Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme

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UP4Diversity

TASK 2.2

Literature Review on Digital Media & LGBT violence

D2.2. Report on Digital Media and LGBT Violence

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Structure of the Report

This literature review is part of the UP4Diversity project (WP2) and aims to summarize the main findings regarding existing practices in the use of digital media in upstander interventions against LGBT+ violence and harassment. The report begins with an introduction that summarizes the need to create these tools to combat homophobia, transphobia and bullying directed at the LGBT+ community in educational settings. The introduction is followed by the methodology that clarifies the criteria for the final inclusion of articles in the dataset. The section on results and analysis presents the main outcomes of the literature review, including a presentation of case studies that stand out in the literature. The report ends with a conclusion section that summarizes the major findings and provides recommendations for exploitation of these results in digital media upstander interventions.

1. Introduction

Discrimination and violence against LGBT+[i] individuals have been well documented in the past few decades, both in academic literature (Meyer, 2015; Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012; Mitchell, Ybarra & Korchmaros, 2014; Mogul, Ritchie, & Whitlock, 2011) as well as in EU surveys that have registered high levels of harassment, marginalization and violence in the experiences of the LGBT+ minority (FRA, 2014; FRA 2020). In fact, the FRA (2020) report states explicitly that comparison between the survey results of 2012 and 2019 shows that LGBT individuals continue to experience constant and everyday violations of their human rights. The report also notes that there were not enough indications that sufficient progress was achieved in the protection the LGBT+ community although the report cautions that the EU average does not reflect important differences between member states.

These phenomena have direct and long-term effects on the health and well-being of LGBT+ individuals (Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar & Azrael, 2009; Lick, Durso & Johnson, 2013; Mereish, O'Cleirigh & Bradford, 2014; Bauer, Scheim, Pyne, Travers & Hammond, 2015; Brennan, Irwin, Drincic, Amoura, Randal & Smith-Sallans, 2017; Mazrekaj, De Witte & Cabus, 2020). For example, sexual minority youth report high rates of harassment and victimization through threats and/or injuries with the use of a weapon (Bouris, Everett, Heath, Elsaesser & Neilands, 2016). Thus, they are more likely to skip school and to present suicidal ideation.

European level initiatives in the past two decades have sought to combat this problem at the policy level. For example, the 2006 European resolution on homophobia (European Parliament, 2006) called on member states to ensure that LGBT+ people are protected from violence and homophobic hate speech and urged them to engage in educational, administrative and legislative campaigns against homophobia, especially in schools, universities and the media. Furthermore, the European Parliament Resolution (2014) "Roadmap against homophobia and

discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity" recognized that a more concerted and comprehensive strategy is needed so that member states can ensure that the rights of LGBT+ individuals are respected, especially in education, health and employment.

Since 2014, the European Parliament's "LGBTI Intergroup," an informal forum, has been formed as an intermediary between civil society and the European Parliament. Its main objective is to monitor the status quo of LGBTIQ rights both in EU institutions and EU Member States and report, remind or advice when problematic LGBTQI-related issues arise. The first ever "LGBTIQ Strategy 2020-2025" was published in November 2020 in order to address the challenges affecting LGBTIQ individuals as we move towards a union of equality. The report reiterates the findings of the 2019 survey (FRA, 2020), and the worrying levels of increasing reports of discrimination against the LGBT+ community. More specifically, it states: "In a 2019 survey, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) found that discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity/expression and sex characteristics was actually increasing in the EU: 43% of LGBT people declared that they felt discriminated against in 2019, as compared to 37% in 2012." (European Commission, 2020, p. 3-4). The goal of the strategy is to focus specifically on the more vulnerable LGBT+ individuals and importantly to follow a multidimensional and intersectional approach.

These forms of harassment and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ individuals often appear at the school setting where bullying and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender expression may start at a very early age. Research shows that victims of homophobic and transphobic bullying in school experience negative consequences in their educational development (Cornu, 2016). During the past 20 years, the phenomenon of bullying became recognized as a problematic feature of school life and several programs were designed around the world, aiming to provide successful interventions (Olweus, 1994; Rigby, 2002; Sharp &

Smith, 2002). Olweus (1995, p.133) defined bullying as follows: “A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students.” Other more recent definitions have attempted to add the dimension of power in this interpersonal phenomenon. For example, Volk et al. (2014) write: “Bullying is aggressive goal-directed behavior that harms another individual within the context of a power imbalance” (Volk, Dane & Marini, 2014, p. 328).

