Building Capacities to Prevent and Respond to Any Form of Violence against the LGBTQI+ Community in Europe

Agreement Number:
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Hei4Diversity. Building Capacities to Prevent and Respond to any Form of Violence Against the LGBTQI+ Community in Europe

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Table of contents

Building Capacities to Prevent and Respond to Any Form of Violence against the LGBTQI+ Community in Europe (Agreement Number: 2019-1-ES01-KA203-064121)
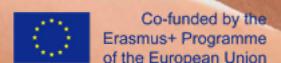
3

SECTION 1.
Introduction

1.1. Conceptualization of violence against the LGTBQI+ groups

Michael Warner, in his Introduction to Fear of a Queer Planet, uses the image of the plaque from the **NASA Pioneer 10 spacecraft mission** to illustrate his notion of heteronormativity (see Figure 1). Indeed, this image portrays the decimal system and the distances between the planets that make up the solar system alongside the representation of a (heterosexual) couple, where the male figure, standing next to the female figure, is greeting benevolently. The couple is meant to show to potential extraterrestrial beings the human race in all its complexity, or essence. **The image combines a set of ideological assumptions on the ideal of the heterosexual matrix, employing Judith Butler's approach** (a prestigious author in the field): *The institution of compulsory and naturalized heterosexuality requires and regulates gender as a binary relation in which the masculine term is differentiated from the feminine term, and this differentiation is accomplished through the practices of heterosexual desire.*

Society and most of our value systems, norms, and imaginary are based on the belief that there is just one form of sexual desire, acting as **a unique and primal orientation (heterosexuality), while also positing the inviolable posing between two opposites (male and female) that "naturally" attract each**

Figure 1 - Misión NASA Piooner 10

other. Such conception crosses every inch of our culture, the system of values, and conceptualizations structurally. This becomes material when our acts, politics, and other manifestations are based, correspond to, or fight against this normalization of a single legitimate and "natural" sexuality: heteronormativity. In this sense, knowing and taking conciousness of the naturalization of just one form of loving and identifying is key in order to understand discrimination

Sexuality has an important power over sex, gender and desire are central categories when studying LGBTQI+ which. In this sense, to be classified as male, a subject must present a set of specific biological characteristics (having a penis and testicles), masculine traits and characteristics (gender); in addition, he must feel sexually attracted to women (thereby declaring himself as heterosexual) and think of himself as a male (regards gender identity). Conversely, women are biologically endowed with a vulva, they have traits and characteristics defined as feminine, they desire men while thinking of themselves as females, and they are mostly seen (and imagined) as engaged in "naturally" feminine activities, such as care and children's wellbeing. **This flow of naturalized categories of gender, sex, and desire establishes hierarchies of power, visibility, and gender discrimination**.

It is important to bear in mind that **gender identity and sexual orientation are two distinct categories**; indeed, and as cited previously, gender identity answers the question "How do I see myself in terms of gender?", whereas sexual orientation

is better explained by referring to sexual attraction and love (i.e., "Who do I fall in love with? By whom do I feel sexually attracted?"). In addition to heterosexual subjects (subjects who are attracted by people of the opposite sex), homosexuals (subjects who are attracted by people of the same sex), and bisexuals (subjects who are attracted to people of two or more genders). As well, recent research has invested in the category of asexuality. **Asexuals are those subjects who do not feel sexually attracted at all, or whose desire for sexual intercourse or pleasure is not a part of their intimate life**, to such extent that it can also be neglected completely, given how these subjects experience intimacy in lots of different ways (sociability, emotional depth or affective experience, other non-normative practices of sexuality).

While eschewing a reflection merely based on classificatory taxonomies, the reality of our sexual identity is much more complex. It is the result of intersecting dimensions that give way to an unthinkable series of shades and forms of subjectivation. In addition to biological categories (sex), one should include the categories of sexual attraction and desire (sexual orientation), self-perception (gender identity), and social expectations (gender role and gender expression). (See Figure 2).

