecting the public and private sectors and despite the absence of quotas, female political participation is above-average.

Child-care policies and parity in education attainment encourage the high numbers of women in the labour market but a gender-disaggregated market combined with ongoing discrimination results in a significant pay gap between men and women.

The rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender (LGBT) persons in Denmark are some of the most extensive in the world and a high priority.

Same-sex sexual activity was legalized in 1933, and since 1977, the age of consent is 15, regardless of sexual orientation or gender. Denmark was the first country in the world to grant legal recognition to same-sex unions, in the form of "registered partnerships", in 1989.

Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation was entirely prohibited in 2004. Same-sex couples are allowed to jointly adopt since 2010, while previously allowing stepchild adoptions and limited co-guardianship rights for non-biological parents. Gays and lesbians are also allowed to serve openly in the military.

LEBANON

Over the last two decades, a change in the general mood and a growing maturity among militant NGOs has been seen in Lebanon. Certain issues once taboo have today been brought into the public debate.

Women's NGOs have become more militant and have better targeted their actions and their lobbying. It is also certain that international pressure on the equality issue, the growing influence of international regulatory instruments, electronic exchanges, regional and international meetings and networking have boosted the movement in favour of equal rights for men and women and the gradual elimination of all forms of discrimination. Lebanon ranks 135th in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report conducted by the World Economic Forum.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons living in Lebanon may face difficulties not experienced by non-LGBT residents, but they are considerably more free than in other parts of the Arabic-speaking community

A poll done by the Pew Research Center in 2007 showed that 79% of Lebanese believed "Homosexuality should be rejected", as opposed to 18% who believed "homosexuality should be accepted". But recently, there was an increase in the acceptance of LGBT people by the society. And that happened especially after the Lebanese National Center for Psychiatry declassified the non-heterosexual sexual orientations as mental disorders, and this was a first in an Arabic-speaking country.iological parents. Gays and lesbians are also allowed to serve openly in the military.

SITUATION OF GENDER EQUALITY

MOROCCO

The issue of women’s rights has been in constant evolution, but rapid progress is a recent phenomenon. This progress has been achieved over several stages, but visibility on the issue only gained ground in the early 1990s, driven by political opening and efforts by civil society, primarily women’s associations. Primary stakeholders have improved their initiatives, both in number and in calibre.
Political will is manifest, as the State has launched new programmes for the promotion of women’s affairs, adopted the principle of the cross-functionality of women’s issues and created gender focal points. Nevertheless, to date no independent body, endowed with sufficient human and financial resources, has been established.

Across all departments concerned, the creation of gender focal points has made it possible to move forward in terms of the visibility of existing gender gaps, especially those in decision-making positions. Morocco ranks 133th in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report conducted by the World Economic Forum.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons in Morocco face legal challenges not experienced by non-LGBT residents. Both male and female same-sex sexual activity is illegal in Morocco. Morocco's statute and culture towards LGBT issues stands in stark contrast to that of neighbouring Spain.

The legal status of LGBT people living in Morocco stems largely from traditional Islamic morality, which views homosexuality and cross dressing as signs of immorality.

JORDAN

With an education system that ensures equal access to both genders, Jordan has a highly educated female population that will help benefit Jordan in the future. Despite ongoing progress, women in Jordan remain underutilized and often side-lined in society due to enduring norms and traditions.

Despite having closed or reversed the gender gap in female education at all levels, Jordan continues to have one of the world’s lowest rates of female participation in the workforce. Only 16 percent of Jordanian women participate in the economy. Jordan ranks 134th in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report conducted by the World Economic Forum.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights in Jordan are considered to be relatively advanced, compared to most other countries in the Middle East. Same-sex sexual activity was legalized in 1951, however, LGBT people displaying public affection can be prosecuted for "disrupting public morality". A general interest gay magazine is published in Jordan.
Most LGBT persons face social discrimination not experienced by non-LGBT residents.

The Jordanian penal code no longer permits family members to beat or kill a member of their own family whose "illicit" sexuality is interpreted as bringing "dishonor" to the entire family.

TOOLS

OPPRESSION AND DOMINATION TECHNIQUES

Training course gave an opportunity for youth workers to learn about concepts of oppression and domination techniques, pyramid of control, terms used in LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex) community, used the method of genderbread person to learn about the complexity of gender, and got introduced to various indexes and maps that help understand the situation of LGBTQI people and gender equality issues around the World.

