

P.R.I.D.E.

**Promoting Rights, Inclusion,
Diversity and Equality**

Toolkit on working with young LGBTQ+ people





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of the European Union

GO FREE - the Association for the
Support of Civil Society



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TOOLKIT ON WORKING WITH YOUNG LGBTQ+ PEOPLE

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P.R.I.D.E.



Promoting LGBTQ+ Rights, Inclusion, Diversity and Equality in Eastern Europe

Romania, similarly to other Eastern European countries has, during the past few years, taken a path on which the pressure and abuse present in the public environment were often aimed towards minoritarian and/or vulnerable groups. Among these groups, next to Roma, Hungarian or Jewish members, there are also the members of the LGBTQ+ community.

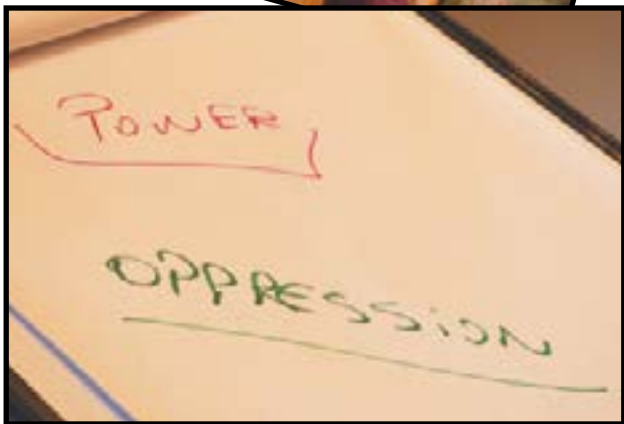
“The abuses, the harassment, and the offensive hate speech directed towards the LGBTQ+ community have intensified in Romania due to the promoting of a single relationship and family model that is ‘acceptable’ in the Romanian public space, and the aggressive campaigns anticipating the referendum for redefining the concept of family within the Romanian Constitution. A referendum which, as the results of the vote show, was considered invalid, not having met the 30% mandatory quorum; a referendum which brought a great cost upon all of us, both financially, and in the relationships with those whom we forget to perceive as people, and we often see them as being different, treating them with a lack of humanity. The fear that was promoted daily within the public space against everything that is different, or outside of the ‘social norms’, has become, for many, a justification for the manner in which they behave and express themselves in public, pushing, once more, the LGBTQ members of the community towards the borders of society, into unacceptance. This happens, usually, because of a lack of actual contact with any member of the LGBTQ community. The question to which it is necessary to find an urgent response is: How can we bring dialogue, respect for all human rights and empathy into the communities that we are all a part of, no matter our place on the world map, and how can we prepare for this to happen, not in 10 years, but starting tomorrow?”

Andra Camelia Cordoș, Go Free president

Shortly after the Romanian referendum, Go Free – The Association for the Support of Civil Society hosted its first activity within the P.R.I.D.E. project - an acronym which signifies the Promotion of Rights, Inclusion, Diversity and Equality, financed through the Erasmus Plus programme of the European Council. The international training is aimed at developing the competences of NGO youth workers from Eastern Europe, teaching them to be better prepared to develop activities for the LGBTQ+ youth, to meet their needs. The formation course managed to bring together in Cluj-Napoca, between the 14th and the 21st of October, 28 youth workers from Hungary, Poland, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia and Romania. For 6 days, the participants have had the opportunity to get familiarized with various notions and working methods which would facilitate a better understanding of the social context and the difficulties faced by LGBTQ+ youth within the participant countries, and the organizations where the participants came from: Centar za građanske inicijative Poreč (Croatia), Magnet House (Serbia), Tolerado (Poland), Európa Ifjúsága Egyesület - Youth of Europe Association (Hungary), MKC Maribor (Slovenia), Tolerantiško jaunimo asociacija (Lithuania) and PRIDE România. as a local partner.



Within the first part of the formation course, the participants found out more about the particularities of the LGBTQ+ community within Eastern Europe and about certain aspects regarding the history of the LGBTQ+ community as a whole, a history of representation which is strictly connected to the feminist movement, from the beginning of the 20th century. These notions are necessary for youth workers' activity, whose work should hold into account the individual particularities of LGBTQ+ youngsters. If these particularities are named and accounted for, the long-term impact of their proposed projects/activities will grow significantly. These discussions provoked the participants to evaluate the situations that the LGBTQ+ youth are confronted with, in their countries of residence, the support, or lack of support, that they receive from the authorities, as well as the manner in which youth organizations manage to collaborate and mobilize themselves to defeat the discrimination and the marginalization of LGBTQ+ members, while also reflecting upon their personal positions regarding this subject in relation with their daily lives, and upon the privileges that some of us have, which may influence the manner in which we try to solve these situations from a position of power. If, for example, in Croatia, NGOs and authorities alike were to reach a collaboration, as the PrEP medicine for HIV prevention to be freely distributed among members of the LGBTQ+ community, and in the city of Gdansk, in Poland, the local authorities support local events which involve or are dedicated to the LGBTQ+ community, in Romania or Serbia this conversation cannot be held, because in these countries discrimination and marginalization still affects the LGBTQ+ community and, on most occasions, the authorities fail to act on this issue, or at least to adopt a firm position regarding it.



Other sessions within the training were oriented towards the exchange of good practices and learning of new methods which aim to support youth workers with the activities they are developing. Among the proposed methods we count: forum theatre; community journalism; photovoice or street debate, and, of course, successful campaigning and advocacy instruments. Together with the learning of these methods, the participants also

debated upon the media representation of the LGBTQ+ community, and the manner in which the message can be influenced by a positive or a negative filter, once it is applied to a piece of information, before being delivered to the general public.

Last, but not least, the final part of the training focused on practicing this newly-gained knowledge, during various workshops. After understanding, in detail, what a lobby and advocacy campaign is, which are the differences and the main methods used within these campaigns, as well as debating some successful examples, the participants projected and planned their own campaigns and events which they will create within the following months.

The following meeting within the P.R.I.D.E. project – evaluation meeting - was planned for June 2019

A first online follow-up activity of the P.R.I.D.E. project partnering organizations has taken place on December 10th, during the International Human Rights Day, when we joined the campaign with a personal message: #MEGA – Make Europe Great for All, initiated at an European level by the European Civic Forum, with which the Go Free Association has developed, during the past few months, a collaboration in order to monitor LGBTQ+ rights in Romania, also contributing to the publication of an article on the European Civic.

Watch platform: ROMANIA: hate speech on the rise against LGBT community and activists.

P.R.I.D.E. has had a real impact on the participants. Therefore, on 29th of June 2019 the youngsters from the Youth Cultural Center Maribor/Maribor skozi rožnata očala (Slovenia), together with the Go Free Association organised the first PRIDE march in Maribor. The march took place within the framework of the international project “United with PRIDE”, a youth exchange project financed by the Erasmus Plus Programme, planned after the training course (P.R.I.D.E.) that took place in Cluj-Napoca in October 2018.

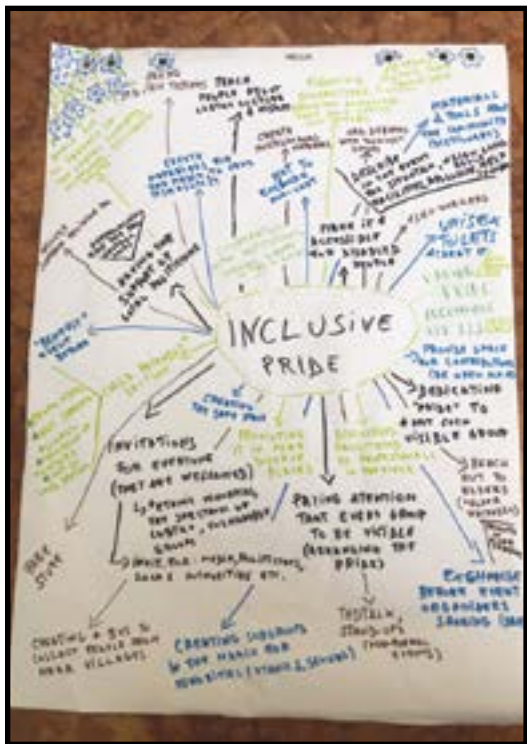


P.R.I.D.E. International evaluation meeting, between the 12th and the 16th of June 2019, the second mobility of the project took place. It focused on evaluating all of the activities envisaged up to that point and on actually underlining whether inclusion needs were properly addressed and resolved. The design offered a space for sharing among participants and enabled them to further learn different perspectives on working on inclusion issues. This meeting aimed to critically and constructively look at the project activities, marking the achievements and the downfalls, but also to look forward into a future of sustainable actions that the partner organizations can undertake further on.

During the meeting, the participants were able to take part in 2 public events, that were also included in the Cluj Pride 2019 Festival: A feminist/gender approach to working with young LGBTQ+ people (facilitated by our partner MAGNET, Serbia); and Debating PRIDE in Europe (facilitated by Go Free and MKC Maribor, Slovenia). The last event focused on questions such as: How to make Pride more visible?; Which is better: Pride or parade?; How to make Pride more inclusive?. Therefore, the participants could share more thoughts on issues regarding LGBTQ+ youth with local members of the LGBTQ+ community and with local activists, finding out more about ways in which we can improve our work on the matter.

The participants had the opportunity to take part in the events of Cluj Pride Festival and also to march together with more than 3000 people at Cluj Pride. Seeing firsthand what a Pride march means, with all the organization of the surrounding events and the march itself, participants were able to reflect more on the importance of it and the ways they thought about this matter:

One of the project’s main goals was to create this Toolkit on working with young LGBTQ+ people. Therefore, during this international meeting, participants could offer feedback on what was included previously in the toolkit and what else should be included or further developed on. Another important aspect of this meeting was the strengthening of the partnership with MKC Maribor in order to implement our future project “United with Pride”, which was held in June both in Cluj-Napoca and Maribor - Slovenia. The aim of our partnership was to organize the first Maribor Pride on 29th of June 2019.



P.R.I.D.E.
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#MEGA MAKE
EUROPE
GREAT
FOR ALL

**INTERNATIONAL
HUMAN RIGHTS DAY**

PRIDE



TOLERANTISKO
JAUNIMO
ASOCIACIJA

The participants told us about

“I learned many things in this project. I came here with certain expectations and I believe the experience here is above those expectations. I became aware of other people’s needs, about strength, about the importance of the fact that we all gathered into a single place to try and change a little the things within the communities we come from, together. I also became aware of my competences and of the importance of those competences and knowledge, as well as that of my experiences, for which I am grateful to the group of people I work with. I believe that a collaboration between the Eastern European countries is the most important aspect, because we have different perspectives and we confront with different issues in the societies we come from. However, at the basis, we all have problems.”

Nikolina, Serbia

“When I was on my way towards Cluj, I never thought it would be so cool. I was surprised that the city is, indeed, a city of the students. It is fresh, and there are many diverse people here. With regards to the project, I am still new to this topic (working with LGBTQ+ youth). However, it helped me tremendously in seeing these situations profoundly, and it has helped me grow as a person, because all of the things that I have done, from games to the actual working sessions, make sense, in the end. From my foreigner’s perception, in Cluj, I observed that members of the LGBTQ+ community are not very visible. On dating and social media applications there are many individuals, however, on the streets, people don’t really seem to know anything about this community. My message for them is to be brave, because once they are together, they have nothing to fear.”