The term **"intersexualism" is used to refer to a series of conditions where someone's genitals are declared "ambiguous"** (that is, their organs do not correspond to "standard" hormonal sets); **and, at other times, this refers to people whose genital organs correspond to their chromosomal set but not their gonads**. In both cases, gonads, chromosomes, hormones, and external genitalia do not correspond to normative definitions of male and female subjects. All this diversity has been historically part of the LGBTQI+ movement and characterized its origins, ongoing growth, and future gathering of disident orientations, identities, expressions.
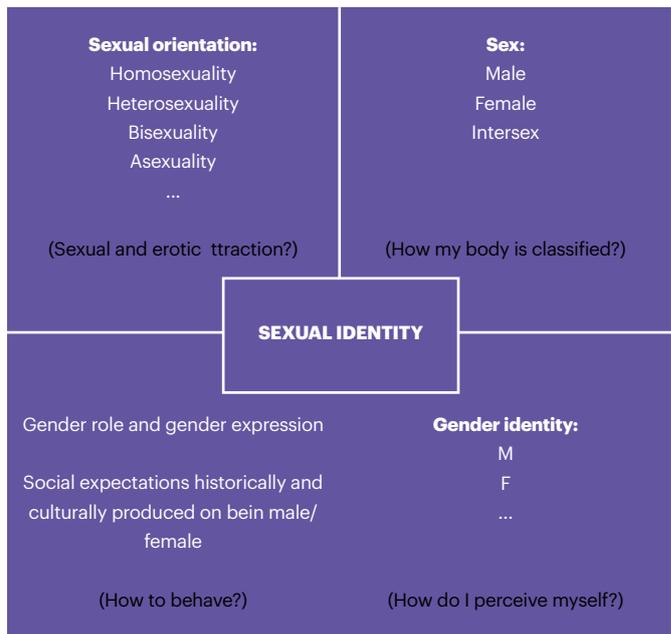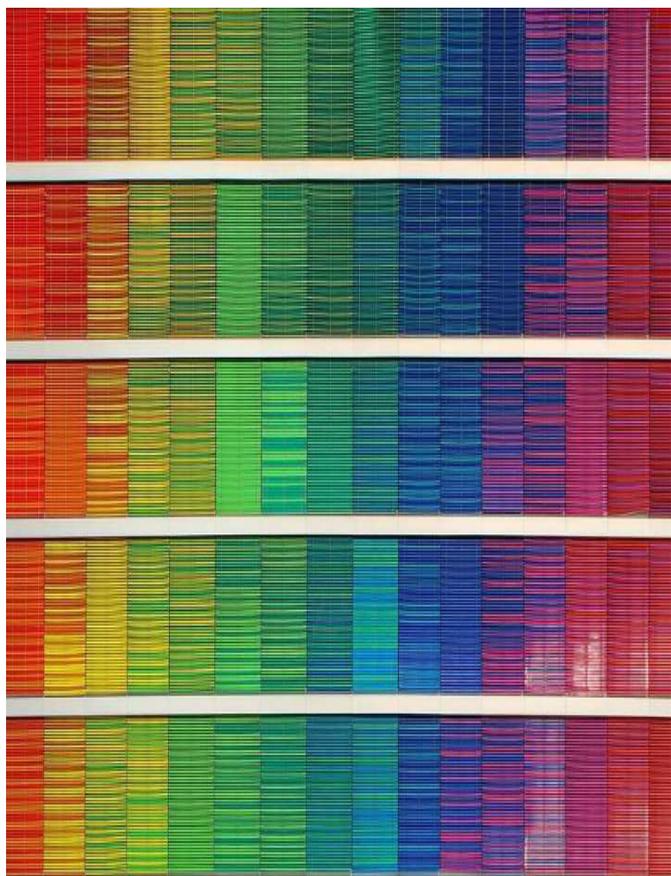

Figura 2 - Dimensiones/Categorias de la identidad sexual
Fuente Propia

Typologies of violence against LGBTQI+ groups

Violent behavior against LGTBQI+ groups can be grouped under the specific category of what can be defined as "normalizing violence". We refer to

normalizing violence like the kind that reproduces the existing hegemonic gender models and normative sexual configurations. This kind of violence is both normalized as it is grounded in cultural and social expectations relating to being, for example, "a real man" or "a real woman".

> This type of violence and normalization acts are used towards those subjects who are perceived as transgressing the sexual and gender normative borders.

This type of violence affecting the LGBTQI+ community has also a symbolic function as it targets both the "victims" and the whole group to whom they belong, or to whom aggressors think they belong: for this reason violence against LGTBQI+ groups is not exclusively "their business" since also heterosexuals who are "perceived" as not normative. Like that, **violence against people who are perceived as "not truly males/female" and "not authentically heterosexuals" is formed by a series of violent moments in which the gender and sexual norms are imposed on the victims within the family, with the peer groups, in the realm of public life through mass media, politics, law, institutions, and organizations**. All of the other categories (sex, gender, desire, role, expression) need not be taken seriously too because they simply represent, according to the heteronormative matrix which contributes to making heterosexuality seem "natural", deviance from what people and things naturally ought to be.

> Manifestation of LGTBQI-phobia can include discrimination, criminalization, marginalization, social exclusion, and violence both at interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels. What we need to focus on is that LGBTQI-phobia is rooted in cultural norms and expectations about gender and gender roles so it's mainly based on the expected identity of the perpetrators and of the victims.

ACTIVITY 1

Drawing on your previous knowledge about violence against LGBTIQ+ people and the insights presented in this course, please take a respectful look at the following video. The proposed video is a recording made by Jonah Mowry, titled "Whats goin on" in which the protagonist shares his story as a victim of bullying for years. Please have a look at it and reflect on the following questions.

Questions

■ How do you think that the perpetrators' identity and expectations are related to the ones of Jonah?

■ What impact can gender and sexual expectations from others can have in educational environments?

■ How are gender and sexual diversity conceived and treated in educational environments in your context?

Resource accessible at
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TRASgip2lk

The role of hegemonic/traditional masculinities in the perpetration of LGBTQI+ violence

Masculinity and its hierarchies seem to be key for understanding LGTBQI-phobic behavior/conduct and violence. It has been demonstrated that, generally, hegemonic males tend to hold sexist views (Herek, 2002; Burn, 2000; LaMar & Kite, 1998), where for instance, fathers, brothers, and sons who follow this hegemonic model react more violently to a homosexual family member than mothers, sisters, and daughters (Herek, 1988; Kite, 1984; Bertone et al., 2003). Within school environments, **research shows that some males are more likely to display and aggressive behaviors towards a peer who identifies and/or is perceived as homosexual**. Males also highlight the need to maintain and preserve traditional gender roles, so they adopt negative and oppressive behaviors against "feminine" gays (Parrott, Adams and Zeichner, 2002) and "masculine" lesbians (Laner & Laner, 1980). All of this points to certain sociocultural circumstances that affect males due to the hegemonic and traditional model of masculinity (Connell & Messerch, 2005), the reason why they perform more aggressively and oppressive towards those who challenge the sexual and gender norms.

Gender and LGBQI-phobic violence become the biggest challenge to traditional and hegemonic masculinities when gender and sexual diversity threaten their stability and social and political power (Flecha, Puigvert & Rios, 2013; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003).