Oppression and domination techniques

Making invisible: If nobody listens to what you say, you can easily stop talking. Marginalising people can be done through an environment where it is difficult to make one's voice heard.

Ridiculing: Ridicule can be expressed in comments, insults and jokes, or in non-verbal communication that hints at the other's inadequacy. People may often play along with these dynamics to avoid being subject of ridicule.

Withholding information: Those who hold important information may exercise power and influence. If information is not shared evenly among people in the same position or situation, or if decisions are taken without involving everyone concerned, there is an inequality of power. It may be that important issues are discussed in informal groups, or that decisions are already taken informally when the official body meets.

Double punishment: Double punishment means that whatever you do it is wrong. A girl who is not involved in lots of discussions can be seen as passive, boring and avoiding responsibility. But on the other hand if she gets involved in everything she is said to be taking too much space. A boy who does not want to play football can be called a sissy. If he decides to join in the next day, he might be teased for succumbing to group pressure.

Shame and guilt: Creating feelings of shame and guilt is a powerful tool of oppression. Among boys it may mean to make someone seem feminine or not manly enough. Families who exercise excessive control over their children's habits may encourage shame and guilt in their children for causing unrest in the family if they don't obey. Similarly, youth contexts may involve situations where people are shamed for not taking part, or sharing a joke, and so forth.

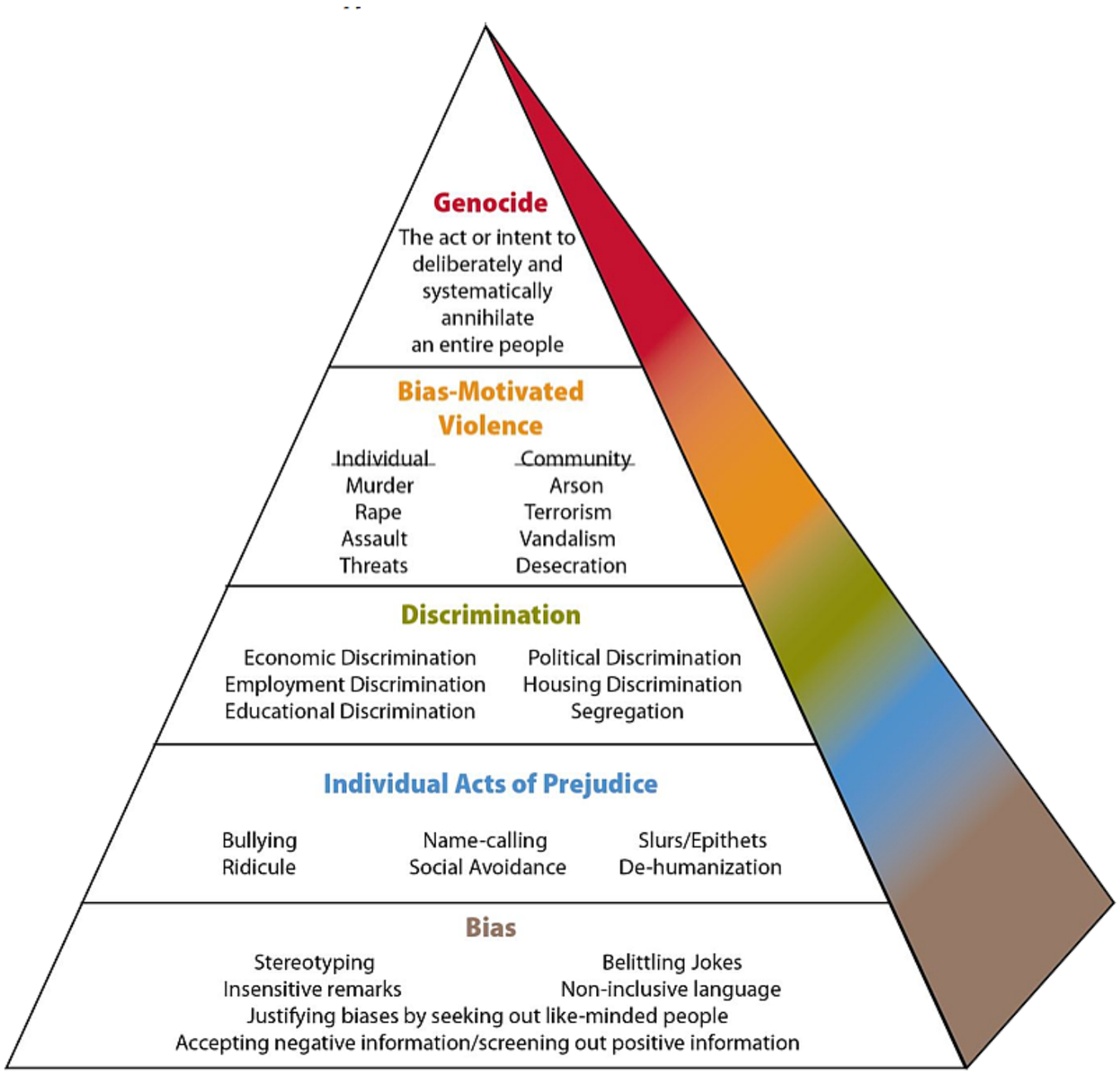
Objectification: We chiefly associate objectification with the kinds of sexualised images that circulate in popular media. However, women and men can be objectified in organisational contexts, by being referred to solely according to their physical appearance, or by being included in something as a 'token' rather than on their merits.

