



# Up4Diversity

Empowering Young People and  
Youth Workers to Become  
Active Upstanders in the  
Prevention of Violence Towards  
LGBTIQ+ People in the  
Digital Era





This training document was funded by the European Union's Rights,  
Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)

REC-RDIS-DISC-AG-2019

Agreement nº 881918 – UP4Diversity.

# Introduction

## Structure of this training document

Violence and discrimination in youth education formal and non-formal institutions is a worrisome reality, and it affects more deeply vulnerable groups, such as LGBTIQ+ youth. The European project Up4Diversity, funded by the REC programme, has developed these evidence-based pedagogical modules to train professionals who work with youth so that they acquire knowledge and skills about how to successfully contribute to stop and prevent violence against LGBTIQ+ youth in their educational contexts. These **modules are not designed for professionals to directly transfer the content and activities as they are to youth**. Both are proposed to be used among educators in professional-training spaces.

As can be seen in the modules, we take a stand for theoretical content because professionals have the right to know the scientific evidence behind the educational actions they implement, in order to avoid mechanically applying practices without meaning and purpose. As scientific evidence suggests, **violence and bullying cannot be overcome by isolated activities; on the contrary, only a holistic and community change that permeates all spaces and moments** of the educational institution can have a long-term effect in creating safer spaces for LGBTIQ+ youth and for everyone, spaces where violence is successfully combated and discouraged.

Implementing educational actions proposed in this training is not supposed to take time away from the curriculum content. Applying this evidence can, in fact, contribute to improve the environment where instrumental learning will be enhanced.

This document can be read individually, even though we suggest carrying out pedagogical dialogical gatherings among professionals and adults in the educational institution in different sessions: this successful teacher-training actions consists in reading the evidence-based resource agreed with the intention to share the highlighted paragraphs and arguments that arise from them with the other participants in the gathering.

In every module of this training, there are resource proposals to continue studying and deepening on the knowledge explained. The goal is to help create reflection spaces around the practice, always having the theory as a base to give meaning and to help better understand



youth's actions. These activities are better enjoyed and more useful in teacher meetings or, if not, individually.

This training material has, in fact, been used to develop training workshops within the life span of the Up4Diversity project in Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Ireland, and Spain, with people who work from very diverse profiles: school and high-school teachers, university professors, teacher trainees, volunteers in non-formal educational institutions and NGOs, youth relatives, etc. The evidence-based approach facilitates the transferability of the content to many different contexts.

Professionals or institutions interested in more training about the evidence provided in the materials can contact **[up4diversity@gmail.com](mailto:up4diversity@gmail.com)**

The topic of this training and this project is quite sensitive, since it focuses on the violence suffered by a vulnerable collective as is LGBTI+ people and especially LGBTI+ youth. Any training or implementation should be carried out creating a safe space where organisers inform that no form of discrimination or power interactions will be tolerated, and that participants do not need to share any personal experiences, either as victims, bystanders, or allies.

4

---

<sup>1</sup><https://socialimpactscience.org/education/2022/07/13/adhyayana-post-template-2/>

# Index

<b>Module 1</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Introduces and explains the reality of LGBTIQ+ people and youth and Europe, with some basic concepts and a political framework.	
<b>Module 2</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Describes bullying and violence against LGBTIQ+ Youth in the digital era, deepening on the unique characteristics of such environments.	
<b>Module 3</b> .....	<b>25</b>
Is the core of our training, as it explains the approach of bystander intervention and upstanders who defend the victims of LGBTIQ+ violence.	
<b>Module 4</b> .....	<b>40</b>
Gives an outline of the social reasons why interpersonal and power-based violence persists and how to create a preventive socialisation in educational environments.	
<b>Module 5</b> .....	<b>48</b>
Describes how the participation of the community in the elaboration and accountability on norms can help prevent violence.	
<b>Module 6</b> .....	<b>53</b>
Introduces some evidence-based strategies, materials, and programs that are showing results in violence reduction and prevention.	

# Module 1. LGBTIQ+: conceptualizations and political framework

Before introducing the upstander approach and how you can further build your skills in this area, it is important to be clear about the 'who' and 'what' we are talking about. **Therefore, this first module will introduce you to key concepts on LGBTIQ+, followed by the LGBTIQ+ rights and relevant policy frameworks, in particular at the European level.** The module is anchored in theory and research but also provides a wide range of examples and illustrations.

To help you engage with these theoretical foundations, this module also offers suggested 'activities' that encourage you to explore these issues for yourselves, concerning your personal and professional context. Several of these activities can be easily adapted for young people as well. Finally, the module invites teachers and youth workers to use educational resources developed dedicated to building awareness and understanding of sexual diversity.