The gender of the aggressor(s) (and of the victim) and the cultural constructions of masculinity seem to play a crucial role in the shaping of anti-LGTBQI violent conduct. One element that emerges with clarity, however, **is that the aggressor's gender and the situated cultural constructions of masculinity seem to play a fundamental role in generating anti-homosexual violence**. Indeed, the violence performed is used to cement the bond among members of a group and its values; it also entails a predominantly communicative function, in that it is directed against those subjects who do not align themselves with hegemonic masculinity, and are perceived culturally either as "homosexuals", or "not males". For the aggressors, the recourse to violence is a way to distance themselves from victims, while also re-establishing the norm, whenever they sense that a transgression has taken place with regards to the "natural" relationship between genders. This also extends to gender boundaries, as in the case of trans-phobic attacks. **Here, violence is a punishment to those individuals who are seen to betray traditional masculinity and gender normativity** (Rinaldi, 2018). However, research also shows the existence of non-traditional models of masculinities that escape from these toxic and hegemonic masculinities. These kinds of masculinities, so-called the **new alternative masculinities** (Flecha, Puigvert & Ríos, 2013), are framed on different traits: **self-esteem, upstander behavior, and a strong combination of attractiveness and kindness**.

ACTIVITY 2

After working on the materials on the role of masculinity in gender and LGBTQI-phobic violence, please work individually or in groups, if possible, to gather information on this issue in a specific context in your institution. **Please, take some time to explore within the gender strategies (at the academic and political level) launched by your institution which is the role that masculinity plays on them.**

To present the results of your search, please submit it in a written document of **400 words max in which you summarize the results you have gathered** on the importance of masculinities and their linkage with the perpetration, transformation, and overcoming of the gender of LGBTQI+ violence.

1.2. Historical Overview of International Policies and Recommendations for the Protection of LGBTQI+ rights

When we deal with legal frameworks for equality and LGTBQI+ rights in Higher Education Institutions, we must take into account two main legal frameworks: the first regards a series of binding international treaties while the second refers specifically to commitments within the Council of Europe legal framework. Within the international frames, Member States have ratified binding international treaties and signed political pledges protecting individuals from discrimination and countering violence; most of them are not specifically related to sexual orientation, gender identity/ expression, or sex characteristics while all of them are inspired by the principles of universality and non-discrimination. Among them, we must be the focus on the following ones (Figure 1).

Figure 2 - Timeline on LGBTQI+ United Nations Political Steps

Council of Europe Member States must take further actions to observe the Council of Europe standards. A relevant role is played by the principles stated in The **European Convention on Human Rights (1950)**, applied to all Council of Europe Members States and interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights, which reaffirms the right to education (Protocol 1, Article 2) and prohibits discrimination (Protocol 12 and Article 14) and, specifically, in **The European Social Charter (1961)**, which explicitly sets the rights to access to education, protection from violence and discrimination (Article 21).

Some other commitments are recommended by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Euro-

pe such as the Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity (2010) which invites Member States to take positive actions to protect human rights of LGBTIQ+ students (specifically in the school curriculum and relating to bullying) and two resolutions adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: Resolution 2048 on Discrimination against transgender people in Europe (2015) and the Resolution 2097 on Access to school and education for all children (2016), while the former called on Member States to provide safe environments for

Charter of Fundamental Rights

Article 21: Non-discrimination

1. Any **discrimination based on any ground such as** sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.

Figure 3 - Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union 2012/C 326/02

transgender children, the latter invites Member States considers LGBTI children to have safe access to education and calls on introducing measures to address homophobic and transphobic bullying. More details about the policy framework on LGBTIQ+ issues in the European Union will be widened in section 5 of this course.

One of the major Commission aims is to ensure that EU legislation and policy comply with the Charter of Fundamental Rights, specifically with **Articles 21** which specifically prohibits discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. According to the principle of Non-discrimination, the European Commission protect people rights through various directives:

■ **Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000:** establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

■ **Directive Proposal (COM(2008)462):** establishing a general framework against discrimination based on age, disability, sexual orientation, and religion or belief beyond the workplace.

Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5
VI. Education
31. Taking into due account the over-riding interests of the child, member States should take appropriate legislative and other measures, addressed to educational staff and pupils, to ensure that the right to education can be effectively enjoyed without discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity; this includes, in particular, safeguarding the right of children and youth to education in a safe environment, free from violence, bullying, social exclusion or other forms of discriminatory and degrading treatment related to sexual orientation or gender identity.

32. Taking into due account the over-riding interests of the child, appropriate measures should be taken to this effect at all levels to promote mutual tolerance and respect in schools, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. This should include providing objective information with respect to sexual orientation and gender identity, for instance in school curricula and educational materials, and providing pupils and students with the necessary information, protection, and support to enable them to live in accordance with their sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Commission play also a relevant role in supporting member States, as main key actors who have exclusive competence regarding LGTBQI+, supporting the Member States in key policy areas such as:

ACTIVITY 3

After reading the statements of EC and UN politics to protect and recognize LGBTQI+ rights, please take some time to review the published in 2015. To answer the following questions work individually or in groups if possible. Please take some time to review the content of this Resolution and apply it to your country's politics on transgender rights.

Questions

■ What are the most important issues treated in this Resolution that innovate in how institutions and public organisms treat and conceive transgender rights traditionally?

■ How do these measures and declarations made at the UN on transgender issues apply to your country's politics in this regard in the present?

■ How do you think that mandatory implementation commitments may affect these politics and their inclusion in national and regional politics?

Resource accessible at
https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HT-ML-EN.asp?fileid=21736

1. The High-level Group on Non-discrimination, Equality, and Diversity. This group supports the activities in the area of Equality, develops and identifies group practice exchange involving experts, civil society and/or organizations regarding transgender legislation/legal gender recognition, the development of efficient national action plans, and the use of European Social Fund aiming at social inclusion of LGBTQI+ in the labor market.