Violence and the threat of violence: The fear of being subject to violence is a strong factor restricting people's behaviour and freedom of movement. For example, having to take a long route home in order to avoid violence, or not daring to go out at night due to potential violence, are everyday realities for a lot of young people.

TOOLS

PYRAMID OF HATE

A good way to illustrate that sexist, racist, homophobic and otherwise discriminatory jokes are not as innocent as young people often like to think is to show and discuss the pyramid of prejudice that shows different levels of prejudice and violence and how they are related.



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LGBTQI TERMS

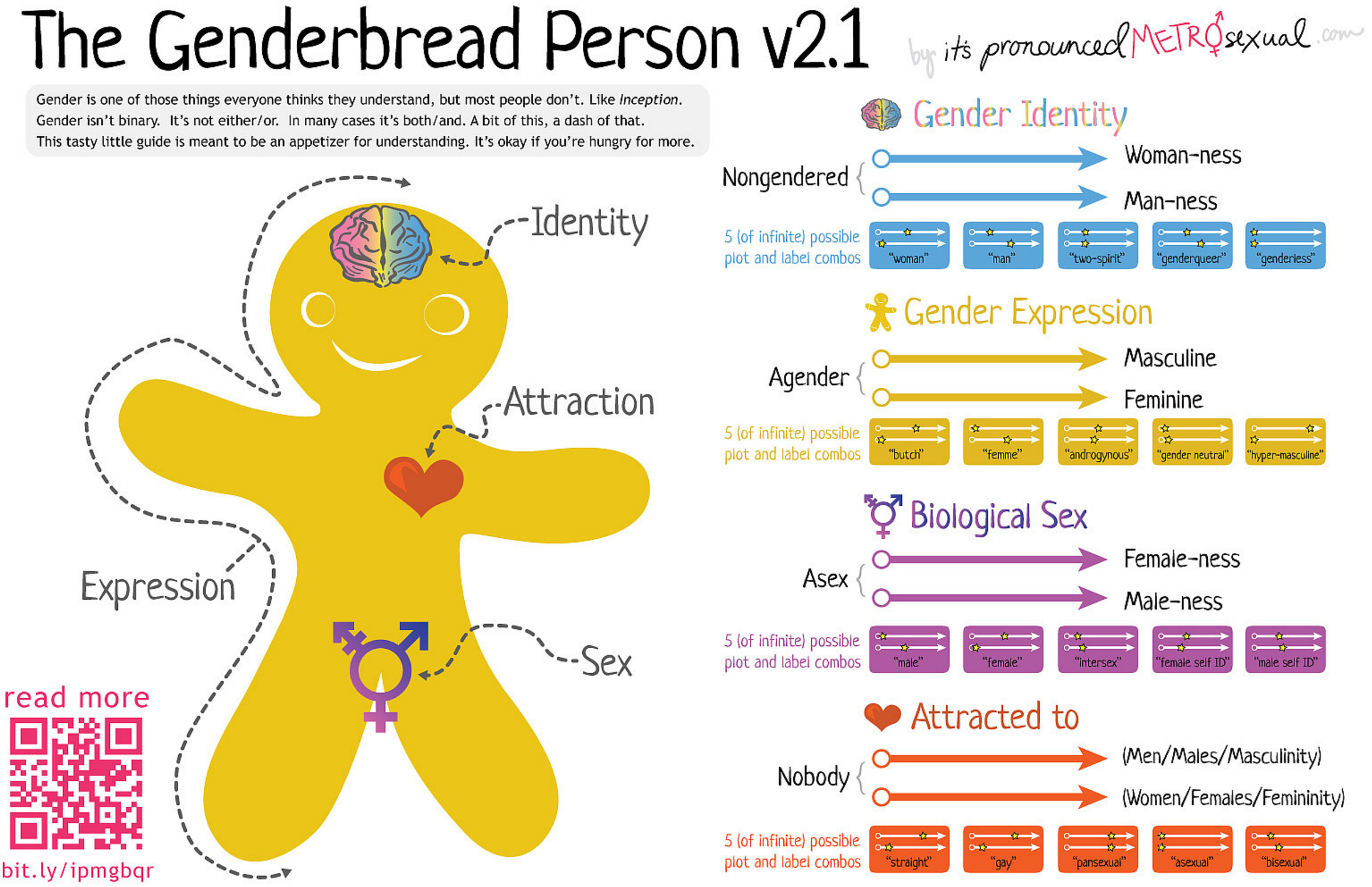
To be inclusive of the LGBTQI+(lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex) community a youth worker should know the basic terms that are related to the infinite LGBTQI identities and their intersectionality, as well as other terms that often come up when discussing the needs, struggles and peculiarities of LGBTQI communities.