Before we get started, a quick note. It can be challenging to address LGBTIQ+ issues, especially the first few times you do this. The same may be true for the young people you work with: some will need more support than others to join the conversation, to open up about their



own views, or to treat the issue with respect. It's not easy being an upstander! To break the ice, we invite you to consider the following activity:

## Homo'poly: The Game

Are you ready to spin the wheel and work with your colleagues to complete all 8 steps? In 'Homopoly - The game' players have to complete 8 actions or 'life experiences' such as getting married, buying a house and taking a trip around the world. The possibility of doing a certain action depends on what character you are, and characters change every round. Playing this game helps students become aware of the possibilities, advantages, and disadvantages someone might have because of their sexual orientation and/or identity. The game focuses on the LGB community only, but could be adapted to include the full LGBTIQ+ community.

<sup>1</sup> Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and others

## Core concepts and Definitions

It is important to start by **clearly identifying what we understand by 'LGBTIQ+'**. A quick online search reveals that there are many definitions and that it is not unusual for interpretations to change over time. You will also note that language is very important: small nuances make big differences, and part of respecting and recognizing the LGBTIQ+ community involves adopting the terms and definitions the community itself prefers.

Since **UP4Diversity supports European partners, the project will employ internationally recognized sources for relevant terminology**. Firstly, for the broader concepts of sexual identity and sexual orientation, we adopt the definitions provided by the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (1):

tation towards persons of the same gender) or bisexual (oriented towards both genders).

**Gender identity** refers to “each person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms”. Those whose gender identity does not correspond with the sex assigned at birth are commonly referred to as trans\* persons. This group includes persons who wish at some point in their life to undergo gender reassignment treatments (usually referred to as transsexual persons), as well as persons who ‘cross-dress’ or persons who do not, or do not want to, consider themselves as being ‘men’ or ‘women’. Some of them refer to themselves as ‘gender variant’.

**Gender expression** refers to a person’s manifestation of their gender identity, for example through ‘masculine’, ‘feminine’ or ‘gender variant’ behavior, clothing, hair-cut, voice or body characteristics.



**Sexual orientation** refers to “each person’s capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender”. Sexual orientation refers to identity (being), conduct (behaviour) and how you relate to other persons (relationships). It is generally assumed that persons are heterosexual (orientation towards persons of a different gender), homosexual (gay, or lesbian, orien-

In addition to these core concepts, the glossary of the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association – widely known as ILGA-Europe – provides the remainder of our definitions. ILGA-Europe’s glossary is regularly updated and extends beyond the terms listed here. For the full set of definitions, please access their glossary (2):

**Bisexual:** when a person is emotionally and/or sexually attracted to persons of more than one gender.

**Gay:** a man who is sexually and/or emotionally attracted to men. Gay is sometimes also used as a blanket term to cover lesbian women and bisexual people as well as gay men. However, this usage has been disputed by a large part of the LGBTI community and gay is therefore only used here when referring to men who are emotionally and/or sexually attracted to men.

**Gender:** refers to people's internal perception and experience of maleness and femaleness, and the social construction that allocates certain behaviours into male and female roles.

**Heteronormativity:** refers to cultural and social practices where men and women are led to believe that heterosexuality is the only conceivable sexuality. It implies that heterosexuality is the only way of being "normal".

**Heterosexual:** people who are attracted by people from the other sex: women attracted by men, or men attracted by women.

**Homosexual:** people are classified as homosexual on the basis of their gender and the gender of their sexual partner(s). When the partner's gender is the same as the individual's, then the person is categorised as homosexual. It is recommended to use the terms lesbian and gay men instead of homosexual people. The terms lesbian and gay are being considered neutral and positive, and the focus is on the identity instead of being sexualised or pathologised.

**Intersex:** a term that relates to a range of physical traits or variations that lie between stereotypical ideals of male and female. Intersex people are born with physical, hormonal, or genetic features that are neither who-

lly female nor wholly male; or a combination of female and male; or neither female nor male. Many forms of intersex exist; it is a spectrum or umbrella term, rather than a single category.

**Lesbian:** a woman who is sexually and/or emotionally attracted to women.

**Queer:** has become an academic term that is inclusive of people who are not heterosexual - includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans people. Queer theory is challenging heteronormative social norms concerning gender and sexuality, and claims that gender roles are social constructions. Traditionally the term "queer" was an abusive term and therefore for some still has negative connotations. Many LGBTI persons however have reclaimed the term as a symbol of pride.