Mislav, Slovenia

their experience within the project

“For me, the project experience has been efficient, highly educational, useful and I have clearly gained more practical knowledge, which I can take home. I believe that this idea of bringing together organizations with a common goal is a very good idea and it could only produce benefits, such as exchanging techniques, knowledge and experiences, or participating in international projects, these could lead to a sort of international support nodes between LGBTQ+ communities.”

Petra, Croatia

“For me, the P.R.I.D.E. project and the activities were amazing. I had the chance to go deeper into this topic and change some stereotypes of my own. I had some really good talks with other participants and all of the preparation in which I could help was so great! It was my first time helping and taking part in a Pride [march]. This year, at Cluj Pride, there were about 3000 people, and I was so surprised at how many people were taking part. It was a really good and new experience for me, I learned so many new things and I am waiting for the next time!”

Bernadette, Hungary

“During the 3 days of activities, we were talking about PRIDE, how to improve it, how to implement it in many different areas in order to make everyone be aware of the LGBTQ+ community. On 15th of June, we participated together in Cluj Pride, which was an unforgettable event for me. The attitude and the atmosphere were amazing and very cheerful. I will always remember this PRIDE [march]. All in all, it was a short meeting, but more intense. I experienced a lot and my way of thinking has changed as well.”

Szabolcs, Hungary

About the project

Since youth work is commonly understood as a tool for the development, inclusion and citizenship of young people, the P.R.I.D.E. project proposed to prepare youth workers to better address the real needs of young LGBTQ+ people and decrease bias and discrimination towards them. For this we aimed to:

- enhance specific competences in working with young LGBTQ+ people for 28 youth workers from 7 countries in Eastern Europe through a thematic training course of 6 days and an evaluation meeting of 3 days;
- increase the personal and professional development outlooks for at least 70 young LGBTQ+ people from 7 countries in Eastern Europe over a period of 6 months;
- increase awareness in at least 7 countries in Eastern Europe on how to recognize and get involved in specific anti-discrimination actions on a national and European level within a period of 6 months.

Within the project, youth workers involved in the 7 partner organisations coming from Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia have participated in two international mobility activities (one international training course and one evaluation meeting) and also in follow-up activities at a local level targeting young LGBTQ+ people and an awareness campaign targeting bias and discrimination against young LGBTQ+ people. Besides these activities, the project also envisaged the creation of a toolkit on working with young LGBTQ+ people, the one that you are reading right now.

As a result of this project, the participants have increased their competences in working with young LGBTQ+ people, taking into account their learning and inclusion needs and particularities and they are empowered to use different non-formal education tools and methodologies in order to make their work more suited to the target audience that they are working with.



About the partners



• Go Free - Asociația pentru Sprijinirea Societății Civile, România

Go Free is a Cluj-Napoca based NGO that works with young people - Roma and non-Roma, LGBTQ+ youth and aims to promote the respect for diversity and dialogue between different communities. We believe that all people are equal and, as such, most of our activities have targeted the theme of diversity, solidarity and social justice while having the goal of empowering citizens/ our target group to take action by themselves and to speak up against injustice. Since 2012, when we were officially established as an NGO, we have created a proper environment for young people's personal and professional development, and have worked together to build a more accepting community towards the diversity of people.

Our official goals and objectives are to raise the level of culture, education and democracy in the civil society of Romania, support democratic values and principles, minorities, and the promotion of cultural diversity in the national and European space, to create opportunities for the involvement of youth in the development of the community.

Go Free has been one of the 9 members of the National Committee Coordinating the No Hate Speech Movement Campaign in Romania since July 2016. It has focused its attention onto the topic of "hate speech" since 2013, gradually building its expertise on the matter through trainings, media campaigns, projects, national and international media monitoring, and participation in various activities, projects or conferences that cover the topic (e.g. Utøya TC on Counter and Alternative Narrative to Hate Speech, organised by The European Wergeland Center (EWC), The Youth Department of the Council of Europe and Utøya AC; NO hate practitioners' - meeting Mainstreaming best practices, organised by FDSC; "Preventing right-wing extremism and group hatred – exchanging good practices from Germany and Central and Eastern Europe", organized by European Network for Non-Violence and Dialogue). In the past year, Go Free has hosted a significant number of workshops on the topics of human rights, promoting diversity and fighting hate speech and social exclusion, at both a local and national level. In its activity, Go Free relies on the use of multimedia methods in order to reach a greater audience and to ensure that its message gets across. From an online magazine, to short films that combine non-formal methods (e.g. digital storytelling) and a large presence on social media platforms, Go Free and its members have developed, over time, an understanding of multimedia and has increased its competences in photography, filming, writing, editing in order to carry out its goals and support local communities/ marginalized groups from both Cluj-Napoca and rural/ urban areas in Transylvania.



• MAGNET

MAGNET is a non-governmental, non-partisan, non-profit national organization registered in Belgrade, Serbia, composed of national and international members working with and for young people, active in the area of intercultural dialogue and raising awareness on social issues. MAGNET offers an online and offline structure for wider, international cooperation and representation while protecting members' identities. MAGNET runs a training center in Serbia, in Veliki Gaj (Magnet House).

MAGNET focuses on:

1. Awareness and understanding of cultural diversity as a wealth linking generations within and beyond borders.
2. Innovative practices in the active participation of young people as agents of change in society through non-formal educational processes and international activism and networking.

Despite being a newly founded organization, in 2017 alone, MAGNET's founding members have acquired plenty of experience in project development and the management of large international projects with 10+ partners, as well as members with a strong political engagement in the International Voluntary Service movement, having as members an ex vice-president of the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations, senior trainers in different pools like the Alliance, Council of Europe, SEEYN, National Agency – Tempus office in Serbia, Young Researchers of Serbia, IJGD Germany. As MAGNET is a newly founded organisation, its resources and experience are drawn from its members.

Among our founding members we have experienced trainers in non-formal education in regards to the theme of the project, having most recently organized a Study Session in cooperation with the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg "SAGE: Self-Assessment on Gender Equality" 15-20 May 2017, for the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations. Also, we are active in the Alliance's Working Groups, especially the one on Gender Equality. This is a European based network with 50 members from 29 countries.

MAGNET is managing Magnet House, an education center in Veliki Gaj, Serbia. As the center is currently being renovated and will open its doors to civil society organisations from all over Serbia and abroad in June 2018, we would like to build up the capacities of our members to successfully run youth educational activities in a holistic manner, offering not only thematic workshops, but also being sensitive and reflective over the values of the organisation: intercultural dialogue, equal opportunities, social inclusion, global networking, non-formal education and learning and active citizenship.



• Mladinski kulturni center Maribor

The Youth Cultural Centre Maribor (Mladinski kulturni center Maribor) is a public institute, founded in 1993 by the Municipality of Maribor. It is active in the fields of art, creativity, urban culture and youth sector. It promotes and organizes art projects, cultural programs and activities for youth. Their projects and activities are internationally and locally-oriented and intended for young people and fans of contemporary art and urban culture. The Youth Cultural Centre Maribor organizes over 300 different evening events and activities every year, such as art festivals, exhibitions, workshops, literary events, artistic performances, shows, lectures, round table discussions, symposiums, youth exchanges, installations, urban and street actions, conferences, book fairs and multimedia events. In the implementation of our activities we cooperate with other organisations active in the field of culture and youth work in Slovenia and abroad. The institute programs are structured under the form of regular program activities and temporary projects.

The mission of the Youth Cultural Centre Maribor (Mladinski kulturni center Maribor) is to offer young people the opportunity to use their ingenuity and initiative, and, with our help, gain a broad spectrum of knowledge and experience that will be of good sustenance on their journey into the adult world. Through the implementation of youth programs we enable young people to participate in various activities during their leisure time and, through this, give them the opportunity to improve their knowledge, educate themselves non-formally, discover, explore and train. At the same time, we provide them with the financial, material, and infrastructural conditions necessary in order to allow them express themselves, and to become creative in various fields. Our priority areas reach the sphere of non-formal education, volunteering, research, and international youth work, information and advice services as well as the participation of the young in society, an awareness of human rights and active citizenship.

One of the youth projects in our organization is also an LGBTQ+ group for young people. For the past couple of years the LGBTQ+ group was really strong, and it was built by a group of young people who prepared and organized workshops about LGBTQ+ topics, as well as public events, parties, anonymous peer counseling and informing young people about issues related to homosexuality via e-mail and phone.

Now, these people have gotten older, they have found jobs, started their families and slowly started to grow out of this group, and therefore are no longer as connected to our organization as they were before. And so, it happened that the group began to fall apart last winter. Right now, we're in the process of building a new group with youth who recognize the need of talking about LGBTQ+ topics, we are getting to know each other better, discussing the issues that they are facing and are motivated to do some projects together.

• Centar za građanske Porec udruge CCI

The Centre for Civil Initiatives Porec is a human rights, feminist, peacemaking civil society organization, which protects and promotes human rights and active citizenship, respecting the principles of freedom and equality, since 1992, by providing direct protection, advocacy actions, lobbying, raising awareness and educating citizens, supporting the work and development of civil society organizations and civic initiatives which contribute to the common good and the strengthening of civil society.

Our organisation is working on three main activities/projects regarding human rights:

1) Education in high schools regarding LGBTQ+ rights – sessions are organized in a way that two lesbians get to talk to young people directly, about their lives, struggles, discrimination, violence, but also love and pride, in connection with LGBTQ+ rights in general.

2) LGBT summer festival “Homo, fešta!”

The festival was inspired by the present homophobia and transphobia in our society that, instead of decreasing, is increasing. There is a great need for creating, gathering, and strengthening the LGBTQ+ community. Entertainment and educational content break prejudices and, through cultural events, the festival opens up questions regarding the (in)visibility of LGBTQ+ people and sensitizes the citizens. It is important to work on this problem and raise awareness among citizens about the need to accept LGBTQ+

people as equal members of society, as well as the strengthening of LGBTQ+ people to freely, and without fear, walk the streets. This project increases knowledge and awareness among citizens on issues related to LGBTQ+, reduces prejudice and shatters stereotypes against LGBTQ+ people, increases the acceptance and visibility of LGBTQ+ people by organizing 3-days long festive, cultural, educational, and events (exhibitions, concerts, movie screenings, parties, panel discussions) on different topics. The project is innovative because it opens up uncovered contents in Porec or Istria (and Croatia, there are no LGBTQ+ festivals).

3) ETHOS - The E.T.Ho.S international project has emerged from the partners' drive to challenge long lasting stereotypes and prejudices against LGBTQ+ people in the EU by targeting one of the most powerful sources of representation, the media. The role of media is critical in addressing the phenomenon of homophobia/ transphobia/ biphobia. Instead of (re) producing negative stereotypes against LGBTQ+ people, using offensive language against them and contributing to sustaining their social exclusion and “legalizing” discrimination against them, the media can play a vital role in communicating the needs of LGBTQ+ people, spreading awareness for human rights and justice, achieving social acceptance and cohesion. Media can be used in a very positive - educational and awareness-raising - way in order to change the public opinion in favor of LGBTQ+ people and their rights.



• Európa Ifjúsága Egyesület

Európa Ifjúsága Egyesület (Youth of Europe Association) was founded in 2008. It aims to promote the autonomy and personality of young people and their active social engagement; to support disadvantaged young people in the interest of equal opportunities; to involve young people from small settlements in social processes. During our activities, we try to influence the attitude of the young in order for them to become responsible adults. We do this by getting involved in international youth exchange programs (youth exchange), trainings (mobility of youth workers) and other Erasmus+ projects, children and family programs and other such programs and projects. We also undertake many educational activities, trainings, workshops, and counseling with groups of young people in relation to their current problems. The main areas of our activities involve counseling, developing strategies and action plans concerning communities of young people, informational campaigns, training activities and workshops. Also, our association carries out the coordination of the Eurodesk Network in Central Transdanubia.