When organizing an activity for young people it is a good idea to invite an experienced LGBTQI youth worker as it was done in the project Gender Approved! but that is not always a possibility so here is a good list of the most commonly used terms that may come up in discussions: http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2013/01/a-comprehensive-list-of-lgbtq-term-definitions/

TOOLS

GENDERBREAD PERSON

Genderbread person is a great tool for youth workers and teachers who want to introduce young people to the complexities of human identities. Every person has a gender identity, gender expression, biological sex and a sexual orientation, and every person has their own unique combination of those. Using Genderbread person is a way to introducing young people to those concepts and raising a discussion and leading young people to think about their own identities.



TOOLS

MAPS, PRINCIPLES, INDEX

A great tool for young people to gain perspective of the situation in their communities and countries in comparison to the world are various maps and indexes that are created and updated annually. They are free to use and available online. Some of the tools you can use are:

ILGA-Europe Rainbow map

ILGA-Europe Rainbow map is updated annually and it is one of the best known tools in Europe for understanding the situation and dynamic of LGBT rights in European countries. The whole package includes an ILGA-Europe Rainbow Europe map, Rainbow Europe Index, Country ranking, and Dynamic to the previous year.
You can find it here:
http://www.ilga-europe.org/resources/rainbow-europe/2015

The Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Map of World Laws

This map gives an overview of laws concerning same sex relationships all around the world and gives a clear vision of the inequality of the world – while some countries have a full recognition of same sex couples and there is protection against hate crimes bases on sexual orientation, other countries have imprisonment charges and even a Death penalty for homosexual activity.
You can find it here: http://old.ilga.org/Statehomophobia/ILGA_WorldMap_2015_ENG.pdf

Yogyakarta principles

In 2006, in response to well-documented patterns of abuse, a distinguished group of international human rights experts met in Yogyakarta, Indonesia to outline a set of international principles relating to sexual orientation and gender identity.

The result was the Yogyakarta Principles: a universal guide to human rights which affirm binding international legal standards with which all States must comply. They promise a different future where all people born free and equal in dignity and rights can fulfil that precious birthright. You can read the principles here:
http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles_en.htm

Gender Inequality Index

United Nations Human Development programme releases an annual overview of Gender Inequality in the world.
You can find it here:
http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII

METHODS

In non-formal learning active participation is one of the key anchors of learning process. Among discussions and sharing experiences, learning through games is one of the key elements of non-formal education.