In recent years, the problem of bullying has intersected with the dominance of social media in young people’s lives and their increasing access to interactions through social networks at younger and younger ages. This has added another layer of complexity to the phenomenon of bullying through “cyberbullying.” Cyberbullying happens when bullying is mediated through the use of technological tools such as mobile phones, social networks, video games or any other online platforms that allow user interaction: “Cyberbullying is typically defined as aggression that is intentionally and repeatedly carried out in an electronic context (e.g., e-mail, blogs, instant messages, text messages) against a person who cannot easily defend him- or herself” (Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, Lattanner, 2014, p. 1073; see also Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012). Cyberbullying occurs at higher percentages for LGBTQ youth at a range between 10.5% and 71.3% (Abreu & Kenny, 2018). The negative effects of cyberbullying are the same as face-to-face bullying and they include depression, lower self-esteem, suicidal ideation as well as lower academic performance. What makes cyberbullying even more insidious than regular bullying is the fact that it can take place anytime and anywhere (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). Not being able to predict when and where cyberbullying will occur means that it is more difficult to protect oneself from being exposed to harassment.

According to Patterson et al. (2017), although there are similarities between online (cyberbullying) and offline incidents of bullying, there are distinct differences of cyberbullying

that need to be identified and addressed in different ways. An important concept is the term "hybrid-bystander" (hybrid by way of being online and offline) has been made by Price et al. (2014). Such term, sheds light to the complexity as well as the relational aspect of bullying and cyberbullying. As such, it can be an important and valuable tool for educators and any others working in understanding and combating the phenomenon. Research has also shown that young people are unable to distinguish between bystanders online and offline; a fact that consequently influenced their intention to intervene (Price et al., 2014).

The current literature shows that the problem of homophobic bullying and cyberbullying in educational spaces and youth organizations needs to be addressed early on in order to prevent the spread of marginalization (Elipe, de la Oliva Muñoz & Del Rey, 2018; Rodríguez-Hidalgo, & Hurtado-Mellado, 2019). Research has confirmed that school climate that is non-acceptant, the lack of a supportive social network as well as the absence of LGBT+ movements in the community are related to higher rates of suicidality in LGBT+ youth (Poštuvan, Podlogar, Šedivy & De Leo, 2019). These reports confirm that unsupportive reactions by others contribute to the internalization of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia by LGBT+, thus, leading to depression and suicidal ideation.

There are also indications that empowering young people to become allies of the LGBT+ community and intervene in situations of harassment and violence is an effective tool towards this goal (Dessel, Goodman & Woodford, 2017; Della Cioppa, O'Neil & Craig, 2015; Villarejo-Carballido, Pulido, de Botton & Serradell, 2019). The aim of this report is to conduct a thorough literature review on the state-of-the-art regarding training and implementation of "upstander" interventions with the use of digital media. Results on the methods and impact of these training interventions will be used as a starting point in designing the UP4Diversity "upstander" intervention.

It is important to clarify how this report uses the terminology of "upstander" intervention. Most of the literature reviewed here uses the term "bystander" to refer to individuals that observe bullying, harassment and other acts of violence but fail to act. In some cases, the term "active bystander" was used to indicate individuals who decided to intervene in order to interrupt the aggressive acts or to support the victim. This report uses the term "upstander" instead of "active bystander" to suggest a better distinction from the phenomenon of a "bystander" and to attribute a more positive connotation to their acts. Indeed, given that some "active bystanders" may act with complicity in order to further incite violence and encourage the aggressor, it is important to provide a term that does not add to the confusion. Existing research has attempted to examine different typologies of upstanders and bystanders based on their motivation, level of moral reasoning and perception of self-efficacy (see for example, Olweus & Limber, 2010; Graeff, 2014; Shultz, Heilman & Hart, 2014; Beer, Hawkins, Hewitson & Hallett, 2019).

2. Methodology

The goal of this literature review was to collect evidence of the the *social impact* of social media interventions to prevent LGBT+ violence and cyberbullying, protect victims or raise awareness about LGBT+ violence in youth populations. In this case, social impact is defined as "when the published and disseminated research results, which have been transferred, lead to an improvement [of society] in relation to the goals agreed in our societies (through our political representatives) (IMPACT-EV, 2015, p. 1).