2. The High level Group on Racism, Xenophobia, and Other Form of Intolerance. This group brings together the Member States, civil society, and community representatives to improve intervention and enforcement of EU and national criminal law legislation on hate crime and hate speech.

3. The Commission supports also Member States to implement the **Paris declaration to exchange good practice on LGBTQI+ anti-discrimination** actions in education and homo/transphobic school bullying.

4. The Commission implements also the depathologization of transgender identities following the initiatives of the World Health Organization (WHO).

5. The Rights, Equality, and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020) provides funding to help member States preventing and combating discrimination and homo/transphobic hate speech and crime.

Following the enforcement and the monitoring of the implementation of EU Law, **the Commission also aims to align the Member States with the disposition on gender reassignment** (Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament, the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation, and the Council Directive

2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004), to **mutual recognition of protection measures regarding victims of bias-motivated crime and all matters concerning sexual orientation and gender identity in the area of European Asylum System** (European Asylum Support Office - EASO).

Regarding LGBTQI+ issues there are more awareness in the European context but sexual justice and inclusion is still under discussion since LGBTQI+ rights are a truly divisive topic in terms of consensus and implementation of institutional policies. **Awareness and diversity in higher education have** been stated by several political commitments such as **the Paris Declaration of EU Member States in March 2015 concerning citizenship and promotion of non-discrimination, the 2015 Yerevan Communiqué and the 2018 Paris Communiqué of the Bologna Process and, in 2017, the European Commission** considered the necessity to renew **the agenda for higher education aiming at the reinforcement of social dimension and equality**.

ACTIVITY 4

After working on the materials of the first section of the training course, we hope you can apply some of the notions on the main UN LGBTQI+ politics to the following activity. Please, take some time to read carefully the "UN General Assembly, Statement on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, 18 December 2008". Take some time to reflect on the following questions and answer them individually or in groups if possible. We will be expecting a brief document of 400 words max.

Questions

■ Can you find any similarities between this Statement on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity by the UN and recent political changes in this regard in the European Union? Please, elaborate on your argument.

■ What impact do you think that this Statement has socially and politically around the world?

■ How does this UN Statement establish minimum standards of respect and recognition of sexual orientation and gender identity?

Resource accessible at
https://www.refworld.org/docid/49997ae312.html

Related links:

- http://www.refworld.org/docid/51ef9e134.html
- http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/50a0cd982.pdf
- http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf
- http://www.coe.int/en/web/turin-european-social-charter/home
- http://www.coe.int/en/web/sogi/rec-2010-5
- http://www.coe.int/en/web/sogi/rec-2010-5
- http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-EN.asp?fileid=21736&lang=en
- http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-EN.asp?fileid=22510&lang=en
- https://eige.europa.eu/keywords/lgbt
- https://www.coe.int/it/web/commissioner/thematic-work/lgbti
- https://www.oecd.org/els/soc/lgbti.htm
- https://www.unfe.org/about-2/
- https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52008PC0426
- https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006L0054
- https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32004L0113
- https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32012L0029
- https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/news/2015/documents/citizenship-education-declaration_en.pdf
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SECTION 2.
Situation of the LGBTQI+ population in universities
Prevention of discrimination and violence

2.1. Regulation of LGBTQI+ cases of violence in Higher Education Institutions: Problems of trust, confidence and response when reporting

When approaching the problems of violence and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression from a transformative perspective it's necessary to evaluate how this is been tracked, prevented and intervened. In the fight against this socio-cultural problem, the feminist and LGBTQI+ activism has been critical on how educational and social institutions have been implicated on eradicating it around the world. The case of higher education is at the moment in continuous change regarding this issue as very recent gender and LGBTQI+ policies are slowly been implemented in national and regional levels. As studied by **ILGA-Europe organization in its 'LGBTQI+ Inclusive Educational Report' (2018), there are still pending subjects in the fight within educational institutions to eliminate the violence against the LGBTQI+ community**. Generating incidence in bullying and harassment through intervention protocols is just the pic of this deep problem of lack of awareness, ignoran-

ce and tolerance. To tackle this violence crosswise and with social impact, it is necessary to generate changes in how gender, sexuality, freedom and identities are treated in educational institutions in its curriculum taking into account all forms of vulnerabilities and conditions that may lead to any form of discrimination. In conclusion, for a deep and fruitful transformation of HEI's in terms of LGBTQI+ issues we need **all university community, policymakers, NGO's, governments and civil society to understand the urgency of this structural problem and articulate transversal strategies to its eradication**.

In the European context there is a similarity in the way LGBTQI-phobia is being tackled at HEI's: **creating university units that centralize all gender and LGBTQI+ policies and measures**. Such centres are been progressively being integrated in the institutions, deriving in more specialized centres for the creation and consolidation of institutional achievement in the fields of rights, recognition, protection and visibility of vulnerable communities. Gender Equality Units, as they are generally titled in our context, have been framed under National Laws on the regulation of gender issues and gender discrimination from the beginning of the 2000. In the case of Spain, the *organic law 1/2004, from December 28th, on integral protection measures against gender violence* set a precedent in the articulation of national explicit actions against violence on the grounds of sex and gender. Besides, it stipulated the duty of creating university Equality Units and including and fomenting in every academic field training, teaching and research activity on gender equality and anti-discrimination transversally. Such legislative advance in 2004 translated into a high social impact that grew and multiplied thanks to its ramification in measures, policies and protocols against this violence at regional and local levels. The case of Catalonia presents a significant and updated effort to combat the violence and discrimination against the LGBTQI+ community. **One of the most remarkable evolutions of gender**

equality and LGBTQI+ politics is the regional *law 11/2014, for the guarantee of lesbian, gay, transgender and intersexual rights and for the eradication of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia* **promoted in Catalonia**. Several shifts were achieved with this policy, including educational protocols on the prevention and intervention of cases of LGBTQI-phobic violence and discrimination. Overall, the Spanish example of political and legislative transformations is one of all taking place in the European context towards the recognition, protection and equality of the LGBTQI+ community in HEI's.