We provide low-threshold services so we can reach more young people. We provide, for university students, a space to practice. We work with tools of non-formal learning. We are involved in domestic and international trainings involving young people, because it is important for the professionals who work with them to progress. We monitor the development of international youth policy and participate in influencing the policy processes on a national level. We are members of the National Youth Council.

Our vision for young people is that, through developing their communication skills, self-esteem, and self-confidence, they can change their mindset, acquire attitudes that provide them with a broader perspective, and improve their personality. New connections make it easier for them to accept others and become more accepting. They can start to cooperate with other areas, conduct community actions, actively participate in volunteering and involve themselves in youth organizations. The acquired information is passed on, multiplied in their families, in their schools, in their narrower and wider circles, and contributes preventively to the formation of our society.

Our experience on the topic of the project: Our organisation has worked on LGBTQ+ issues and gender issues in the past. Through our actions and programs, we have been tackling topics such as gender roles in society, stereotypes, LGBTQ+ issues, topics that need to be put forward in order to create respect for all human rights, so that we can build a democratic society. With these projects, initiated by young people, we aimed to promote active civic engagement, social inclusion and solidarity, to fight against discrimination, to increase equal opportunities, and the intercultural sensitivity of young people, to develop competences, to raise awareness on non-formal and informal learning, to promote mobility projects within the European Union, and thus increase the labor market integration of these young people.

• **Tolerantisko Jaunimo Asociacija**

Tolerant Youth Association (TYA) is a grassroots youth organization in Lithuania, which aims to promote human rights, inclusion and youth empowerment through participation. TYA operates on a national level, implementing activities and projects addressing various human rights issues and connecting youth across the country.

The organization focuses on promoting a human-rights approach and inclusive education, empowerment and human rights awareness among young people, particularly focusing on LGBTQ+ people and other vulnerable groups. It also advocates for the rights of migrants, non EU / non EEA countries citizens (the so called “third country nationals” - TCNs), refugees and asylum seekers.

During the 13 years of existence of the Association more than 60 projects and a wide range of activities have been implemented in the fields of non-formal education, advocacy campaigns, research & publishing. Our Educational and cultural events involve both vulnerable groups (LGBTQ+, TCNs) and society as a whole, and seeks an empowering and inclusive approach. TYA advocates for LGBTQ+ rights and hosts LGBTQ+ community initiatives.

Since 2011, the Migrants’ Information and Consulting Center has been established by TYA, supplying TCNs with information, educational support, training, social, and intercultural activities. It has also stimulated the establishment of local African and Arabic communities.

In its activities TYA has been cooperating with Equal Opportunities Ombudsman Office, Lithuanian Center of Human Rights, various educational institutions, such as Mykolas Romeris University, several public secondary schools.

TYA is a full member of international organizations such as ILGA and IGLYO, also Lithuanian Youth Council, and a member of several regional umbrella youth organizations, as well as a member of the Coalition of Human Rights Organizations in Lithuania. TYA has been working with various donor institutions, both local (Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Vilnius and Kaunas municipalities) and international (EIF, EEA, Harvey Milk Foundation, Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, etc.). It has also cooperated with the US, Germany, Austrian, Swedish, Spanish and Dutch embassies in Lithuania.



• **Stowarzyszenie na rzecz osób LGBT Tolerado**

The LGBTQ Association TOLERADO was established in 2012. The organization incessantly conducts several long-lasting and parallel activities and a series of single events.

TOLERADO consists of more than 100 members, activists with vast professional backgrounds and skills. The team's core is built by people with experience in NGO structures. Additionally, we cooperate with multiple Polish and International organisations in the LGBTQ+ field, as well as with dozens of local institutions and organisations. Starting in 2017, we have broadened our cooperation with the Gdansk's government to form the city's action strategy for equal treatment.

TOLERADO is experienced in organizing events and campaigns, both on a local, national and international level, such as: Equality Days (screenings, concerts, debates, exhibitions, theme parties) and Equality Marches, projects such as "Let us offer each other the sign of Peace" a campaign focusing on the dialogue between the Christian church and the LGBTQ+ society, organisation of the European Forum of Christian LGBTQ+ Groups and "Rainbow families full of strength and shine" having a national campaign in supporting the parenting of same-sex couples.

We also organize the annual Polish Rainbow Families Festival. We support the local LGBTQ+ community by providing free of charge psychological and coaching help and by managing dedicated development groups.

We also take on an important niche, with events dedicated strictly to LGBTQ+ women. Women are not visible, are not present in the media or in politics, and are rarely to be found in leadership positions. This problem is common for every woman, not only non-heteronormative ones. However, this group is the area of our focus – since this is a double-excluded group. Our goal is to give women the necessary bravery, strength and tools which will allow them to voice their opinions, apply for managing positions and exist in the public space.



General overview of LGBTQ+ issues

Poland has received international attention in previous years following official bans, and attacks by right wing political groups, against public LGBT events. In particular, Poland's previous government and the Catholic Church have been vocal against LGBT persons and their rights.

From an NGO perspective, LGBTI activists remain concerned about how the space that civil society occupies in Poland is gradually being eroded. They are continuing to monitor how new laws, such as the Public Assembly Bill (now deemed constitutional), will operate in practice. Worries also linger around access to funding and resources to support LGBTI activism in the coming years.

Thousands of LGBTI people also responded to a survey on their social lives by NGOs KPH, Lambda Warsaw and Trans – Fuzja Foundation, sharing their experiences of depression and anti-LGBTI violence. However, the same survey also contained an element of hope for the future, as the LGBTI community were shown to be very politically engaged and turn out to vote in huge numbers.

Equality & non-discrimination issues

Despite the EU Employment Directive operating in Poland there have been very few cases before Polish employment courts where the claim of sexual orientation was raised. This should be seen in the light of a fear by LGBT persons about disclosing their sexual orientation.

There is only a small amount of data available that details discrimination in the workplace. A low level of awareness of discrimination prevents it from being recognised in the Polish workforce. Besides, unequal treatment can be difficult to prove. Moreover, because of a fairly high unemployment rate, employees are afraid that reporting discrimination will lead to them losing their jobs.

On 14 June, the Commissioner for Human Rights (RPO) intervened in a case of an employee of a printing company in Łódź, who refused to work on an order by the foundation LGBT Business Forum due to his religious beliefs. Upon the foundation's complaint, the RPO sent a letter to the local police unit, arguing discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. The police filed a case against the employee, under Art. 138 of the Code of Misdemeanours. First and second instance courts found the employee guilty. The Prosecutor General requested his acquittal, but the Supreme Court dismissed this and stated that the employee did in fact discriminate.

Legislation

Poland does not legally recognize same-sex unions, either in the form of marriage or civil unions. In 2012, the Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples have limited legal rights in regards to the tenancy of a shared household. A few laws also guarantee certain limited rights for unmarried couples, including couples of the same sex. Same-sex spouses also have access to residency rights under EU law.

Article 18 of the Polish Constitution was previously interpreted as banning same-sex marriage, but in February 2019 a court in Warsaw ruled in a landmark decision that this provision does not explicitly limit marriage to opposite-sex couples.

On the 5th of June 2018, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that European Union member states (including Poland) must recognise the freedom of movement and residency rights of same-sex spouses, provided one partner is an EU citizen. The Court ruled that EU member states may choose whether or not to allow same-sex marriage, but they cannot obstruct the freedom of residence of an EU citizen and their spouse. Furthermore, the Court ruled that the term “spouse” is gender-neutral, and that it does not necessarily imply a person of the opposite sex.

Family

Polish national legislation does not permit unmarried different-sex couples to adopt a child (also each other’s child), which also applies to unmarried same-sex couples. Under the Polish law only the married couple and a single person have a right to adopt a child. In practice marriages are preferred as providing better conditions for the full development of the child.

In October, the Supreme Administrative Court ruled in favor of a lesbian couple, who requested to register their child in Poland. In 2015, the couple was refused a Polish birth certificate stating both women as parents, even though they were already legally recognised as parents in the UK.

Hate crimes and hate speech

Poland regularly reports hate crime data to ODIHR. Poland’s Criminal Code contains several substantive offences. Data reported to ODIHR include crimes of incitement to hatred. Hate crime data is collected by the Department of Control, Complaints and Petitions of Ministry of the Interior, the General Police Headquarters, the Internal Security Agency, the Preparatory Proceedings Office of the General Prosecutor’s Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Institute of National Remembrance – General Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation and the Ombudsman’s Office. Hate crime data is regularly published. Poland conducts a victimization survey containing questions on hate crimes.

According to information provided by the Ministry of Interior and Administration 19 police officers who register an incident have the possibility to indicate that a particular crime is hate-motivated (there is a so-called “hate crime checkbox”). Despite international recommendations to address the problem of underreporting of anti-LGBT hate crime, the Ministry of Interior and Administration and the Police ignore the issue. Unlike some other types of crimes with vulnerable victims (e.g. domestic violence, racist violence), there are no special measures undertaken to encourage victims of anti-LGBT hate crime to come forward and report.

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General overview of LGBTQ+ issues

Hungary, like other nations in the region, was experiencing the rise of a powerful right-wing movement that not only resulted in significant representation in the Hungarian parliament (the Jobbik party) but, especially after 2006, demonstrations of public force in the streets and the countryside, where so-called vigilantes have attempted to enforce justice as they see it. Their victims continue to be those from marginalized populations: gays, Jews, and Roma. This transformed Hungarian sexual politics: there was little overt opposition to Budapest's Gay Pride March (which had already been staged annually for a decade) until 2007, when counterdemonstrators became violent. Anti-gay, nationalist protestors – some giving the Nazi salute and screaming homophobic slurs – attacked Pride marchers with eggs, bottles, rocks, and smoke bombs. Eleven Pride participants were beaten, two so badly that they required hospitalization.

The ongoing issues of belonging – of nationality and sexual orientation – that face those in the Hungarian LGBT community have not been solved by clinging to the Western construct of Pride, nor have they been alleviated by adopting the politics of “Dignity.” In fact, in the face of ongoing opposition and threats of violence, and in an atmosphere of continuously increasing national rhetoric, the public space and voice of Hungary's LGBT community may in fact be shrinking both physically and symbolically.

Equality & non-discrimination issues

The European Social Study found that 44% of Hungarians would feel ashamed if they had lesbian or gay family members, scoring among the least accepting countries in the European comparative study.

In 2017, the Hungarian government continued to openly vilify NGOs and activists. A controversial new law, imposing additional requirements on NGOs that receive funding from abroad, was condemned as discriminatory and disproportionate by human rights groups. This specific piece of legislation also elicited a reaction from the European Commission, as it stepped up legal proceedings against Hungary for breach of the EU's treaty provisions.

Several politicians drew attention during the course of the year – but not for their support of LGBTI equality. Prime Minister Viktor Orban spoke at the International Organisation of the Family's annual conference in Budapest, while the mayor of Asotthalom's attempt to introduce ‘anti-propaganda’ regulations was annulled by the Constitutional Court.

Legislation

Registered partnership, a family law institution for same-sex couples similar to marriage was introduced in Hungary in 2009. The law stipulates that besides the few exceptions explicitly mentioned in the Registered Partnership Act, all legal provisions that apply to spouses shall also apply to registered partners. Exceptions relate to taking the partner's name and parenting, thus do not cover taxation issues.