In order to achieve these goals, a literature search was conducted in scientifically valid and peer-review databases such as Web of Science and Scopus. Priority was given to articles published in peer-review journals in the last 10 years. All partners in the project focused initially on searching results from their own states (Spain, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark) in order to provide a review that includes relevant data that can potentially be more easily applied at the local level. Subsequently, the partners covered literature from other areas around the world as follows: KU Leuven on North America, URV on South America, UCY & Accept on Asia and CFDP on Africa.

The literature review was guided by search criteria: a set of keywords agreed upon initially and then enriched after a preliminary search. These keywords were also translated into national languages in order to search relevant databases. The review was conducted using inclusion and exclusion criteria in order to ensure uniformity in the quality of results. The keywords and inclusion/exclusion criteria were as follows:

- Keywords
    - LGBT* (LGBTI, LGBTIQ, LGBT+) LGBT* violence, LGBT* bullying, homophobia, prejudice, transphobia, heterosexism, homophobic violence, homophobic bullying, homophobic discrimination
    - Youth, students, high school, secondary school, pupil, intervention
    - Upstander, bystander

- Inclusion Criteria
    - Empirical studies
    - Target countries
    - Analysis of changes in prevalence, attitudes and perceptions of lgbt violence/discriminations based on upstander/bystander intervention (community approach)

- Exclusion Criteria
    - Articles with a methodological aim, that exclusively explain instruments for data collection
    - Theoretical articles and literature reviews (except if they are systematic literature reviews analysing the impact of upstander intervention in LGBT youth)

All partners conducted thorough literature searches based on the above criteria and generated lists of proposed articles for inclusion in the literature review. The list of articles was cross-checked in order to avoid overlaps. A total of 17 articles fulfilled the criteria and were included in the review. Out of the 17 articles, 15 presented specific case studies in different countries and the remaining two were literature reviews that fulfilled the criteria. The distribution of case studies in different countries was as follows:

Case study articles per country
4 Spain
4 USA
3 Australia
2 Netherlands
1 UK
1 Canada

Each partner elaborated a summary of each article on a template (see Annex 1) in order to provide material for the literature review. UCY, the lead partner in this task, gathered all the article summaries and assembled the results of the literature review.

3. Results and Analysis

Review of the literature shows that homophobic bullying and harassment of LGBTIQ youth is a widespread phenomenon with detrimental and long-term effects on their health and well-being (Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar & Azrael, 2009; Toomey, Ryan, Diaz, Card & Russell, 2013; Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen & Palmer, 2012). At the same time, there is a growing literature that shows how interventions to disrupt bullying by training "active bystanders" or "upstanders" contributes both to the reduction of bullying as well as the mitigation of its harmful effects (Caravita, Di Blasio & Salmivalli, 2009; Salmivalli, Voeten & Poskiparta, 2011).

Special attention has been dedicated to promote the role of bystanders in incidents of bullying and cyberbullying. Salmivalli (2014), identifies the roles of participants in bullying incidents as follows: participants who directly assist the bully (assistants), participants who laugh and support the bully (reinforcers), participants who witness the incidents but walk away (outsiders) and participants who stand-up and support the victim (defenders). Another study showed that defended "victims were less frequently victimized then undefended victims. They [defended victims] had a higher self-esteem and a higher status among peers" (Sainio et al., 2011, p. 149).

In-line with the findings of the above-mentioned study, interventions have been designed to promote the engagement of participants towards supporting the victim. More specifically, interventions have focused on enhancing bystander skills in order to be more effective. Some interventions focused on defenders' self-efficacy (Abbott et al., 2020), others focused on enhancement of empathy and anti-bullying attitudes of the bystander (Williford et al., 2013) while others focused merely on promoting awareness of bystander approach (see for example Sundstrom et al., 2018).

In this literature review, we focus on upstander training interventions that are mediated with the use of digital technology. These interventions attempt to educate youth not only about the negative consequences of cyberbullying but also about the positive uses of technology to intervene in situations of harassment and discrimination. The first section presents 8 case studies which use digital media upstander interventions to target bullying behavior in general. These interventions form the bulk of digital media-related upstander programs and they reflect the fact that most of these interventions refer to bullying in general and do not target bullying against the LGBT+ community. The second section presents two case studies in digital media upstander interventions related to anti-LGBT+ bullying. The third section focuses on interventions designed and carried out by the LGBT+ community.