Even though the institutional changes and protocols are tangible, measures and other strategies have been promoted, the situation of the LGBTQI+ needs to be improved in higher educational institution in the European context. The problem of hate, violence and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are still manifested within classrooms at universities as scientific evidence and reports point out. LGBTQI+ students still feel uncomfortable in their academic environments, as presented in the report by the Institute of Physics, Royal Astronomical Society and Royal Society of Chemistry (2019) (Figure 1).
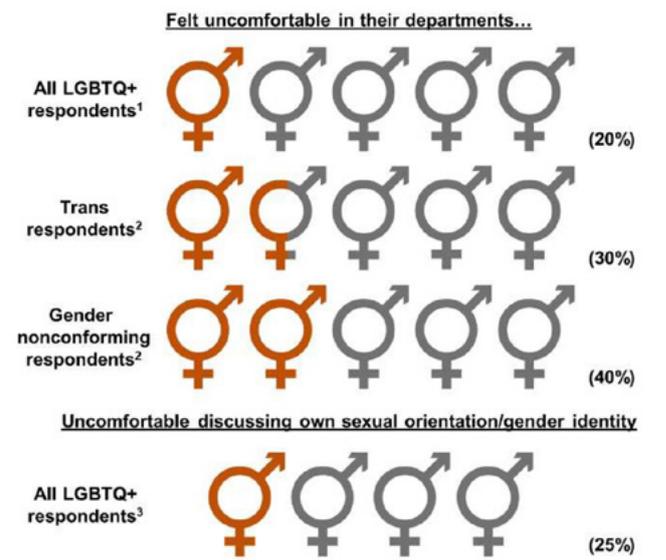

Figure 4 - Key findings from the Royal Society of Chemistry, the American Physical Society and the Wellcome Trust on workplace culture and attitudes towards members of the LGBTQ+ community. (Image credit: The Biochemist)

Evidence as such demonstrate the critical current situation of the LGBTQI+ students at HEI's all over Europe in terms of safety, comfort and freedom to express themselves freely. As well, other research evidences point at the high risk to which the LGBTQI+ community is exposed to suffer discrimination or sexual harassment in their university trajectory (Costa, Peroni, de Camargo, Pasley & Nardi, 2005; McGinley, Wolff, Rospenda, Liu & Richman, 2016; Ranking, 2005). This is because the university environment presents hostility towards gender and sexual diverse identities, orientations and expressions, generating fear on LGBTQI+ students to suffer from negative attitudes from others (Ellis, 2009; Evans & Broido, 2002; Lapinski & Sexton; 2014; Rankin, Hesp & Weber, 2013; Rothmann, 2016). Such hostility and suffering have been proved to have deep consequences in the health (Woodford et al., 2013 & 2014; Martin-Storey & August, 2016; Alessi et al., 2017; Ellis, 2009), academic success (Woodford & Kulick, 2015; Lapinski & Sexton, 2014; Kheswa, 2016) and social relations (Rothmann, 2016; Hong et. al., 2016; Woodford & Kulick, 2015; Alessi et al., 2017), negatively determining their present and future.

ACTIVITY 1

Instructions

Please read and reflect on the materials provided in this section and take special attention to the presented example of legislation in the Spanish context since the 2000's on LGBTQI+ issues and gender equality.

Please organize yourselves individually or in groups, if possible, to develop a task of review of grey literature (official documents, legislation) on issues of LGBTQI+ protection, recognitions and anti-discrimination in the last 10 years. **Please, pick a concrete country, region or higher education institution and write a short report (500 words max.)**

presenting the results and the specific impact that these politics have had at universities. The submitted short reports will be shared with the rest of the participants in online or face to face.

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a) The case of Equality Units & LGBTQI+ issues in Higher Education Institutions.

The results mentioned above can lead to considering problems of trust, confidence and support on educational institution on receiving, processing and managing cases of violence as Equality Units are not reporting such quantities of cases. **Recent actions have developed detailed protocols to intervene in cases of harassment or violence at universities**, in which the protection of victims and confidentiality are crucial axes for any type of action. In this subsection we would like to deep-in a very recent protocol established in Spain to fight against LGBTQI-phobia and other forms of discrimination and violence.

Protocol against harassment at URV

The case of the Rovira i Virgili University (URV, hereinafter) is very recent in the creation of an action protocol in case any form of harassment is reported to the Equality Unit (URV.L18.03.00). In the case of the URV, there is a clear flow of work when a case is detected by the Unit, so that all the steps are standardized and universal for all the university community, putting all possible resources in the fight against violence. To ensure the protection and safety in reporting, the Equality Unit has presented the following principles and performance guarantee: the base of this protocol is framed on the following objectives:

■ **Ensuring the respect and protection of the person** reporting the case, making sure their dignity and intimacy are not damaged in any stage of the process.

■ Implementing a **full confidential intervention for the protection of personal information in all stages of the process**. Only the workers involved in the process will be able to access the personal information of victims and other people involved.

■ Efforts for **diligence and speed of the process**, in order to resolve all cases professionally and without delays.

■ Establishing **minimums of impartiality in the professional practice** to ensure the defence of all people involve in the case.

To understand the whole process when receiving an alleged case of violence to the Unit, see the following figure (Figure 2) in which we have summarized the four steps procedure to diagnose, resolve and follow-up a case of violence, harassment or discrimination at university.