A game is the main way to express creativity, energy and power. That is why a game has potential to break stereotypes and encourage innovation. A game is one of the techniques that make it possible to change the elements of some specific situation to create something new and unknown, and to find solutions for “unsolvable” situations. Due to the playfulness of situations, there is less fear of taking risks, which is often present in daily life. A game in a group gives a reason to start and develop conversations on specifics topics based on common or similar experiences.

Games are often given another name in the context of non-formal youth education. Often they are referred to as methods, tasks or exercises. No matter how they are called they are a great tools to use in learning process.

METHODS IN TC GENDER APPROVED!

In non-formal learning active participation is one of the key anchors of learning process. There are many types of activities that take place during a Training course designed in a non-formal education. During the TC Gender Approved! there were various games, discussions, reflections, sharing experiences, presenting local realities, interacting with locals, designing and implementing own activities happening. Feel free to use them in your own work with youngsters!

50 cents

Use: At the ice breaking and group building stage. A way of letting people release tension of being in a new unfamiliar group, and get them to have fun as a group.
The number of participants: 6 - 50
Equipment: A prepared story with sums of money
The task: The facilitator informs the participants that each of them represent 50 cents. Then they start reading a story which includes various sums of money. Each time when the facilitator mentions a sum of money, the participants (50 cents) have to make groups that constitute the mentioned sum. For example, if the facilitator says, “Laura looked down and found 2 euros on the pavement”, the participants form groups of 4 people because 4x50 cents equals 2 euro.

Safety challenge
Use: At the group building and trust building stage. It can be used as a way of building trust between the participants and starting the discussion about the importance and different ways of communication.
The number of participants: 2-50
The equipment: Scarves or “sleeping glasses” for blindfolding the participants.
The task: The group divides in couples. They are given the task to lead each other around the premises while one is blindfolded and the other is leading the blindfolded person with touch and sound (but only non-verbal). The couples are given a couple of minutes to agree on ways to communicate with each other without speaking before starting the “journey”.
When they start feeling safe or bored the couple switch places. After the task: Discuss the feelings of both how it felt to be in the position of leading and being led as a blindfolded person. What signs worked well. What were the difficulties. How did the other couples walking around impact the task? What are the factors that impact the feeling of safety?

METHODS

METHODS IN TC GENDER APPROVED!

IMoving debate

Use: At the introduction of the topic of the activity, training. Moving debate helps participants see the complexity of any topic, it can show the group how the beliefs they hold are different, it allows participants to explain their opininons to others.
The number of participants: 4 - 50
The equipment: Prepared statements on the topic.
The task: Before starting the activity the facilitator informs which side of the room is for “disagreeing” and which side of the room is for “agreeing” with the statement. The group members are told to randomly walk around the room until the facilitator reads a statement. When hearing the statement everyone has to choose a side according to their personal opinion. After the participants have chosen sides, they shortly discuss the reasons for choosing sides. The facilitators should try to make the statements that are not “black and white” so that there are differences in opinions. Examples of statements could be “Gender is a personal choice”, “To keep your culture you should keep your gender roles”, “Because the majority of people are heterosexual it is only fair that they set the norms in society”.

Forum Theatre

Use: when the topic is already introduced to the participants. Forum Theatre helps exploring ways of solving problems or resolving conflicts. It allows people to take the stage and explore different possibilities, and analyse the alternative solutions to situations.
Equipment: Anything that is available in the room can be used as props
Number of participants: 10 - 50
The task: Forum theatre is a form of role play. The audience watches a short play in which a central character encounters an oppression or obstacle which he or she is unable to overcome; the subject-matter is presented in a way that it relates to the lives of the audience. When the play has been performed it is repeated and members of the audience can take to the stage and suggest alternative options for how the protagonist could have acted. The actors explore the results of these choices with the audience, creating a kind of theatrical debate in which experiences and ideas are rehearsed and shared, generating both solidarity and a sense of empowerment.

CONCLUSION

INon-formal education in both local communities and in international context in the Erasmus + programme is a great way of broadening the horizons of young people. Doing so in a way that recognizes the gender inequality and respects the LGBT youth as well as any group that is in some way different from the majority leads to stronger and healthier society.
The ways of designing and organising non-formal education are endless. As a youth worker you can either use already existing methods of work or invent your own. Always keep in mind age group, diversity of the group and their existing awareness of the topics in hand, be flexible and always remember to make it fun!

Good luck!