According to the court's argumentation current Hungarian legislation contains no explicit provisions, neither requiring, nor forbidding the recognition of foreign same-sex marriages, so according the general principles of international private law a foreign same-sex marriage should be recognized as the institution most similar to it in Hungarian law, that is registered partnership. Rejecting such a recognition would infringe on the fundamental rights of the couple, as their stable relationship would not be recognized.

Family

The act on registered partnerships entered into force in January 2009, introducing the possibility of a registered partnership for both opposite- and same-sex couples. This is a significant development for LGBT couples, although the partnership does not grant full equality of rights in comparison to marriage.

The most important exception in relation to marriage is that registered (same-sex) couples cannot adopt children together and lesbian couples are not entitled to assisted insemination. As Hungarian law permits adoption by single persons as well as married couples, there seems to be no reasonable explanation for excluding same-sex couples from adopting children.

Hate crimes and hate speech

In spite of the relatively favourable legal situation, LGBTQI people still face prejudice and discrimination in many areas of life. Most of them decide to keep their sexual orientation and / or gender identity secret, even to their family, friends and colleagues; there are very few out public figures in the political or cultural life. Nearly every second Hungarian agrees with the statement that homosexuality is a sickness, and would rather not have a gay or lesbian neighbour.

Since 2010, Hungary has had a conservative government that significantly cut back on the rights of LGBTQI people. In 2011, they adopted a new Constitution that defines marriage as a union between a woman and a man and limits the notion of family to spouses and parent-child relationships. They adopted legislation on the content of education which does not include LGBTQI issues in school curricula, and introduced family education as a compulsory topic with homophobic and transphobic undertones.

Hate speech is covered by the law when it amounts to incitement to hatred against a community. Court practice finds incitement against a community only if ‘stirring up hatred’ prompts direct and immediate violent action. General homophobic comments that do not reach this level of severity are not prohibited by Hungarian criminal law. There is no case law known concerning homophobic hate speech.

As instances of anti-gay violence and gay bashing are rarely recorded, there is little data on this phenomenon. However, the aftermath of the July 2007 Pride march was marked by anti-gay attacks—for the first time in the 12-year history of Hungarian LGBT festivals. Given that anti-gay violence is typically socially invisible, the violence during and after the 2007 Pride is seen as shocking.

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LITHUANIA

General overview of LGBTQ+ issues

According to Rainbow Europe, the overall score of achieved LGBTI human rights in Lithuania is of 21%, the country occupying the 37th place among the 49 European countries regarding the achievement of these rights. In 1993, homosexuality was decriminalized in Lithuania. Regarding the legislative part of the situation of the LGBT community, there have been both for and against initiatives of enlarging the rights of the LGBT people. According to the Eurobarometer on discrimination in the EU in 2015, 57% of the population of Lithuania considered that discrimination based on sexual orientation is very widespread in their country (the mean at the level of the EU28 being of 58% of the population), while discrimination based on gender identity was considered to be very widespread by 46% of the population (and 56% at the level of the EU 28). Moreover, according to a survey conducted by the NGO LGL in the autumn of 2016, 54% of the LGBT people in Lithuania had faced hate crimes or hate speech during the previous 12 months.

Equality & non-discrimination issues

The Penal Code of the Republic of Lithuania states that the instigation to acts of violence against minorities, including the LGBT community, is banned (according to section 170 (3)). Also, as it is stated in The Law on Equal Treatment (adopted in 2003 and last amended in 2008) discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is not legally allowed in the areas of employment, education, access to goods and services and health. However, discrimination based on gender identity is not addressed in this law. An example of a non-discrimination act is that gays and lesbians are allowed to serve openly in the military. Also, freedom of assembly is guaranteed by the Constitution of Lithuania and by the Law on Peaceful Assembly. Over time, even though there have been some problems when the LGBT community wanted to organize events such as Pride Marches (not being allowed to organize them or facing the public local authorities' attempts to banning them), in 2016 the Baltic Pride March was peacefully organized.

Legislation

Article 38 of the Lithuanian Constitution (adopted in 1992) states that "Marriage shall be concluded upon the free mutual consent of a man and a woman" and Article 3.12 of the country's Civil Code states that "Marriage shall be concluded with a person of the opposite sex only", thus marriage between same-sex couples not being recognized. Regarding registered partnerships, these are also not available in Lithuania because the Civil Code allows only the institution of partnerships in the case of heterosexual couples (see Article 3.229 of the Civil Code). In 2017, there were discussions on a proposal issued by several Members of the Lithuanian Parliament aimed to amend the Civil Code of the country so that it would recognize the legal status of different-sex couples as well same-sex couples. The proposal did not pass, 59 MPs voting against it, 29 in favor, and 20 abstained. According to the Eurobarometer mentioned in the section "General overview of LGBTQ+ issues", 71% of the population of Lithuania considered that same sex marriages should not be allowed throughout Europe, while only 33% of the population of the 28 EU countries shared this opinion.

Regarding gender identity, non-married people can change their legal gender if it is medically possible. Although the European Court of Human Rights has asked Lithuania to establish a law that would regulate which are the conditions and the process of gender reassignment, the policy makers of the country have ignored this task. In 2017, 6 people were provided with legal gender recognition without having to get a surgical intervention. In the same year, the Lithuanian Government asked the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Healthcare to draft a proposal of law which would enable gender reassignment. In the proposal, the Ministry of Justice described the

administrative procedures a person has to follow before proceeding to change his/her identity documents, while the Ministry of Healthcare provided documentation on the conditions for obtaining specific healthcare services. In 2018, 14 trans people changed their personal identification documents through a judicial procedure. This is a process which does not require trans people to get a surgical intervention or sterilization beforehand.

In 2017, the legislative body of the country did not propose legal initiatives in order to offer a greater support to the LGBT community, instead it tried to strengthen the idea that marriage should be between a man and a woman.

The Law on the Protection of Minors against the Detriment Effect of Public Information states that minors should not be exposed to information which can have detrimental effects on them, for example information that is against family values or that encourages marriage otherwise than mentioned in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and in the Civil Code, both acts recognizing only the marriage between opposite sex people (as mentioned above). This law is important in the context of LGBT rights as it threatens the freedom of speech, right guaranteed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and the right to speak publicly.

Here are some of the homophobic and/or transphobic legislative initiatives proposed in the Lithuanian Parliament so far:

- amendment to the Civil Code to ban gender reassignment surgeries
- amendment to the Law on the Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child through which it is desired to forbidden same-sex couples to adopt children citizens of Lithuania
- amendment to the country's Constitution to redefine the concept of "family life" as being linked to the marriage between a man and a woman.

Family

As a right of LGBTQ+ minority related to the family sphere, trans people have the possibility to marry a person of another gender as long as they have corresponding identity documents and the decision to marry a person of different sex is of their own. As mentioned before, marriage, registered partnerships with similar rights to marriage or with limited rights are not legally allowed.

Hate crimes and hate speech

There are laws against hate crimes and hate speech based on sexual orientation. For example, the Article 60, Part 1, Paragraph 12, of the Criminal Code states that an act has been done under aggravating circumstances if it "has been committed in order to express hatred towards a group of persons or a person belonging thereto on grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, nationality, language, descent, social status, religion, convictions or views". However, there are no laws regulating hate crime and hate speech based on gender identity.

Also, according to the LGL LGBT NGO in Lithuania, hate speech online regarding sexual orientation "is widely neglected by the law enforcement bodies, refusing the investigation of complaints". In 2017, NGOs from Lithuania were involved in a project in which they worked together with the country's police school in order to help over 160 officers to better understand and react when faced with incidents caused by hatred against members of the LGBT community.

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General overview of LGBTQ+ issues

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons in Serbia may face legal challenges not experienced by non-LGBT residents. Both male and female same-sex sexual activity are legal in Serbia, and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is banned. Nevertheless, households headed by same-sex couples are not eligible for the same legal protections available to opposite-sex couples. In May 2014, Amnesty International identified Serbia as one of a number of countries where there is a marked lack of will to tackle homophobia and transphobia, noting that public authorities had repeatedly banned pride marches on the basis of violent threats from homophobic groups. A Pride parade successfully took place in September 2014 in Belgrade.

In 2016, the association ILGA-Europe ranked Serbia 28th in terms of LGBT rights out of 49 observed European countries. In June 2017, Ana Brnabić became the Prime Minister of Serbia, as the first woman and first openly gay person to hold the office, and the second female LGBT head of government overall (after Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir of Iceland). She was also the first Serbian Prime Minister to attend a Pride parade.

Equality & non-discrimination issues

The Current Commissioner for Equality is Brankica Jankovic. She assumed the position in 2015. Before her, for the first 5 years the position was held by Nevena Petrusic, a law school dean with a background in women's rights. LGBT Organisations have criticised her performance as Commissioner. In the early years, lesbian organisation Labris, filed three complaints to the Commissioner, all related to homophobic, discriminatory statements made by public figures. The Commissioner seemed to stall all proceedings, stating that one of the complaints had not been responded to due to her inability to find the address of the perpetrator. However, on two other occasions Petrusic responded affirmatively to two of Labris's complaints, recommending that perpetrators publicly apologise for their discriminatory statement. These have been the first positively resolved complaints by the Commissioner for human rights violations based on sexual orientation.

While the law clearly reflects a marked improvement in the legal status of LGBT individuals, it has been criticized for allowing overly-broad exceptions and the government has been slow in implementing the law and responding to complaints. For instance, the law condones discriminatory attitudes from religious leaders. Article 18 exempts "behaviour of priests and religious officials which is consistent with... religious doctrine; [religious] beliefs... shall not be considered discriminatory, in accordance with the law governing freedom of religion and the status of churches and religious communities."

Legislation

By 2009 the Serbian Parliament adopted four laws, which specifically ban discrimination based on sexual orientation: Labour Law, Law on Higher Education, two media laws, Law on Public Information and Law on Broadcasting. In March 2009, the Serbian Parliament finally adopted a comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Law and Article 21 of the law specifically bans discrimination based on sexual orientation and allows the right to privacy, as well as the free expression of sexual orientation. The 2009 the Law for Protection from Discrimination also established a Commissioner for Equality. The Commissioner is elected by the Assembly. All candidates must meet minimum requirements, including at least ten years of experience working with human rights law. On 5 July 2011, the Parliament adopted a Youth Law, prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

On 28 July 2011, the Parliament approved a change in the Health Insurance Law, based on which sex change surgeries will be fully subsidised by the State, beginning in 2012. In 2014, Serbia adopted a strategy (2014-2018) to combat discrimination against LGBTI people which was followed in 2015 by the adoption of a National Action Plan (NAP). The NAP has been considered a good step forward by LGBTI organisations. However, according to them the quality of implementation is poor. There seems to be a focus on the quantity of activities and not their quality. For instance, the plan includes trainings for local institutions which are carried out by the state institutions themselves with little cooperation and involvement of NGO's and people with high expertise on LGBTI issues. Also, the responsibilities for implementation of the NAP are not clearly defined, and institutions use this as a way to avoid responsibilities and assign them to each other.