A. Digital Media Upstander Interventions in Bullying Literature

1. Theory of Planned Behavior-Cyberbullying intervention

According to Vlaanderen et al. (2020), interventions to date, have focused mostly on reducing cyberbullying behavior by examining the determinants of cyberbullying such as social support, frequency of use of ICT and poor academic performance. They also argue that most of the studies are "falling short in using a solid theoretical framework" (Vladderen et al., 2020, p. 2). In an effort to fill this gap, they utilized the Theory of Planned Behavior to design an online anti-cyberbullying intervention for 10-12 year olds. Both the anti-cyberbullying intervention and the fake news intervention were online e-learning modules in which the children had to read information about either cyberbullying or fake news, complete tasks, answer questions, and view some videos. The researchers concluded that it positively affected the intention of children to intervene on behalf of a cyberbullying victim. Even though this study did not detect the specific reasons of the positive effects of the intervention (none of the concepts included in

the three hypotheses were found statistically significant), the study showed that low-cost, brief interventions that utilize technological tools can at least stimulate children's intention to intervene in cyberbullying incidents.

2. ConRed

Literature on cyberbullying has shown that there are several factors that influence cyberbullying intervention such as perceived control over information shared accessed on the internet, awareness of time spent using ICT and distinction of different roles in cyberbullying incidents (Ortega et al., 2012). The ConRed intervention, an intervention focused on issues arising from the use of internet, has been proven successful in enhancing children's awareness on the risks involved with the use of internet (Ortega et al., 2012). Although the approach was "holistic," taking into consideration all three social groups in the school community – students, teachers and families—the most important element was the work carried out with the students, who received eight training sessions conducted by external experts (the researchers). The experts worked in collaboration with each school's school climate planning team for three months. ConRed contributed to reducing cyberbullying and cyber-dependence, to adjusting the perception of information control, and to increasing the perception of safety at school. This was confirmed through the experimental design that included a control group and an experimental group. For example, the experimental group presented a statistically significant decline for cyberbullying behaviour (from 0.09 to 0.07) whereas the control group maintained a 0.11.

3. Cyberprogram 2.0 Program and Cooperative Cybereduca 2.0 Videogame

This intervention was a combination of a learning program (Cyberprogram 2.0) and a videogame (Cooperative Cybereduca 2.0) which aimed at preventing and reducing

cyberbullying during adolescence (Garaigordobil & Martínez-Valderrey, 2018). The classroom program included 25 activities aimed at helping young people become aware of the phenomenon of bullying and cyberbullying and understand its harmful consequences. It also provided adolescents with the opportunity to think how they would react in a situation of bullying, either as victims or bystanders. The online video is the last activity, which represents the end of the intervention program. The videogame (www.cybereduca.com) is a trivial pursuit game with questions and answers related to bullying/cyberbullying. This cybernetic trivial pursuit is organized around a fantasy story that guides the game. The videogame is played online and is free of charge. It is intended to play on computers, with an adult who guides the development of the game and who fosters reflection, although it can also be played independently. The characters/guilds represent the five roles involved in a bullying/cyberbullying situation: aggressors, victims, defending observers, observers who support the aggressors and passive observers. Results showed that victims learned to defend themselves and those who had a bystander role learned how to intervene.

4. Connectado

Players of this game (children) are placed to be a victim of cyberbullying by their classmates (Calvo-Morata, Rotaru, Alonso-Fernandez, Freire, Martinez-Ortiz & Fernandez-Manjon, 2018). In Conectado (https://www.e-ucm.es/es/portfolio-item/conectado/), the player plays the role of victim, while in many other games the player is an observer of the bullying or cyberbullying situation. It is focused on conveying feelings and increasing empathy with the victims, while many other resources focus on imparting knowledge through definitions and in-game lessons, which are less attractive to learners. Then the players, can experience a storyline and choose in several points the trajectory that the story will take by answering questions on their screen. While playing the game, students gain a first-hand immersive experience of the problem and the associated emotions, fostering awareness and empathy with victims. This paper describes

Conectado and presents it validation with actual students using game analytics. The game was more effective at the ages between 12 to 16 and it was successful in raising awareness around cyberbullying and increasing children's empathy towards victims. More specifically, there was a statistically significant difference of 0.66 points in 7 of the 18 pre-post questions which means that the hypothesis of whether intervention increases awareness was confirmed.