ACTIVITY 2

Instructions
After working on the provided materials, please reflect for a few minutes on the following questions and answer them individually or in groups if possible:
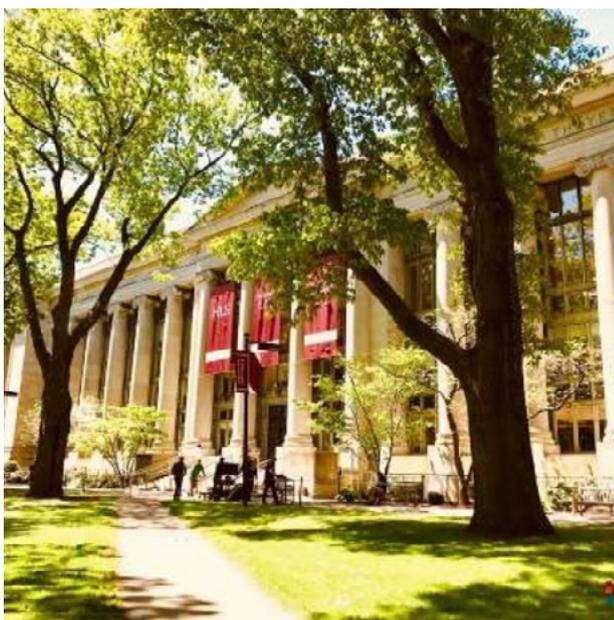

Regarding the complex situation of victims suffering LGBTQI-phobia at universities in Europe and the key of reporting and searching for support, please answer to the following questions (max 300 words):

■ How could we improve the confidence and trust of LGBTQI+ victims of violence to report and search for help in institutional system?

■ What advantages may have reporting of LGBTQI-phobic cases of violence in the University system? Who would benefit from the reporting of this violence within the institution and university community?

■ Which strategies could be implemented to promote the dissemination of numbers of cases of violence on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender within university community?

■ Which step is missed in the process explained in the Figure 2? Justify your answer.

Workplans as such are pioneers in its form, depth and follow-up and need to be disseminated and shared with all the university community as part of actions of violence prevention. Anyway, intervention protocols should not be launched on its own since it is necessary to articulate measures and long-term strategies for both prevention and intervention, taking into account the whole of the university community.

Other key point is the issue of trust concerning the reporting to police or another formal social control actors of any harassment and/or violence incidents. Many LGBTQI+ still fear of being found out by peers/families/colleagues that they will not report any offence because of the risk and threat of "outing". University bodies have the duty of managing case respecting the privacy of victims to ensure trust and faith in their own services.

Fase I
- Reportar el caso
- Cuando se haya presenciado o denunciado un incidente violento, discriminatorio o de acoso, la Comisión deberá informar al Rector de la Universidad, realizar un expediente informativo y asignar un instructor para el caso.

Fase II
- Archivo informativo
- a) Protocolo de información (7 días de duración): el instructor asignado debe al menos entrevistar a la víctima y al presunto acosador por separado e informarles sobre el protocolo universitario. El instructor puede considerar medidas de protección para la víctima.
- b) Peritaje externo: Luego del primer contacto por parte de la Universidad, un perito externo en violencia de género debe entrevistarlos a ambos nuevamente y a través de un informe deben declarar si existe o no un caso de violencia, acoso o discriminación. además, proponen nuevas medidas.

Fase II
- Procedimientos disciplinarios
- Después de recibir el informe del experto externo, el rector decide sobre nuevas medidas disciplinarias o preventivas si las considera.

Fase IV
- Seguimiento
- El seguimiento del caso se realiza en relación a las medidas tomadas en el proceso. El instructor debe estudiar si las medidas se han implementado, son suficientes y puede proponer acciones adicionales si es necesario. En el caso de medidas disciplinarias, el instructor debe hacer un seguimiento del caso dos meses después de cerrado el caso.

Figure 5 - Versión reducida de las fases del protocolo contra el acoso universitario de la Universidad Rovira i Virgili (URV.L18.03.00)
Fuente propia

ACTIVITY 3

Case study. **Building trust with LGBTIQ+ victim of violence/harassment in Higher Education Institutions**.

Carlo is a transsexual student but has never come out. A course mate discovered he is a transgender and threatens disclosing his sexual status assigned at birth to the other students. Carlo wants to tell the university administration about the threat but he fears that they may not be understanding of his situation.

Discuss the following points:
- ◾ Why LGBT people are closeted more likely to be the victims of threat?

- ◾ What would be the implication for Carlo if he is outed?

- ◾ What should/could higher institutions do to encourage LGBTIQ+ people to come forward to them if being threated or harassed?

2.2. Impact of working on LGTBQI+ perspective with peers, educators and staff workers

When approaching the problem of violence on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in HEI's, it's important to look at the whole picture and how other subjects involved in the situation apart from the victim and the perpetrator. All university members may have a role and definately have agency depending on their responsability, closeness and role at university in cases of violence as they all share and co-exist in the university environment.

For that reason, working on social support is essential for a successful prevention of violence as scienfic evidence demostrate.

Some of the necessary lines to work on prevention of violence against the LGBTQI+ students at HEI's is to create and develop strategies that allow LGBTQI+ students to meet other students in the same situation, letting them generate a strong supportive network (Coleman, 2016; Duhigg et al.,

2010; Rankin et al., 2013). The existance of this **networks can impact the reality by promoting and increasing solidary actions, sharing experiences and opening university spaces to gender and sexual diversity realities**. Besides, experiences of beloning to a network of support and friendships as such can reforce the feelings of belonging and acceptance at University (Schmidt et al., 2011), which affect very positively to the **mental health and quality life of LGBTQI+ students** (Kheswa, 2016; Woodford et al., 2014).