Family

During their work in 2017, LGBTI activists in Serbia encountered several familiar challenges – resistance to the introduction of new legislation and unsatisfactory implementation of existing standards. Same-sex couples continue to be omitted from the pages of family law, with no legal protection or recognition of their relationships. LGBTI NGOs reported that the rhetoric around registered partnerships for same-sex couples is not positive, but they still attempted to keep the issue in the spotlight by calling on new (openly lesbian) Prime Minister Ana Brnabić to adopt a law within the lifetime of her government. This was one of the priority pieces of legislation referred to by activists and included in the previous Annual Review's recommendations to policymakers. Asylum law is an area where Serbian legislation makes little provision for LGBTI people; activists watched with interest as a new bill on asylum and protection began its journey through parliament in the autumn. Another law that will be keenly examined by LGBTI NGOs is the Biomedical Fertility Act, which gives access to assisted reproduction to single women for the first time.

Hate crimes and hate speech

The Criminal Code of Serbia (as amended in 2012) (excerpts):

Article 54a - If a crime is committed out of hatred because of someone's race or religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, the court shall consider this circumstance as an aggravating circumstance, unless it has been prescribed as an element of the criminal offence.

Article 317 - Instigating national, racial and religious hatred and intolerance

(1) Whoever provokes or incites ethnic, racial or religious hatred or intolerance among the peoples or ethnic communities living in Serbia, shall be punished by imprisonment of six months to five years.

In Serbia, there are no comprehensive statistics on hate speech. According to the 2013 Anti-Discrimination Strategy, available data from various sources indicate that interethnic incidents including hate speech are still relatively frequent, although decreasing over recent years. According to statistics from the prosecution services, criminal charges on hate speech were pressed against 216 individuals between the 1st of January 2011 and the 30th of May 2016. Out of these, 211 were based on Article 317 CC, three on Article 387 CC and two on Article 174 CC. Twenty-five of the incidents concerned the victim's national or ethnic origin, five their religious affiliation, one their citizenship and one their sexual orientation.

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General overview of LGBTQ+ issues

Romania is generally socially conservative with regard to the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender citizens. Nevertheless, the country has made significant changes in LGBT rights within its legislation since 2000. According to a study by ACCEPT, which promotes LGBT rights in Romania, two-thirds of gay people hide their sexual orientation to minimize discrimination and violence. In the past two decades, it has fully decriminalised homosexuality, introduced and enforced wide-ranging anti-discrimination laws, equalised the age of consent and introduced laws against homophobic hate crimes. Furthermore, LGBT communities have become more visible in recent years, as a result of events such as Bucharest's annual Pride parade and Cluj-Napoca's Gay Film Nights festival.

In the Rainbow Europe 2017 index produced by ILGA-Europe, an NGO which fights for gay rights, Romania ranks 35th out of the 49 analyzed states (with a score of 23.12%), the assessment criteria being the level of, discrimination, hostile atmosphere towards LGBT community members. In 2006, Romania was named by Human Rights Watch as one of five countries in the world that had made "exemplary progress in combating rights abuses based on sexual orientation or gender identity."

Equality & non-discrimination issues

In Romania, societal discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons remains a problem. In recent years some progress has been made in relation to antidiscrimination, however there is still a need for greater legal protection of victims, alongside improved responses, and enhanced knowledge and resources available to both victims of discrimination as well as the Equality body, administrative authorities and Courts.

On a national level, the Romanian Constitution provides for equality and non-discrimination in broad terms. These provisions are implemented in practice by specific anti-discrimination legislation - the Governmental Ordinance 137/2000. The specific grounds spelled out by the Constitution in the context of the equality principle are: race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, gender, opinion, political adherence, property and social origin.

Legislation

Romania has many laws banning discrimination. The problems in the country are not rooted in a lack of legislation, as Romania has a strong de jure framework, but in the lack of enforcement of the existing laws - often due to bureaucracy, social norms and corruption. The most important anti-discrimination laws are:

Ordinance no. 137 of 31 August 2000 republished (law on preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination).

Law no. 202 of 19 April 2002 republished (law on equality of opportunity and treatment between men and women).

In addition to these laws specifically created to deal with discrimination, articles banning discrimination can also be found in many general laws, which deal with general aspects of life, and also contain specific articles banning discrimination in that area (e.g. Law no. 188 of 8 December 1999 republished [law on the status of civil servants], the Labour Code of 24 January 2003, the Law on National Education no.1/2011, etc.). Furthermore, discrimination is also addressed in the Criminal Code.

Family

There is currently no recognition of the same-sex couples in Romania.

On the fifth of June, the Court of European Justice confirmed that the term ‘spouse’ needs to be interpreted as being inclusive of same-sex spouses of EU citizens in the framework of the Freedom of movement directive. The Court ruled on a referral from the Romanian Constitutional Court, which in 2016 asked the CJEU to interpret the word “spouse” in the context of EU law on freedom of movement. The judgement means that all EU Member States must treat same-sex couples in the same way as different-sex couples when they exercise freedom of movement rights. Same-sex spouses of EU nationals must now be recognised and granted residence rights on an equal basis. With this judgement, the CJEU provided the legal clarity that had been demanded by activists and in European Parliament resolutions.

In August, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency FRA published a new report on EU’s freedom of movement, providing an overview of selected law cases. Same-sex couples and their families continued to dominate discussions in Romania – and outside the country’s borders too.

In what promises to be a highly significant case for same-sex couples in Europe, Adrian Coman and Clai Hamilton’s request to be recognised as family reached the Court of Justice of the European Union. The couple’s case was heard by the Grand Chamber of 15 judges, a sign of the magnitude of the legal principles being argued in the case.

Hate crimes and hate speech

The Romanian Police records all criminal offences in a dedicated database. Romanian investigative police officers have a duty to highlight all aggravating circumstances when registering criminal files that are under investigation. However, there are no designated procedures for recording hate crimes by the police. A working group has been created at the level of the Romanian Police to determine necessary changes to the registration and investigation of hate crimes.

Criminal Code – Law No. 289/2009 (entry into force 1 February 2014)

Art. 77 – Aggravating Circumstances

h) the offense was committed for reasons related to race, nationality ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, political opinion or allegiance, wealth, social origin, age, disability, chronic non-contagious disease or HIV/AIDS infection, or for other reasons of the same type, considered by the offender to cause the inferiority of an individual from other individuals.

G.E.O. No. 31/2002 prohibiting the organizations with a fascist, racist and xenophobic character and the glorification of those found guilty of crimes against peace and humanity.

Art. 6/1 - Threatening by means of IT system

(1) Using a computer system to threaten a person or a group of persons with committing an offence whose maximum penalty provided by law is at least 5-year imprisonment, on grounds of race, colour, race, descent, national or ethnic origin or on grounds of religion, if used as pretext for any of the abovementioned grounds, shall be criminalized and punished by imprisonment from one to 3 years.

(2) Criminal proceedings shall be instituted upon preliminary complaint lodged by the injured party.

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General overview of LGBTQ+ issues

The Croatian population is still developing and transforming its views on the LGBTQ+ community. According to a poll conducted last year for “Call It hate” movement, those with a high level of education expressed a positive behavior towards the LGBT community, but, surprisingly when it came to age, the least supportive groups were those of young adults, mostly between 18-24 years old.

Equality & non-discrimination issues

According to the ILGA-Europe rating, Croatia is placed as the 14th in the ranking regarding European countries tackling equality and non-discrimination issues.

Legislation

According to Equaldex, a community-verified LGBT knowledge platform, before 1977 homosexual activity was punishable by two years of imprisonment, but afterward and until now it is a legal right.

Currently, same-sex marriage is not allowed because of the definition of marriage in the Constitution, but since 2014 homosexual couples have the right to declare a civil union, with the first registered couple in September 2014, a right sustained by Croatia’s Life Partnership Act.

The change of legal gender on an individual’s birth certificate is legal since 1st of January 2014, but it requires surgery.

Discrimination is punishable by the Croatian law, producing homophobic material can lead to one year of imprisonment.

Members of the community can serve in the military, while blood donations and organ transplants from homosexuals are completely banned.

Conducting sexual orientation changing therapy has been taken out of banishment since the 1st of January 2017.

The legislation regarding the rights of intersex persons has seen no major development, but the Minister of Education issued guidelines for respectful treatment, introducing the official instructions to all educational institutions, along with obliging them to re-issue certificates and diplomas after name or legal gender changes.

Family

According to the ILGA-Europe rating, Croatia is placed as the 23rd in the ranking regarding European countries tackling family issues.

This placement is a result of several laws and regulations that violated the Croatian Life Partnership Act adopted in 2014. One of the most recent example is the new Foster Care Act, adopted on 7 December 2018, through which formal and informal life partners are denied the right to foster children. As a result, Zagreb Pride and other partners are preparing a lawsuit against the state.

In August 2014, Croatia’s Life Partnership Act is adopted, as an alternative to the 2013 referendum that obliged the parliament to redefine the constitution’s definition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman. Zidarevic and his partner become the first to register as partners, and one of the attending persons was Arsen Bauk, Croatia’s then Minister of Public Administration.

Hate crimes and hate speech

According to the ILGA-Europe rating, Croatia is placed as the 6th in the ranking regarding European countries tackling hate crime and hate speech issues.

Although being placed on a high ranking, Croatian population is showing signs of negative behavior against its LGBT community, and the judiciary is still inefficient in responding to hate speech (usually based on bias motivation) and hateful attitudes. There are several examples of such cases, ranging from hate comments on Zagreb Pride's official Facebook page to hate crimes like the tear gas attack at a Zagreb nightclub in February 2017 and the case of the burned copies of the children picture book 'My Rainbow Family'.

There is a directive ensuring the special protection of hate crime victims (The Victims' Rights Directive 2012/29/EU), but the police usually registers anti-LGBTQI crimes as misdemeanors, therefore the victims do not receive support services. Zagreb Pride is holding trainings for the forces of law to recognize hate crimes and learn how to properly treat the victims.

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SLOVENIA

General overview of LGBTQ+ issues

In the former Yugoslavia, male homosexual activity was made illegal under the Penal Code (no mention of lesbian activity), but in 1976 a new penal code was passed that decriminalised homosexual acts.

So far, Ljubljana, the capital and largest city in Slovenia, is perceived to be overall a positive place for LGBT members and travellers. Most of the LGBT movements have concentrated in this area, mainly through the work of MAGNUS and LL (gay and lesbian sections of ŠKUC) campaigning organization called Roza Klub.

The first ever Pride Parade was held in Slovenia's second largest city, Maribor, on Saturday, the 29th of June 2019, with some 800 people peacefully marching the city's streets to spread a message of love, equality and inclusion. Maribor Pride was organized by Youth Cultural Centre Maribor (MKC Maribor) together with Go Free-the Association for the Support of Civil Society (Romania).

Equality & non-discrimination issues

According to the ILGA-Europe rating, Slovenia is placed as the 10th in the ranking regarding European countries tackling equality and non-discrimination issues.

Since 1998, Slovenian forces of justice started to introduce multiple bills banning discrimination, starting with the one based on sexual orientation in workplaces and continuing in other fields like education, housing and access to products and services, and since 2009 the Slovenian Constitution encapsulates this idea in Article 14.

Legislation

According to the information provided by the community of Equaldex, homosexual activity is legal since January 1976.

In 2015, the National Assembly passed a bill changing the definition of marriage from a "union of a man and a woman" to a "union of two." However, the bill was quickly rejected by a referendum where the majority voted against legalizing same-sex marriage. Since the 24th of February 2017, same-sex couples have the option of registering in legal partnerships, through which they benefit from most of the legal rights of marriages, one exception being joint adoption.

Gender changes are legal, but require surgery. Also, Slovenia still requires trans individuals who wish to change their legal gender to be unmarried or divorced.

Homosexuals can openly serve in the military.