5. Name-calling

According to Thornberg and Jungert (2013), self-efficacy plays an important role on whether a bystander will decide to intervene in both bullying or cyberbullying incidents (Thornberg & Jungbert, 2013). More specifically, as their study has shown, "high level of defender self-efficacy seem to motivate and engage adolescents to help victims, low level of defender self-efficacy inhibit them from intervening as bystanders" (Thornberg & Jungert, 2013, p. 11).

Taking into consideration the importance of self-efficacy, the name-calling intervention, a role play intervention for adolescents was designed and implemented. Name-calling focused on promoting defending behaviors to name-calling incidents by focusing on boosting adolescents' self-efficacy through various role-playing techniques. A drama team was established and trained for the role-play scenarios. The participants observed the drama team and had the opportunity to participate since the scenarios were interactive. The intervention has proven to be successful as statistical differences arose between the intervention and control group. The study has shown that "role-play can serve as an opportunity to practice defender behaviours and develop mastery of such situation" (Abbott et al., 2020, p. 7) and also that self-efficacy of the defender is an important aspect of defender's behavior.

6. Online and offline vignettes

Few studies investigated interventions which simultaneously addressed cyberbullying and bullying, in an effort to examine differences arising by comparing the two. An example of such an attempt is the study of Patterson et al. (2017) which offered hypothetical scenarios to students in the form of vignettes (one online and one at school) and then asked them to choose a reaction (from a list of possible approaches) by placing them in the role of a bystander. In each student a different relationship with the victim and a bully was assigned (close friend, friend but not close, and stranger) in order to test the relevance of the relationship of the bystander with the victim and the bully. According to Patterson et al. (2017), bystanders are more reluctant to defend online. Furthermore, perception on the seriousness of an incident, seems to be an important factor influencing bystander's intention to intervene as well as acting upon such an intention. The more the bystanders viewed the incidents as serious or harmful, the more likely it was for them to intervene (Patterson et al., 2017). Another aspect influencing the intention of the bystander to act was the relationship of the bystander with the victim or the bully, which is also supported in other studies (Price et al., 2014). Being a close friend to the victim made the bystander more likely to intervene.

7. Digital animations

An animation titled *Broken Friendship* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRByQHXmvD0), presented a cyberbullying scenario and included scenes where bystanders do not react to support the victim (Price et al., 2014). The study sought to examine adolescents' understanding of moral engagement or disengagement in online bullying situations. Secondly, the study aimed to investigate the understanding of youth regarding the notion of 'bystanders' as well as their rational and thinking regarding such notion. The study concluded the young people did not differentiate between online and offline bystanders. The report emphasizes that educators

need to recognize how online and offline environments are interconnected for youth. The authors propose the term “hybrid-bystander” to account for this phenomenon. Overall, young people thought that a cyber-bystander does have the ability and the moral responsibility to intervene in cyber-bullying incidents. The likelihood of intervention depended on social conventions, perceptions of moral duty based on the nature of their friendship with the victim and the dynamics of peer group membership.

8. It’s your place

Some interventions have focused on giving visibility to issues of violence and promote - through the use of technology the feeling of taking a stance against violence in different levels via campaigns. An example is the “It’s your place” campaign in the USA (Sundstrom, Ferrara, DeMaria, Gabel, Booth & Cabot, 2017). The main pillar of this research was bystander’s intervention regarding incidents of sexual assault and misconduct in a college campus. The campaign included old media channels (flyers, postcards, logos) as well as new ones (social media, QR codes) or a combination of two. Campaigning took a variety of trajectories such as promotion through athletic events, local businesses, videos and promotional items. Participants reported that the campaign incentivized them to take further action such as discuss it with friends, further investigate for additional information or discuss intervention techniques with mentors. After seeing the campaign and because of it, participants intervened to prevent (~11%) or reported (~6.5%) incidents of sexual assault. Results also showed that participants who were exposed to the campaign were more likely to intervene in sexual assault incidents.

B. Digital Media Upstander Interventions in anti-LGBT+ bullying

All of the above interventions utilized digital tools to combat cyberbullying or to examine how young people understand the role of bystanders in a digital/social media context. There were also two case studies that specifically examined cyberbullying and upstander behavior in the context of homophobic aggression:

1. Second Step: Student Success through Prevention program

Second Step is an extensive 3-year program that was implement in schools in Kansas and Illinois (Low, Van Ryzin & Polanin, 2015). The intervention was a whole curriculum class, focusing on bullying, cyberbullying, homophobic name-calling and sexual harassment perpetration. This program included thirteen to fifteen lessons taught either weekly (50 minutes) or semiweekly (25 minutes each) throughout the school year. The main objective was to build and practice skills that would in turn assist in reducing the phenomena under examination. A DVD was also disseminated containing videos presenting skills and interviews with students. Although the study did not find any direct effects on bullying, cyberbullying, sexual harassment and homophobic name-calling, the study reported "reductions in various forms of bullying behavior via reductions in the growth of delinquent behavior" (Espelage et al., 2015, p.475).