In order to deep-in the case of violence and discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression, find in the following activity examples to navigate and think through the community responsability by respoding and the questions.

> Experiences of university belonging, acceptance and support of LGBTQI+ students becomes such a transformative action that promotes the creation of student associations and other participative initiatives, letting the LGBTQI+ movement work on making visible their own role and referents to the community, improving the social integration of new students and bettering academic performance (Alessi et al., 2017; Duhigg et al., 2010; Woodford & Kulick, 2015), improving the Institution's quality and openness.

ACTIVITY 4

Instructions
For the following activity, decide on whether you divide yourselves in groups or do the activity individually to exploit the material the best. Firstly you can watch the video in the big group and then exchange responses and thoughts on the proposed discussion questions. For a more complex exploitation of the activity, work for creating a specific strategy to struggle against forms of LGBTQ-phobia at HEI's.

Watch the following video created by Chronicle of Higher Education in which transgender and non-binary University students were interviewed exploring what makes them suffer and thrive at HEI's:

'Ask Me': What LGBTQ Students Want Their Professors to Know
139,406 views · Sep 3, 2015

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-nbnF8QAnsY

After viewing this video, try and create categories summarizing the kinds of experiences that these participants have experienced in relation to their University staff.

Questions
■ Have you ever experienced or seen any of the realities collected in the video?

■ How can do we address gender identity and expression issues in HEI's from an inclusive perspective? Please elaborate at least 3 examples with a transversal and inclusive perspective.

■ Have you ever heard before anything regarding sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression's diversity in your educational or professional training?

■ Why do you think this type of training should be part of general and transversally included in education?

■ Who do you think has the responsibility to ensure an open and inclusive space in classroom and other university spaces for everyone?

■ How do you think this community responsibility can be promoted and developed?

■ How can these experiences be prevented? How could supportive network initiatives could impact the experiences that participants show in the video?

In order to promote strong networks and create new ones that could prevent from LGBTQI-phobia and other types of violence and discrimination, it's important to consider the importance of **social interactions between students and its significance for the LGBTQI+ community**. Experiences of **friendships between LGBTQI+ and other students** seem to be a protective factor for the prevention of violence on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

Relationships between LGBTQI+ students and non-LGBTQI+ students can improve climate at university, having an impact in minimizing many forms of LGBTQI-phobia (Deniz, 2017).

Experiences to promote gender and sexual diversity awareness by introducing with a participative methodology gender and sexuality topics has been a strong strategy to tackle this form of violence and discrimination as it has been implemented in American HEI's (Dessel et al., 2017; Duhigg et al., 2010). Both of these actions towards a more supportive and open university campus intend to have an impact in reducing violence and discrimination against the LGBTQI+ community.

Specifically, networks and social interactions like that can, not only reduce the violence, but increase the **number of interventions and positionings against the violence**.

The Gay-Straight Alliances

Several college and university campuses started gay-straight alliances, so to say alliance of gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and straight students aiming to promote tolerance, acceptance and diversity in academic contexts. The Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA) aim to educate academic community about the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning) community. The GSAs organize events to spread awareness about the issues facing the LGBTQ community (such as the National Coming Out Day and the Day of Silence; or the LGBTQI+ History Month Day), collaborating also with ministerial offices to promote multicultural activities to campuses and eventually with the existing federations of professors. These activities are considered potentially positive for the life of LGBTQI+ students/staff playing a protective role of GSAs which produce immediate and long terms benefits for LGBTQI+ students offering a space for emotional connection and sense of membership, a trusting space for the fulfilment of individual and group needs ad serve as gateways for supportive adults (Porta et al., 2017); Chong et al., 2019).

After the reading of the ILGA guide to support youth to start a GSA at school (https://www.ilga-europe.org/what-we-do/our-advocacy-work/education/events/how-support-youth-start-gsas-schools) , try to imagine a grassroot approach adapting it to your own context.

This is what is called the bystander intervention: when other subjects -not victims or perpetrators of the violence- become active agents of transformation by intervening in cases of violence.

The bystander intervention perspective has been proved to be fundamental to create safer and more inclusive spaces at universities, combining both the refusal of violence and the offer of support to victims by agents of change (Dessel et al., 2017; Russel, 2011; Woodford & Kulick, 2015). This transformation **of preliminary *neutral* subjects to the violence towards an active role of change and intervention is very powerful as it makes possible not just one axe of change but as many as the number of subjects present in the conflict**. As well, what is the most innovative is the possible influence that bystander can have in the rest of the university community and its responsibility to take part in violence. Generating **active roles and attitudes towards LGBTQI+ community in HEI's can work as a referent to encourage and empower other subjects to position themselves** in the conflict, instead of allowing neutral and passive roles when violence takes place (Rankin et al., 2013).

This question of removing guilt can influence one of the most invisible consequences of LGBTQI-phobic violence: the self-internalized stigma and guilt of being responsible for the violence. To focus on the student's well-being is very challenging as a goal institutionally but can be achieved by studying how research has pictured the affectations on the well-being of LGBTQI-phobic violence and basing interventions in evidences (Alessi & Chatterji, 2016 & 2017; Guz et al., 2020; Watson et al., 2017).

Experiences of implementing this perspective in HEI's are common and have proved that these mechanisms as successful strategies to prevent violence as well as developing Education Institutions into more inclusive and blameless towards victims of violence (Potter et al., 2012).

For a more in-depth study of the bystander intervention programs, we present summarized in Table 1 some of the most recognized and impactful examples of bringing into reality this way of approaching violence.

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP)

This program was founded in 1993 and it is one of the most recognized programs to prevent and educate in gender and sexual issues from an educational philosophy perspective. This program focusses on introducing key concepts and other strategies for implement the bystander perspective in schools, workplaces and extended peer cultures, to have the highest impact in society. The program gathers both dissemination talks and actions, programs and specific training to fight for gender equality and prevent gender-based violence.