**Sex:** refers to biological makeup such as primary and secondary sexual characteristics, genes, and hormones. The legal sex is usually assigned at birth and has traditionally been understood as consisting of two mutually exclusive groups, namely men and women. However, "[t]he Court of Justice has held that the scope of the principle of equal treatment for men and women cannot be confined to the prohibition of discrimination based on the fact that a person is of one or other sex. In view of its purpose and the nature of the rights which it seeks to safeguard, it also applies to discrimination arising from the gender reassignment of a person." (This language comes from the preamble of the Gender Recast Directive 2006). In addition to the above, the legal definition of sex should also include intersex people.

**Trans\*:** refers to people who identify entirely with the gender role opposite to the sex assigned to at birth and

seeks to live permanently in the preferred gender role. This often goes along with strong rejection of their physical primary and secondary sex characteristics and wish to align their body with their preferred gender. Transsexual people might intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment treatment (which may or may not involve hormone therapy or surgery).

**Trans person/people/man/woman:** is an inclusive umbrella term referring to those people whose gender identity and/or a gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. It includes, but is not limited to: men and women with transsexual pasts, and people who identify as transsexual, transgender, transvestite/cross-dressing, androgyne, polygender, genderqueer, agender, gender variant or with any other gender identity and/or expression which is not standard male or female and express their gender through their choice of clothes, presentation or body modifications, including undergoing multiple surgical procedures.

me-sex marriages. Opponents argued that same-sex marriage would be harmful to children and would undermine the strength of the family as an institution. However, recent research (3) shows that children raised by same-sex parents from birth perform better than children raised by different-sex parents in both primary and secondary education and that (4) children in same-sex families fare as well as children in different-sex families on the labor market.

**These findings provide upstanders with powerful arguments to argue in favor of same-sex marriages.**



### Human Rights frameworks for LGBTIQ+

Human rights are at the core of philosophy, religion and political thinking. The basic idea is that all human beings have some inalienable rights that cannot be taken away and that must therefore be protected. Every person holds them under being born: "Human rights are not privileges and cannot be granted or revoked. They are inalienable and universal." (5). In the wake of World War II, this human rights doctrine became highly influential in law, in particular at international level. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), still the key text much of today's international human rights law builds on, was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The document itself is

**ACTIVITY 1**  
 Choose some of the terms above and create your own definitions. Were you familiar with all of them? Which concepts are more socially accepted, which less so? And which concepts do you think young people are most familiar with? If you are uncomfortable with (some of) these terms, reflect on why that is.

Before we move on to explore the human rights framework, let's pause briefly on the science – or lack thereof – on LGBTIQ+. Notoriously under-researched until very recently, and thus with significant catching up to do, the scientific evidence base for sexual orientation and gender identity is patchy at best. As a result, important questions persist. We do, fortunately, have growing evidence on the situation of young people, in particular on the 'consequences' of sa-

not legally binding but has formed the basis for a growing range of legally binding instruments at national, regional, and global level.

This brings us to an important point: the distinction between ‘universal’ and ‘legal’ rights, and the consequences of that distinction for the rights and protections of the LGBTIQ+ community. When the **UDHR was first adopted, homosexuality was a criminal offense in most of the signatory countries, and transgender or intersex rights were unheard of.** The ‘freedom of expression granted in the Declaration was not extended to include gay or bisexual behaviour in the documents that translated these universal rights into legal rights at the country level. This remains the case in some parts of the world today: it is a desperate reality that homosexuality is still punishable by death in a handful of countries, or that the opinion of students and teachers are often hostile (6, 7). In many more, some of the universal rights all individuals have under the Declaration are either limited or not legally enshrined at all.

#### ACTIVITY:

Watch the following videos:

- **Video:** ‘Human rights in two minutes’
- **Video:** ‘What are the universal human rights?’

Reflexionando sobre esto, escribe 5 derechos humanos que sean relevantes para la orientación e identidad sexual (por ejemplo: la autoexpresión). Cuando los tengas escritos, pregúntate -o a tus colegas- si las personas que se identifican como gays, transexuales o intersexuales en tu país disfrutaban de esos derechos en la práctica. En caso

## Human rights in Europe

In Europe, several steps have been taken to ensure LGBTIQ+ people enjoy the same legal rights as others. Central among these is the European Convention on Human Rights.

Adopted by the Council of Europe in 1950, the Convention – among others – established the European Court of Human Rights. Any person who feels their rights have been violated can take their case to the Court, and all findings of the Court are legally binding and must be executed.