2. Step In, Speak Up

This intervention focused on enhancing the capabilities of educators, staff and youth-serving adults to connect and support LGBTQ students who are being harassed and learn how to manage circumstances where a student is using homophobic language or harassing another student on the basis of their sexual orientation (Bradley et al., 2019). Step In, Speak Up

intervention uses an online simulation which is able to mimic a student's intelligence and emotional responds. On the first part of it, participants are exposed to a simulation of incident where students are harassing other students on the basis of sexual orientation (or their perception of sexual orientation). Then participants are provided with different approaches to choose from, that could either be effective, neutral or ineffective and then they see what would happen if the approach they chose was followed. The simulation continues to ask for their opinion on which approach to use after observing the effect of the previous one, until the participants manages to handle efficiently the situation. On the second part, participants similarly choose approaches to be used, in order to build trust between a victimized student that approached them for help. A "Trust Meter" shows the effectiveness of their choices. The intervention was found successful in terms of preparedness, effectiveness and efficiency of the participants to support harassed LGBTQ student or manage a situation of homophobic language or harassment. Online interventions like "Step In, Speak Up" are proven to be successful because they provide participants the opportunity to face real-life examples in a safe environment where they can "play" and observe different approaches and navigate through the consequences without exposure.

Results show moderately promising impact in self-reported behaviors in the three-month follow-up. For example, 54% reported an increase in number of times they had someone talk to them after class to check in if they were OK and 52.6% reported an increase in their upstander behavior, that is, intervening for students being teased and harassed because of their real or perceived gender identification and/or sexual orientation. Overall, participants reported that "Step In, Speak Up" was an intervention that helped them to actively work to create or maintain a safe environment for LGBTQ students. Educators also stated that they recognize the importance of their role in connecting LGBTQ students who experience harassment and bullying to support services.

C. Digital Media Upstander Interventions by the LGBT+ community

Apart from the risks accompanying the emergence of ICT, a comparatively smaller part of literature focuses on the ways LGBTQI youth make use of ICT as a way to support the LGBTQI community (Craig et al., 2015; Venzo & Hess, 2013). More specifically, according to Craig and colleagues (2015) four themes are enabled through use of media by LGBTQ youth: coping through escapism; feeling stronger; fighting back and finding and fostering community. The study showed that LGBTQ youth used media channels that are created specifically for LGBTQ audience (mainly offline traditional) to escape from the stress of everyday life, but also to find positive representations relevant to their identities. Additionally, positive representation of LGBTQ lives such as celebrities seen as role-models had a positive effect on the youth feeling stronger regarding their sexual identities.

Another study, focused on the ways media (mainly new media) can be used strategically by LGBTQI individuals to interact with each other, create social bonds and networks, and fight/combat social exclusion, considering a safer environment when combating homophobic behaviors online (Venzo & Hess, 2013). Having noted the above, it seems that along with all the risks inherent to the use of ICT by youth, there are also different kind of documented stories echoing when discussing media use. Those stories show how the strategic use of media by minority groups served as a way of creating a community, which in turn created a feeling of *belonging* for isolated individuals.

4. Conclusions

The literature review shows that there is still large and unexploited potential for digital tools to be used in upstander interventions for reducing bullying and violence against LGBT+ individuals. The examples presented here indicate that there is at least a possibility to use these digital tools in conjunction with face-to-face interventions (Nocentini et al., 2015); Patterson et al., 2017; Garaigordobil, M., & Martínez-Valderrey, V.2018). There are three advantages in using a combination of these approaches in designing upstander interventions:

a) Advancements in digital technology can create immersive environments that simulate real life with great success. Approaches such as virtual reality and serious game (Nocentini et al., 2015) are already available tools with endless possibilities for creative scenarios. While it is true that role-playing is an approach that has been used successfully in these interventions, the use of digital media can be an alternative way to allow students to practice upstander interventions.
b) The use of digital technology creates a safe environment for practicing upstander interventions. As Nocentrini et al. (2015) indicated, these are: "protected environments which allow children to explore 'emotionally hot' situations, or a cognitive learning situation free from social pressure" (Nocentrini et al., 2015, p. 53).