Family

According to the ILGA-Europe rating, Slovenia is placed as the 18th in the ranking regarding European countries tackling family issues.

Joint adoption for same-sex marriages is prohibited, the only legal option being step-child adoption only. A Eurobarometer survey published in December 2006 showed that 31% of Slovenians surveyed support same-sex marriage and 17% think homosexuals should be allowed to adopt children (EU-wide average 44% and 33%).

Hate crimes and hate speech

According to the ILGA-Europe rating, Slovenia is placed as the 26th in the ranking regarding European

countries tackling hate crimes and hate speech issues.

Discrimination of the LGBT community is illegal as provided by the penal code that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. Despite this, there have been several anti-LGBT violence acts all across Slovenia, like individual attacks during Pride parades and altercations at famous LGBT meeting points. One such example is the attack with torches at a gay bar in Ljubljana, where one of the injured persons was the activist Mitja Blažič.

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Particularities of (young)

There are no big differences in how young people are physically, mentally, and socially constructed and how youth workers can address their (learning) needs. However, there are particularities of the LGBTQ+ spectrum that any youth worker working with young LGBTQ+ people should take into account, at least on an informational level. Some 10 years ago there were only four letters commonly used to define the spectrum: L, G, B and T. At the time, they were a big step towards inclusion — an expansion of the language used to represent a group that had often just been called “the gay community.” However, the letters proved to be limiting. Times have changed, and the language used to discuss sexual orientation and gender identity has also changed. As a result, the established LGBT abbreviation has acquired some extra letters, that we collect and detail on in this non-exhaustive list:

Lesbian and Gay: are as basic as it gets. As “homosexual” began to feel clinical and pejorative, gay became the mainstream term to refer to same-sex attraction. Gradually, the phrase “gay and lesbian” became more popular to highlight the similar-yet-separate issues faced by women. Gay is still sometimes used as an umbrella term.

Bisexual: people who identify as bisexual are attracted to both men and women. Some people argue that the prefix “bi” reinforces a male/ female gender binary that isn’t inclusive.

Asexual or “Ace”: Someone who experiences little to no sexual attraction. They are not to be confused with “aromantic people,” who experience little to no romantic attraction. Asexual people do not always identify as aromantic; aromantic people do not always identify as asexual.

Intersex: A term for someone born with biological sex characteristics that aren’t traditionally associated with male or female bodies. Intersexuality does not refer to sexual orientation or gender identity.

Pansexual: Someone who is attracted to people of all gender identities, or someone who is attracted to a person’s qualities regardless of their gender identity.

Questioning: The process of exploring one’s own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Transgender or Trans: A wide-ranging term for people whose gender identity or gender expression differs from the biological sex they were assigned at birth.

Cisgender: Someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender nonconforming or G.N.C.: Someone who expresses gender outside traditional norms associated with masculinity or femininity. Not all gender-nonconforming people are transgender, and some transgender people express gender in conventionally masculine or feminine ways.

Nonbinary: Someone who identifies as neither male nor female and sees themselves outside the gender binary. This is sometimes shortened to N.B. or enby.

Genderqueer: Someone whose gender identity is outside the strict male/ female binary. They may exhibit both traditionally masculine and feminine qualities or neither.

LGBTQ+ people

Genderfluid: A term used by people whose identity shifts or fluctuates. They may identify or express as more masculine on some days, more feminine on other days.

Gender-neutral: Someone who prefers not to be described by a specific gender, but prefers “they” as a singular pronoun.

Agender: An umbrella term encompassing the many different genders of people who commonly do not have a gender and/ or have a gender that they describe as neutral.

Two-Spirit: A contemporary term chosen by Native American/Indigenous people who identify with a third gender, implying a masculine and a feminine spirit in one body.

Queer: A term describing people who have a non-normative gender identity, sexual orientation, or sexual anatomy. It can include many identities within the spectrum. Since the term is sometimes used as a slur, it has a negative connotation for some LGBT people; nevertheless, others have reclaimed it and feel comfortable using it.

Ally: a person who actively supports the cause without being part of the community themselves.

+ Not just a mathematical symbol anymore, but a denotation of everything on the gender and sexuality spectrum that letters and words can't yet describe.



Methodologies on working

Living library

The Living Library aims to promote respect for human rights and human dignity, to draw attention to diversity in all its forms and foster dialogue between people. The Living Library works as a normal library. It is allowed to step into this area of learning, where you will find books to read, librarians that will recommend books that can change your life, a place where you can just be alone with yourself and your chosen book pages. But what makes a Living Library a great experience is the fact that, on the shelves, the books are actually people who start a personal dialogue with you, the reader.

Stepping into the Living Library will facilitate learning from people that you may not even think might say something interesting - you can see the world with new eyes, at least for a while. In addition, you can discover things about yourself that you would have never known before, even tell your own story, and especially - you will find out that life is composed of all of our stories and it is up to us whether we write them or not.

The Living Library works like a normal library - readers come and borrow books for a limited time. After “reading” the books, readers return them to the library. There is an important aspect to consider. The books from the Living Library are people representing groups that have faced or that may face prejudice and stereotypes (gender, age, ethnicity, race, religion and so on).

To whom is it addressed?

Before the start of a living library project, any organization, together with the team, must be aware of the reasons that generated the process of making a living library and its objectives during the process. We recommend the establishment of a living library to those organizations that think their mission and status is to promote human rights, non-discrimination, equal opportunities and diversity.

The Living Library’s aim is predefined, to promote respect for human rights and human dignity by challenging dialogue on topics such as prejudice and stereotypes. It should be noted that each team member should fully understand the purpose of the method and its benefits for the community.

In addition to understanding and being aware of the purpose of the method, it is necessary to identify together with your team what would be the other perks of the method, such as:

- Increased awareness of prejudices, stereotypes and their negative effects that can have an impact on individuals and on society in general.
- Increasing the visibility that this method could provide to human rights in society.
- Creating an immediate reaction to a case of human rights violation, that has occurred recently in a community.
- Fostering partnerships between organizations working in the field of diversity within a community.
- Fostering dialogue between different civil society stakeholders at a local level.

The Living Library encourages the audience to reflect on their own prejudices and stereotypes. We believe that each of us has prejudices or stereotypes that we are aware of, and that we acknowledge in certain contexts, but in others it may not be recognizable. It is very easy to have prejudices and stereotypes against a group of people at a great distance from us, but it is harder to keep these prejudices when we get in contact with them and notice a different perspective.

Steps to organize a Living Library

- Identifying the objectives and establishing the benefits of the method
- Establishing the responsibilities of the project team
- Choosing a location for organizing the event
- The selection of books and preparing catalogs

with young LGBTQ+ people

- The selection and training of librarians
- Meeting and preparing the books
- Promoting the library
- Effective conduct of the library
- Evaluation of the library

The living Library's basic principles are clear and simple: books may not be paid for within the Living Library, the admission to a living library is free of charge, the library is not to be used for commercial purposes or to promote the interests of the organizations implementing the method, the Living Library is not intended to promote certain occupations or expose the public to certain occupations in order to guide the youth and students in their careers, Living Library is NOT an exhibition space for famous people and famous crafts.

Photovoice

Photos and stories, that is the essence of the Photovoice method. The word itself is a combination of two different words: „photo” and „voice” – as in speaking through images.

Photovoice involved a small group of people taking pictures on a particular topic. They meet regularly and present to each other their photos, discuss about them, share their opinions and they develop their message as a group. Next to each picture appears a message of the author's. Then, the group makes a selection of the photos and they present them to the public and the authorities, in order to send a strong message that can support their cause.

How does it happen?

First you build the aim of the Photovoice process - most of the time you do this along with the group. What do you want? To show the problems of your community? Or to show the difficulties faced by a young HIV positive person? Or...?

The group varies in size, about 10 to 30 people. Each one receives (or has) a camera. They are working with deadlines. The group meets and discusses photos by using facilitators (one, preferably two) and assistants (who take the minute of the meetings and then help the participants write down the story pictures - captions). The duration of this step may vary from 2-3 weeks to several months.

Then the Photovoice results are presented to the public and public authorities through exhibitions and media events that depict the images and their meanings. The photos and messages that appear in the exhibition are selected by the participants as one of the “rules” of Photovoice. The final decision belongs to the participants.

Why do Photovoice?

The goals that you can achieve through photovoice are:

- To enable people to seek and to think about the strengths of their community and their common concerns;
- To promote the exchange of information and dialogue on critical issues that concern both personal lives and community life in general through group discussions;
- To reach the community, the public and the public decision takers (public administration, elected, experts, etc.)

In more specific terms:

- The participants can build a message to the general public or authorities - and clarify what is most important or what is the solution they want.
- The participants, as individuals, gain confidence and develop their communication skills and team work (and, of course, photographic technical skills – in case you include a small training on this matter).

- Policy makers and the general public may be exposed to a message more powerful than a petition or a simple photo exhibition, and thus can be sensitized or persuaded to adopt a certain conduct or take a particular decision.

Using photography is easier for categories of people that would have difficulty expressing themselves in writing, or sustaining their views in a speech (in public or in a group) or who wish to remain anonymous. These categories may include different types of people: illiterate people with disabilities, Roma, people with HIV, people affected by prostitution, human trafficking, and drug abuse. Such cases have much more to gain by using this method, than the average.

This method is suitable for groups who have special needs or are part of a risk area.

The Photo Exhibition is the most common result of a photovoice, but in fact, these pictures accompanied by stories can be the support for many more events. Here are some examples:

- You can make postcards to send to the public authorities you want to convince to take a decision.
- You can make films or electronic media exhibitions.
- The exhibition itself can be pinned around town or country - in schools, bars, halls of public institutions and fairs.
- You can make bookmarks.
- The opening can be accompanied by many other events - a round table, a performance, a fundraiser.
- You can invest in the participants - photography courses, trips, exchanges and other courses to develop their communication skills, advocacy etc.

Forum/ Image theatre

The Forum Theatre, as the name suggests, is a form of theater that enables interaction and debate, while, at the same time, being a tool for social intervention. At first glance, it would seem that the Forum Theatre is a type of theatre, but the distinct attribute of “forum” creates a new way of expression and interaction with the public. The Forum Theatre play takes place so that a group of people can exchange ideas and opinions, looking for solutions and action patterns appropriate to the situation in which the participants are involved.

The Forum Theatre focuses on the moments that people come across daily, but don't take into consideration as a habit. Unlike life, theater allows those who participate in it to observe the scene as an outsider, to pursue the tragic situation, such as a witness hid behind the curtain and to understand where the ignorance, carelessness, labeling or discrimination can lead. Thus, after the first performance, the participant can say, “STOP! I did not like what happened here! If you had acted sooner would not have gotten into this situation!”

Why use Forum Theatre?

The Forum Theatre method can be used in different contexts of non-formal education, giving the participants a chance to learn from direct experience, as it is a method that is based on experimental learning.

The method can be used in all communities where there are people who are at risk of social exclusion, who meet situations of discrimination of certain categories of people, in any context in which we see people supporting stereotypes and prejudice, in which intolerance and lack of compassion are feelings that cause suffering (such as within the educational system, within the family, in public, on the streets, inside neighborhoods, Roma communities, prisons, etc.). The Forum Theatre is a staging that takes place in a public setting and in front of people that face a problem, in order to create a learning environment for the general public (children, youth, adults and the elderly). The topics addressed can be very diverse because the play takes scenes from the reality of the audience.

How to use Forum Theatre?