**ACTIVITY:** Explore the ‘**how does it work**’ section of the European Court of Human Rights. Try to find examples of cases through which the Court protected the rights of the LGBTIQ+ community (8). Do they feel the Court made a fair judgment? Is there anything you would have done differently?

1. Man’s struggle leads to the legalization of homosexuality in Ireland (full case study here)
2. Legal standards changed after a gay father was denied custody of his child (full case study here)
3. Legal battle leads to stronger transgender rights (full case study here)

It’s important to note that the Convention continues to be revised, and substantially so since its original adoption in 1948. The following provision, critical to the rights of the LGBTIQ+ community in Europe, was enacted in 1999:

“Member states should take appropriate measures to ensure, in accordance with Article 10 of the Convention, that the right to freedom of expression can be effectively enjoyed, without discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, including with respect to the freedom to receive and impart information on subjects dealing with sexual orientation or gender identity.” (9)

This provision not only states that people should be able to freely express their sexual orientation or gender iden-

tity, but it also protects those standing up for the LGBTIQ+ community. Where being an ‘upstander’ – whether as an individual, an organization or a company – is still considered ‘gay propaganda’ in many countries, the European Convention on Human Rights establishes the firm ground for the principles and practices of upstanders. For further information on Article 10, please visit the Council of Europe website here.

### The EU policy framework for LGBTIQ+

Policies are a guidance for achieving objectives. Where laws dictate what is ‘just’ or ‘right’ in society, policies offer rules and directions for society to organize itself following those laws, and in pursuit of the ideals expressed in those laws. Policies apply at all levels, from schools to cities to countries and companies.

LGBTIQ+ policy, too, can exist at all levels and across all types of institutions and organizations. The processes for ‘making’ policy are increasingly complex: partly because there are more existing rules and regulations to take into account, but also because there is growing recognition that people should have a say in the policies that affect them. As a result, many policies now go through a process of ‘public consultation’. Individual citizens, organizations, companies and others can use these processes to try and influence the policy outcome.

There are **strong differences across EU countries in gender equality**: where students and teachers from Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands are quite accepting of LGBTIQ+ issues, those same groups feel much more negatively about them in Poland and Hungary (6, 7, 10, 11). The European Union has long been a leader on gender equality, including the protection and promotion of LGBTIQ+ rights through proactive policymaking. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, spoke powerfully about her commitment to equality:

*“I will not rest when it comes to building a Union of equality. A Union where you can be who you are and love who you want – without fear of reprimand or discrimination. Because being yourself is not your ideology. It’s your identity. And no-one can ever take it away.”*

Ursula von der Leyen,  
President of the European Commission  
State of the Union 2020

Promises were translated into policy with the publication of **the first EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020 - 2025**. This strategy outlines how the EU plans to move towards a ‘Union of Equality’ that recognizes, respects and meets the needs of the LGBTI community (12). The strategy is built on 4 pillars:

1. Tackling discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people;
2. Ensuring LGBTIQ+ people’s safety;
3. Building LGBTIQ+ inclusive societies; and
4. Leading the call for LGBTIQ+ equality around the world.

These are ambitious objectives that echo the repeated calls for action by the European Parliament and leading civil so-

**ACTIVITY:**  
Think of three barriers the LGBTIQ+ community and groups face when trying to implement evidence-based approaches. Why do you think this is? What makes it more difficult for some organizations or groups to develop and implement policies around LGBTIQ+ than others()? What could those fields do to better support upstanders?

ciety actors. They provide concrete, tangible recommendations that, if properly implemented, would significantly improve the lived realities of the LGBTIQ+ community across the European Union.

‘Implementation’ is not so straightforward, however. This is partly because these are complex and challenging issues that take time and space to develop: legislation may lead the way, but hearts and minds can take much time to follow. It is partly also, however, because EU Member States still have significant room in setting their own policies and practices: European legislation and regulation may not extend into all policy areas. Going one step further still, local governments, civil society organizations, companies and so on, in turn, have (some) freedom in setting their own policies.

12

As a result, despite important steps forward in the legal and policy framework at the European level, **the situation of LGBTIQ+ people in several countries within EU borders - and a growing number outside of EU borders - is getting worse, not better.** The latest ILGA-Europe report illustrates that it is again less safe for people to identify as gay, bisexual or trans\*, in particular in Central and Eastern Europe (13). To ensure the full protection of LGBTIQ+ rights across, and to put a stop to this decline, **active and proactive policy-making is needed at all levels, from European decision-makers in Brussels to school administrators and local sports clubs.** Action is welcome across virtually all policy areas, but in particular to prevent hate speech, bullying, and homophobic and transphobic violence; to improve digital governance, to create safe online space; to protect the health and well-being of LGBTIQ+ community; and, of course, in education.