Furthermore, the use of digital technology for upstander interventions is a more versatile tool for educators. First, although the creation of these digital interventions may incur a higher initial cost, they can be applied multiple times with low cost for both the educators and the participants (Vlaanderen et al., 2020). Second, these tools can be used independently or in a group format and allow teachers to individualize interventions based on the needs of the

students or provide opportunities for individuals/players to assume different roles (Garaigordobil & Martínez-Valderrey, 2018).

Third, the research shows that the use of digital tools maintains high levels of student interest and attention and they have been proven successful in teaching concepts such as empathy (Calvo-Morata et al., 2018). Although there are still unanswered questions in terms of the comparative success of face-to-face and digital/media interventions (Nocentrini et al., 2015), it is also true that young people's familiarity and fluency in the use of digital media may have created potential for learning spaces that are not intuitively recognized by researchers. In fact, as research has shown through the phenomenon of the "hybrid-bystander" (Price et al., 2014), young people do not readily make sharp distinctions between offline and online environments signaling both to different modes of socialization for young people today as well as the potential for more expansive use of these tools.

Finally, the research shows that these digital tools offer the opportunity for educators to teach about the use of the internet and overall risks such as fake news (Ortega et al., 2012), which means that using this tools has a spillover effect in other areas of learning. All of these interventions, however, need more systematic, scientific evaluation (Nocentini, et al., 2015) in order to properly designate when and how they can be utilized more effectively.

To conclude, the literature shows that there are reasons specific to the needs of the LGBT+ community which necessitate the use of digital upstander interventions: first, cyberbullying occurs at higher percentages for LGBTQ youth (Abreu & Kenny, 2018) and second, cyberbullying is a form of bullying that can take place anytime and anywhere (Kowalski & Limber, 2007), thus making its targets more vulnerable. Given all the advantages outlined above, this means that use of digital media tools could be even more successful in

demonstrations and upstander interventions of cyberbullying that targets LGBT+ individuals. These tools need to be used with the needs of the LGBT+ community in mind (Craig et al., 2015; Venzo & Hess, 2013), paying special attention to how the design of case studies and interventions reflects real-life experiences. The use of digital media to combat LGBT+ bullying and cyberbullying can also serve as an antidote to the negative and destructive experience of the LGBT+ community on the internet and further the possibilities for cultivating empathy and solidarity.

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ANNEX 1

TASK 2.1. Literature Review on Upstander Intervention & LGBT

Table for literature review (sample)

Reference	Country	Characteristics of the Upstander Intervention	Context of implementation (and details of the sample)	Impacts achieved
Coker, A. L., Bush, H. M., Clear, E. R., Brancato, C. J., & McCauley, H. L. (2020). Bystander program effectiveness to reduce violence and violence acceptance within sexual minority male and female high school students using a cluster RCT. Prevention science, 21(3), 434-444.	*USA*	*Educators provided school-wide Green Dot presentations (phase 1) and intensive bystander training to student popular opinion leaders (phase 2).* *Each spring from 2010 to 2014, students completed anonymous surveys about violence acceptance and violent events.* *Etc.*	*26 Kentucky high schools* *74,836 surveys over the 5 years* *All students (grades 9–12) who could provide consent were invited* *University of Kentucky IRB approved the study protocol. Each year letters describing the study were mailed to the parents of all students.*	*Significant declines in sexual violence acceptance over time (Table 2, mean school-level IRMA scores) were observed in the sexual majority male subgroup (CxT; p = .02), sexual majority females (CxT; p = .004), and sexual minority female subgroup (CxT; p = .03).* *Etc.*

[i] This report utilizes the acronym LGBT+ to refer inclusively to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans individuals as well as other identities such as Queer, Intersex and Asexual. Different organizations use this acronym differently: the Human Rights Campaign uses LGBTQ (https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms) and ILGA Europe LGBTI (https://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/glossary_october_2015_edition.pdf). Given that most of the articles reviewed in this report use the LGBT acronym as a minimum reference to the queer community we follow the same format and include the plus (+) sign to indicate that we embrace other self-identifications not explicitly noted by the participants in the studies.