Preparing the play

A group of volunteers, most often non-actors are well trained in the forum theater method through a specific training which develops the skills of theater with exercises, games and debates specific methods. They identify

a problem of oppression in a particular community or are informed by project managers, community facilitators and others who want to make a change. A volunteer team then develops a project around it, using the forum theater method, a tool for participatory art whose experience proved very suitable for social interventions.

The theatre part

For the success of the performance, it is good to have between 30 and 70 spect-actors and to better promote the event to the target group. The effective deployment of a forum theatre play has three main stages: play, discussion and forums. First, the situation of oppression is presented in approximately 15 minutes through the characters and their interaction. Characters of the forum theater are constructed incompletely so that the public can identify that with these, even more, to feel the need to complete their actions, by replacing that character.

The Forum part

In the second stage, the moderator of the play, called Joker, facilitates the discussion about the presented situation, the causes of oppression, about the relationships between characters and the position of each performer in the play: oppressor, oppressed, their allies, neutral characters. The Joker's role is to motivate and encourage the public to come up with realistic solutions or improvements to the situation presented to them and to play on stage. In the forum part, the play is resumed and the public becomes active. The public can change all the characters, but the oppressor.

Interventions

Each spect-actor can intervene during the re-run of the play by clapping. Actors will “freeze” and remain motionless on stage while members of the public come and replace the actor in the play. The aim is for the public to act for the characters who did not take a stand and who can change in a positive course of action that can help the oppressed to take a decision that can sustain and develop them positively.

Therefore the spect-actors can intervene in every scene of the play, one by one, replacing characters until it reaches the solution that will be voted by the public as the most realistic and useful in the present situation. After choosing solutions, discussions take place about how it might be implemented in everyday reality – in the community facing the issues discussed in the play.

Community journalism

Community journalism is a method of involvement involvement in the community, developed by Go Free-the Association for the support of civil society in a pilot project – “Community Journalists for Social Solidarity”, implemented between 2015 and 2016 in five multiethnic rural communities in Transylvania. The method was then adapted (2016-2017) to the needs of the LGBTQ+ community of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, a city where Go Free operates. Community journalism is one of the instruments by which Go Free has prepared, step by step, the local community for the first PRIDE event in Cluj-Napoca, promoting a responsible way of speaking in the public space in response to the fake news and hate speech that target the LGBTQ+ community, providing visibility to the members and activities of the LGBTQ+ community, building a humanized image of LGBTQ+ people, as well as a visual history of LGBTQ+ activism through advanced journalistic materials and the involvement of community journalists in public communication campaigns such as #SpuneDrept, #Boicot etc. Between 2018 and 2019, Go Free has set up the first Community Journalism School in Romania, involving young people from vulnerable communities in training programs including LGBTQ+ youths, who learn to develop responsible media materials and at the same time manage public communication (online, mass-media etc.) on topics involving social injustice, discrimination, bullying, hate crimes, including communication with the local authorities and the promotion of solidarity and dialogue between different communities, as well as monitoring hate speech and reporting it or organizing *media advocacy* activities to in order to meet the challenges faced by vulnerable communities.

Therefore, in Go Free's vision, community journalism has contoured itself as the kind of journalism centered around vulnerable groups and/ or people from multiethnic or disadvantaged communities, rural areas and peripheral areas of major cities.

The community journalism practiced by Go Free addresses topics that are not always addressed by the large press institutions, real problems faced by communities that are not as visible, as well as positive stories from people's lives, which become important for the community journalist and which they develop on in journalistic materials, with the aim of creating an impact.

Used as an instrument of involvement in the community, community journalism becomes the "voice" of the community. The journalist listens to the stories of the community's members, prioritizes the topics of interest for the community, which they document and develop in media.

For the community journalist, telling stories is a way of action: when they write about a problem of the community, they choose to take a stand concerning a certain topic. The community journalist writes for the people, so that they understand that they are not alone. Community journalism is, therefore, a way in which we show our solidarity, a way of engagement and activation. The community journalist understands that there are more things that unite us than things that make us different.

The traits of community journalism:

> It is practiced, generally, by people who possess minimal training in fields such as human rights, social justice, media advocacy, gender equality etc.;

> It reflects real-world problems which affect real people, from communities that are multi-ethnic, less visible or negatively represented in mass-media;

> It has the capacity of calling communities to action, in order to look for solutions to the problems identified/ developed through media;

> It is subjective, authentic and anchored in the community;

> Community journalism keeps the authenticity of local stories; it also sees the world through its own experience;

> It is a form of journalism that is responsible towards the community;

> It has the capacity of changing/ correcting the negative or untrue messages about vulnerable communities that are launched into the public space by mass-media, public people, politicians etc. One such piece, created with the aim of spreading correct images and information about the second Cluj Pride, is available here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VyLvXOz7PZM&list=PLwu_ZJbbnHYenbyVeolw-pOOdMuPQZFpQ

> It is focused on identifying situations of social injustice (ex. unequal access of citizens to resources, products and essential services compared to the general population), researching the causes which are found at the base of social exclusion (collecting information through field research - from the people affected, as well as from public institutions), which it takes on through specific interventions of media advocacy*, as well as through *watchdog activities***.

*We call media advocacy the component of public information, though means of mass-information, that aims to bring together a critical mass of citizens with common interests. Then, this critical mass, through its sole existence, can determine the decision-taker to take the decision that the initial group of people wished for. *Media advocacy* can be developed either through traditional means of mass-information (newspapers, radio, television), or with the help of the more recent social media (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, possibly with the help of paid promotions through these aforementioned platforms).

***Watchdog-ing* means, first of all, hunting down currently existing problems (deficiencies of the decisional process, decisions which are wrong or which lead to inequitable results) and signaling them, exposing them to the public - similarly to the way in which a hound points out where the game is located, or to the way in which a guard dog draws attention towards intruders. It is important to keep in mind that, just as the housemaster decides whether the "intruder" is a hen thief or the mailman bringing good news, it is only the community

that can decide whether the problems signaled are, indeed, worthy of being paid attention to. In other words, community journalists who involve themselves in *watchdog-ing* and who would like to see all of their articles transformed into *advocacy* campaigns ought not to condemn the passivity of the community, if there are situations in which measures are not taken.

When some of the situations exposed following a *watchdog-ing* effort do not lead to *advocacy* activities, the community journalist must ask themselves the following **three questions**, at the very least:

- * Have they allied themselves to an organisation or a civil rights group which has the interest of solving the signaled problem?

- * Is the signaled problem truly of public interest and does it have the potential to call to action the citizens and the decision-takers of the community?

- * Is the way in which they put forward the problem and/or the possible solution adequate, or could it be improved?

Community journalism places the human in the center of their journalistic activity, it cultivates solidarity, respecting the right to both dignity and to a private life, all the while making sure that the information that is published does not place in danger, or in a vulnerable position, the people of the community.



Advocacy and

For some cases, working with young LGBTQ+ people on a daily basis is enough to empower them and help them to become their best version. However, sometimes we need to take things a little further, and advocate on their behalf on a more structural level. For this we propose this exercise on how to set up an advocacy plan:

1. Identify the problem and set the solution

What are the overall biggest issues/ problems faced by the young LGBTQ+ people you work with? Think and write these issues/ problems and try to determine for each of them the cause(s), effect(s) and, most importantly, possible solutions:

Problem	Cause	Effect	Solution

2. Identify the main stakeholders

	Stakeholder 1 (e.g. Ministry)	Stakeholder 2 (e.g. Community leader)	Stakeholder 3 (e.g. Political party)	Stakeholder 4 (e.g. Local authority)
Stakeholder name				
What is the stakeholder's interest in the problem/ solution? (low, medium, high)				
What is the stakeholder's influence over the problem/ solution? (low, medium, high)				
What is the stakeholder's importance in engaging the problem/ solution? (low, medium, high)				

awareness campaigns

* Which of the stakeholders have the highest interest, influence and importance?

* Which of the stakeholders can help in an advocacy intervention?

* Which of the stakeholders listed above can oppose your advocacy intervention?

3. Identify the key message

Construct a core message for your advocacy topic that includes a statement of the problem and solution proposed, evidence – statistics and information and an example – focuses on the affected.

4. Plan and monitor your intervention

Activity	Outcome	Output	Target audience	Time frame	How do you monitor?	How do you evaluate?	Resources needed

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Steps to a successful and #POWERful campaign

Step 1: Who are your audiences? Where/how can you reach them? Who is your target group? What do you know about them? What are they usually doing? Where can you find them? What are their interests? Through which medium can you reach them (online and offline)? Do you know of any other similar successful campaigns addressed to the same target group/s?

Step 2: What is your campaign's main goals? What do you want to achieve with your campaign? What is the reason behind your goals?

Step 3: What is the main message of your campaign? Is your message telling a story?
Build your campaign's message taking into consideration the characteristics of your target group. Make it clear and easy to understand.

Step 4: How can you make your message visible? What channels and activities/actions will you use?
Please think about online and offline tools/methods/actions.

Step 5: How can you mobilize the others to join your cause? Who else may you involve in your campaign to bring extra credibility to your message?

Step 6: What resources must be involved in the implementation of your campaign (information, human resources – please refer to your campaign's staff and their skills too, financial resources, time and other materials)?

Step 7: How (and who) will the success of your campaign be monitored and evaluated (by)?

Step 8: What is the change that you want to achieve through your campaign? What makes it different from other similar campaigns? What is the extra value that your campaign brings to your community?

Step 9: How will you celebrate the success of your campaign?

Advocating for LGBTQ+ Equality

Cluj Pride 2017. Maribor Pride 2019

I. Cluj Pride 2017: Claiming public space through dialogue and solidarity

Organizing the first march for the rights of the LGBTQ+ community in Cluj-Napoca, Romania

“Go Free - The Association for the Support of Civil Society” based in Cluj-Napoca, constantly assumed acts of promoting and respecting the rights of all the people, aiming through its activities to develop a culture of solidarity, to facilitate the dialogue between different communities and to contribute to the creation of new youth movements at local and national level, as an answer to the challenges faced by today’s Romanian society regarding the way human rights are respected. In 2017, the Go Free Association together with LGBTQ+ youngsters from Cluj-Napoca (a part of them organized today in the PRIDE Association) and with the Equality and Human Rights Action Center – ACTEDO, organized the first march in Cluj-Napoca for the rights of LGBTQ+ people (#SpuneDrept), as part of the Cluj Pride Community Festival. In order for the march to take place, 22 official requests had to be applied at the town hall of Cluj-Napoca.

The team who implemented the first Cluj Pride aimed to claim the rights of the LGBTQ+ community from Cluj-Napoca through dialogue, by bringing together members of different minority groups or the ones of the majority and by creating a bridge of solidarity against the hate and the intolerance faced by LGBTQ+ people. Cluj Pride was created in 2017 with the goal to put on the public agenda the problems and the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ youngsters, also offering a space for self-expression without hate and more visibility for the LGBTQ+ community of Cluj-Napoca.