There is widespread recognition of **the role education plays in building awareness, understanding, and inclu-**



**sion of the LGBTIQ+ community.** The FRA research confirms that schools play a powerful role in shaping attitudes, not just educational contexts (1). Importantly, it also confirms that young people “see more individuals standing up for LGBTI people at school - and hear more talk of LGBTI issues in educational settings” (1). The survey also provided some sobering statistics on digital bullying: between 7% and 15% of respondents indicate having experienced online harassment. An unsurprising but worrying insight is that the youngest group (15-17-year-olds) experience more online bullying (15%) than the older groups, and 38% of respondents in this age range indicate that the perpetrator was a teen or a group of teenagers. It is clear, then, that more awareness around these issues is critical, and that the ongoing efforts of a growing number of schools should be encouraged and enabled.

As a youth worker, teacher or education professional, your ability to directly impact policy frameworks may be limited, but you can take action in your own environment. The FRA recommendations listed below address policy makers, but they offer much food for thought – and plenty of potential action and activities:

- Encourage and support EU Member States to ensure that all educational settings, in particular schools, provide a safe and supportive environment, free from bullying and violence, for all LGBTI children and young people. This could include the development and implementation of measures, in close cooperation with teachers and school administrations, that address bullying of LGBTI students and teachers.
- Encourage and support Member States to consider revising educational and training curricula and materials so they do not present LGBTI persons in connotation with pathology, which risks to misinform and fuel hatred and victimisation against them. They should also conform to human rights standards and the World Health Organisation's definition, revising them where necessary. Equality bodies and Ombuds institutions, as well as civil society organisations, could be involved in these reforms.
- Encourage and support Member States to develop peer learning among schools and education professionals, including sharing good educational practices, to tackle homophobic and transphobic bullying. (FRA 2020, p. 19)

**ACTIVITY:** Review these policy recommendations with your colleagues. How could you apply them to your classroom, your school, your organisation? What specific actions could you take to advance each of these three recommendations? What would you need to put them into practice?

## References

1. EU Fundamental Rights Agency (2020). LGBTI Europe II. A long way to go for LGBTI equality. Retrieved from <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2020/eu-lgbti-survey-results>, 12 March 2021.
2. ILGA Glossary (2015). Glossary. Retrieved from <https://www.ilga-europe.org/media/2431>, 12 March 2021.
3. Mazrekaj, D., De Witte, K. and Cabus, S. (2020). School Outcomes of Children Raised in Same-Sex Families: Evidence from Administrative Panel Data. *American Sociological Review* 85 (5). 830-856.
4. Palmaccio, S., Mazrekaj, D. and De Witte, K. (2021). Early Labor Market Outcomes of Children Living With Same-Sex Parents: Evidence from Population Data. LEER Working Paper
5. Berta, B. (2015) What are the universal human rights? Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-DgIVseTkuE>, 26 April 2021.
6. De Witte, K., Iterbeke, K. and Holz, O. (2019). Teachers' and pupils' perspectives on homosexuality. A comparative analysis across European countries. *International Sociology* 34 (4), 471-519.
7. De Witte, K., Holz, O. and Geunis, L. (Eds.) (2018). Somewhere over the rainbow – Discussions on homosexuality in education across Europe. Waxmann. ISBN 978-3-8309-3747-0. Pp. 168.
8. Council of Europe (2021) Impact of the Convention on Human Rights. Case studies retrieved from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/impact-convention-human-rights>, 16 June 2021.

**9.** Council of Europe (2013) European Convention on Human Rights. Retrieved from [https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/convention\\_eng.pdf](https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/convention_eng.pdf), 26 April 2021.

**10.** De Witte, K. and Holz, O. (2013). Gender Specific Education in 12 European countries – A comparison. In Holz, O. and Shelton, F. (Ed.). Gender-Specific education in different countries. Historical aspects – Current trends. Waxmann, München – New York. pp. 159-175. ISBN: 978-3-8309-2868-3.

**11.** Holz, O. and Shelton, F. (2013). Gender-Specific education in different countries. Historical aspects – Current trends. Waxmann, München – New York. pp. 159-175. ISBN: 978-3-8309-2868-3.

**12.** European Commission (2020) LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025. Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0698>, 26 April 2021.

**13.** ILGA-Europe (2021). Annual Review 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.ilga-europe.org/annualreview/2021>, 26 April 2021.

**14.** Homo'poly (2016 - 2019), all resources available at [www.homopoly.eu](http://www.homopoly.eu).