“The public space belongs to everybody and the rights of LGBTQ+ people must be respected no matter the individual preferences, this is the message we would like to share among the community of Cluj. We need to stop accepting the personal lives of LGBTQ+ people to be debated in public and to start discussing about the things that really matter, about the rights of the LGBTQ+ community, about the protection measures against threats and violence of any kind, about the bullying in schools and the discrimination faced by the LGBTQ+ youngsters, about the hate speech that is being promoted by more and more groups and public figures and about the long term effects etc. A responsible society is built on mutual respect and responsible dialogue”

(Andra Camelia Cordoș, President of Go Free, Co-organizer of Cluj Pride 2017)

The Cluj Pride March was held on 1st of July 2017 and it represented the closing event of the festival with the same name, also being the main moment of the visibility campaign #SpuneDrept. Within the #SpuneDrept campaign, which preceded the organizing of the first Cluj Pride, there were 36 videos of showing support to the LGBTQ+ community, the messages being transmitted by activists, members of the academic society of Cluj, politicians, journalists, representative of NGOs etc. and they were shared through the #SpuneDrept Facebook page. The videos had a total of 252.736 views online, but hundreds of homophobic comments and violent language had to be also moderated by the volunteers. The efforts and determination of the young volunteers and activists from Cluj involved in the organizing of the first Cluj Pride, but also a responsible public communication, led to the mobilization of more than 800 people who attended the first Cluj Pride.

A movement on the rise. Resistance to change

It is important to mention that a constant pressure was exercised on the entire organizing team of Cluj Pride, and also on the 3 delegates who represented the group publicly in all of the negotiation meetings with the local authorities in order to obtain the approval for the march. The pressure was exercised through intimidations, online and offline, coming from those who didn't want a march like this to happen in Cluj-Napoca, but also from the representatives of the Romanian Orthodox Church through the creation of public events which were urging people to pray for the organizers and the participants of Cluj Pride, fallen into sin and to save therefore by these acts the world from the homosexuals. Of course, this kind of messages are urging more towards hate than towards acceptance. Therefore, while the Cluj Pride team needed 22 requests in order for the approval for the march to be obtained, on a marginal route, the contra-manifestation organized by the New Right obtained an approval to hold the event in the city center, in Avram Iancu Square, but having just a few supporters.

“All this public pressure was felt by the young volunteers and by the activists involved in the organizing of Cluj Pride. There were different opinions about how we should move forward with our actions, even among the organizing team there were voices suggesting to not continue sharing the event of the march, as the approval was not coming yet from the local authorities (the official approval of the march represented to the organising team an assurance that there will not be violent actions against the participants of the march, and also it meant a public recognition from the public authorities of the fact that #WeAreHere). It was probably the moment when the movement of the LGBTQ+ youngsters of Cluj-Napoca was born, because we all learnt what it means to do activism for the rights of the LGBTQ+ community in Romania, how to manage your own feelings and to overcome your fears of being visible, we also learnt to take action in order to produce the change that all of us involved in the organizing of Cluj Pride wished for.”

(Andra Camelia Cordoş, President of Go Free, Co-organizer of Cluj Pride 2017)

In May-July 2017, during the entire time which preceded the organizing of the first Cluj Pride, there was a constant communication with the members of the Cluj community, who became our allies, through the social media platforms, but also through direct discussions with the representatives of the civil society, journalists etc. Also, there was a constant monitoring of the discourses of public figures and of the press materials published before and after the first Cluj Pride, and when we considered it necessary we reacted to those messages in a responsible way. Some members of the LGBTQ+ community became more courageous and reported by themselves some public reactions, one of these situations being positively solved – a video in which a priest published a video with discriminatory messages against LGBTQ+ people.

The resistance to change was less and less from one year to another, both on the part of the authorities and from the local community, but also from the fascist groups, and the number of participants grew constantly, therefore in 2019 over 3500 people participated in the third edition of Cluj Pride, which took place this time where it belongs: in the city center.

After the first Cluj Pride, LGBTQ+ activists became more visible and mobilized in different organizations or support groups. Therefore, the PRIDE Romania Association was initiated, being the main organizer of Cluj Pride. Other organisations and groups who work or offer support to LGBTQ+ people in Cluj-Napoca, are GO FREE, ACTEDO, Queer Sisterhood Cluj, PRISMA, Glia Queer, COMMA etc.

Cluj Pride 2017: Recognition

The #SpuneDrept march for the rights of the LGBTQ+ community won the first prize at the Youth Gala of Romania 2017, in the section of Youngsters involvement in the community, organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and it was also between the 5 finalists at the National Volunteer Gala, within the section of Volunteering Project of the Year in the domain of activism and human rights.

Public message sent out on stage at the Youth Gala in Romania, an event which was transmitted live on the national television channel

“This evening, it is up to us to continue the #nohate dialogue that we started this summer in Cluj-Napoca, along with the #SpuneDrept movement. It is a very long path that we have paved for ourselves and that we have been walking up to now, not alone, but supported by an entire Romanian community that is gaining the courage to become visible, a community made up of LGBTQ+ people, but also allies, friends.

Our presence here, and the recognition of our youth’s efforts through this prize represents a step forward in our movement for the recognition of LGBTQ+ rights in Romania, including by authorities. The 36 videos and the #SpuneDrept march within Cluj Pride 2017 have represented an invitation to a dialogue on our side, but also a way of taking back the city’s public space and the right to get together and be safe, for each and every one of us, no matter our sexual orientation, our religion or our ethnicity. We had to put forward 22 requests in order to get permission to have the #SpuneDrept march, in order to be able to use our right to get together in the public space. We were, therefore, determined to insist upon it despite the fact that our fight for dignity was not a fair one, because we knew that it would take plenty of patience until we’d obtain the change that we wanted. Tonight, we invite all of you to continue building bridges between people, not only within the organizations that you are part of, within your families, but also within your circle of friends through a dialogue free of hate, through solidarity, through empathy and #respect”.

(Cluj Pride team’s message at the Youth Gala in Romania)



II. Maribor Pride 2019: United with PRIDE!

The first ever Pride Parade was held in Slovenia's second largest city, Maribor, on Saturday, the 29th of June 2019, with some 800 people peacefully marching the city's streets to spread a message of love, equality and inclusion. Maribor Pride was organized by Youth Cultural Centre Maribor (MKC Maribor) together with Go Free-the Association for the Support of Civil Society (Romania).

Context created by the Erasmus Plus Programme

Between the 21st of June and the 1st of July, in Maribor, Slovenia, the second mobility from the Youth Exchange United with Pride, a project organized by Maribor Youth Cultural Centre (MKC Maribor) and Go Free Association, financed by the Erasmus Plus Programme, took place. United with Pride was a common initiative developed as a follow-up of the PRIDE - Promoting Rights Inclusion and Equality training course (October 2018, Romania).

The aim of the project United with Pride was to tackle discrimination and violence against LGBTQ+ people and raise awareness and understanding of the LGBTQ+ community. One of the main goals of the project was the implementation of the first Maribor Pride, in order to stimulate the discussion about LGBTQ+ topics, and the creation of a Guide 4 Pride.

Solidarity works: from Ljubljana Pride to Maribor Pride

The Maribor Pride 2019 team was invited to take part in Ljubljana Pride, where they sent out, at the end of the march, from the stage set up in the city's centre, the invitation to join the first LGBTQ+ rights march in Maribor.

"[...] Maribor is going to get its first pride parade in just a week. Youth Cultural Centre Maribor, which I am representing here together with a group of volunteers, decided to bring this important event for the LGBTQ+ community to the second largest city in Slovenia. We are everywhere, said our friends from Trieste just a week ago. In big or small cities, towns or villages, and we should be proud of who we are. In these grey times when fascism is rising we have to stand up together and show how colourful and resilient our society is. We can do it only if we stand together, so I hope we'll see each other next Saturday in Maribor."

(Luka Kristić, MKC Maribor)

"[...] We walked here today in solidarity for what we have achieved until now, but also for all of those changes that are still needed in order to create a safer space for everyone. [...]. We demonstrated, by marching here today, that change is possible if each of us takes up the challenge to stand for dignity, equal rights and love! See you next week at Maribor Pride, and maybe next year at Cluj Pride Romania."

(Andra Camelia Cordoş, Go Free)



Maribor Pride: Ljubezen ne izbira - zakaj bi mi? [Love doesn't choose, why should you?]

Maribor got its first Pride parade on the 29th of June 2019 and it was organized by a group of young people who found within themselves the courage and the determination to overcome all barriers and to fight their own fears even when those who did not want such a march to take place tried to intimidate them through hateful online comments or street harassment. While some people burned an LGBTQ+ flag within the space where the organizers were preparing the march, our solidarity with the organization of Maribor Pride manifested itself in the form of LGBTQ+ flags being showcased by numerous public institutions and companies. Just as it happened in the case of the first Cluj Pride, there were a few people who expressed their discontentment for the march, trying to intimidate the participants gathered around the square, and such attempts at resisting or opposing change are always to be expected. Their aim is to spread fear amongst both the organizers and the participants. However, what is most important to remember in such cases is the very fact that the solidarity of the people who participate in the march is the key to progress and a confirmation of the fact that we are never alone.



Maribor Pride was attended by British Ambassador Sophie Honey, French Ambassador Florence Ferrari, the new chargé d'affaires at the US Embassy in Slovenia Susan K. Falatko, British Council Slovenia director Dragan Barbutovski, CEO of the British-Slovenian Chamber of Commerce Barbara Uranjek and representatives of the Maribor city council. The participants were addressed by Maribor Mayor Saša Arsenovič, British Ambassador Sophie Honey, Luka Kristić and Marja Guček from MKC Maribor, Andra Camelia Cordoș of the Romanian organisation Go Free, and Simona Muršec of the Ljubljana Pride Parade Association. The speakers emphasized the importance of such events around the world in light of the fight for equality of persons with different sexual orientations, and for the acceptance and inclusion of all. Support for the first Pride Parade in Maribor was also expressed by the UEFA president, Slovenia's own Aleksander Čeferin, Köln Mayor Andreas Wolter and 19 organisations and companies from the city.

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"Hello, dear friends! I'm happy to see so many open hearts here today, walking together, united with pride. One week ago, I've arrived in Slovenia for the first time. I didn't come alone, I'm here with other young people who wanted to stand up with you in solidarity. We started to think about this idea to organise Maribor Pride together with the Slovenian team, last year in Romania, during a project which aimed to promote rights, inclusion, diversity and equality. Today I want to dedicate my speech to them and to all the people here who had the courage to push things forward and make a change for the LGBTQ+ community in Maribor. I respect you all and I'm proud of my Romanian-Slovenian team. You've managed to overcome all of the fears of being exposed and you are determined to transform your vulnerability into power. We shouldn't be afraid to be visible and to love, it's time to celebrate ourselves, happy pride!"

(Andra Camelia Cordos, United with pride Team)

What putting together the first Maribor Pride meant for the young people involved in its organization

“Looking back on what we achieved makes me feel as if I have been born again. Finally, I had a feeling that I helped and contributed to society. All the workshops helped me grow as a person and gave me a realistic perspective on life. Guys, you were amazing, thank you for all of the good memories, support, safe space and glitter.”

(Pia Tavčar, Slovenia)



“Today, I felt that I made a change. Today was a vivid, colourful and emotionally overwhelming day. I saw love, so much love! With adrenaline rushing through my veins, I could not stop smiling. I was here, in Maribor, for a cause, for a very special moment in this city: the very first Pride parade. I came here because I believe that, in the end, love wins. I met some extraordinary people along this 10-day-journey, a journey that nourished my soul and taught me that everyone’s rights and voices matter. I felt amazing today. As I was sharing the PRIDE flags, every look in one’s eyes was telling me: ‘This is happening. Maribor Pride is happening for real!’.

It was us - the participants of ‘United with Pride’ - who made a change in the community, we made the world a better place and I cannot put into words how being part of a historical moment feels. I truly hope that life will bring me back to the ‘time capsule’ in Maribor to march again in the years to come with you, amazing people! See you soon and stay proud!

To be continued...”

Journal page: 29th of June 2019
Written by Miruna Lupaş, Romania