Link: https://www.mvpstrat.com/

InterACT Sexual Assault Prevention Program

This sexual assault prevention program is an interactive, skill-building performace based on critical pedagogy which was promoted by California State University (Ahrens et al., 2011). It is focussed in raising awareness and approaching gender violence against the LGBTQI+ community. This action has reported high levels of impact in students in engaging with behaviours to intervene in violence situations at their HEI.

Link: https://cla.csulb.edu/departments/communicationstudies/interact/

Bringing in the Bystander

This initiative is an evidence-based action for disseminating the bystander intervention perspective with a community responsability point of view. This program was founded by the University of New Hampshire and offers training for the prevention and intervention of community members safely when being witnesses of sexual and relationship violence or it risks to occur. Although its goal is to

tackle sexual and relationship violence, this program also considers gender and sexual diversity.
Link: https://www.unh.edu/research/prevention-innovations-research-center/evidence-based-initiatives/bringing-bystander

Step UP! Program
This program was founded by the University of Arizona in parnership with NCAA and presents a concrete program of training for students to develop preventive behaviours in cases of violence. Through a complex list materials for guiding, effectively and safely helping victims in cases of violence and resources library, this inititative gathers a very complete plan to impact university students. It aims to fight xenophobia, racism, sexism and homophobia, and it includes the LGBTQI+ community in their intervention focus.
Link: https://stepupprogram.org/

Know Your Power
This is a open, image-based social campaign of marketing that portrays realistic and provocative images to disseminate ideas on community responsability and bystander intervention. It was organized by the University of New Hampshire and it aims to develop community strategies to fight sexual and interpersonal violence and harrashment, including sexual orientation diversity.
Link: https://www.unh.edu/research/prevention-innovations-research-center/evidence-based-initiatives/know-your-powerr-bystander-social-marketing-campaign

Table 1
Fuente Propia

Certainly, the bystander intervention perspective is a very impactful and touchable strategy to fight violence, having greats possibilities of transformation towards the accompaniment of victims. Anyway, several difficulties emerge in implementing

this strategy as a single strategy to prevent cases of violence in HEI's. For that reason, we introduce you the following activity to reflect on it and identify the most visible and important challenges of working with university staff and students to fight this form of violence:

ACTIVITY 5

Instructions
Please read individually the following fragments of David S. Byers's paper on the bystander perspective and its implementation in cases of homophobia. Later on, decide on whether you prefer to discuss with a colleague or reflect individually about the further questions.

We want you to read carefully the following paragraphs of the article '"Do They See Nothing Wrong with This?": Bullying, Bystander Complicity, and the Role of Homophobic Bias in the Tyler Clementi Case' by David S. Byers (2018):

Strong resistance to acknowledging the integral roles of bystanders in bullying may perpetuate and even exacerbate bullying dynamics. Clinicians and educators need to proactively engage in ongoing defence analysis with bystanders. (251)

Ultimately, bystander complicity in this case seems to have been socially acceptable because of the culture of subtler homophobia common to the university setting. Philosopher Martha Nussbaum (2001) has argued that the limits of human empathy across social identity difference often refer to unconscious defences against anxiety about one's own vulnerability. Beneath all prejudices toward others, Nussbaum argued, is "the intolerance of humanity in oneself" (p. 350). Homophobic anxiety is an expression of such vulnerability in this context, and as such, there is a powerful investment in keeping it hidden from knowledge with defen-

sive processes. The presence of a gay man, she argued, reminds a homophobic man that he can be penetrated, at least in a figurative sense. This challenges his sense of control and order, and elicits a feeling of disgust, which can then overpower any empathy understanding of shared humanity. Wanting urgently to "fit in" despite a powerful sense of vulnerability and smallness could well be anticipated for college first-year students new to campus. (255)

Wanting to center the blame on the identified "bully," there may be particular reluctance to acknowledge and carefully examine the bystander role with reference to real cases of bullying. Yet, as educators and social workers, it is crucial to account for these processes of maladaptive defence and resistance to important learning. Denial and scapegoating are particularly effectual, yet antisocial, styles of defence within groups for reducing anxiety. When unknown and unacknowledged, these defences impede otherwise thoughtful intervention attempts and leave the group vulnerable to repeating bullying processes now and in the future. (257)

After carefully reading these paragraphs, please answer the following questions on the biggest challenges in the implementation of Bystander Intervention in application on cases of LGBTQI-phobia:

■ What issues have you identified in these paragraphs that seems to be the biggest difficulties when trying to implement this perspective in HEI's?

■ Why do you think that complicity, empathy and self-criticism of all individuals in the classroom/educational space are central skills for the successfully implementing bystander Intervention?

■ How can the work on developing capacities to prevent and intervene in cases of LGB-

TQI-phobia intersect with this perspective of working with peers and other University staff?

■ What are the most important issues to have in mind when seeing or suffering a form of LGBTQI-phobic violence at HEI's taking into account these premises?

■ How could you promote an inclusive and open atmosphere in your classroom as a student or professor? Please elaborate at least 3 detailed actions you could implement.

■ Have you consider changing your behaviour or teaching practice to ensure freedom of expression for all at your home University? How would you do it in your position?

Related links:

■ https://www.ugr.es/universidad/noticias/protocolo-cambio-nombre-persona-transexual-transgenero-intersexual

■ https://www.uv.es/ruigeu/en/network-gender-equality-units-university-excellence-ruigeu.html

■ https://www.rsc.org/globalassets/04-campaigning-outreach/campaigning/lgbt-report/lgbt-report_web.pdf

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SECTION 3.

European landscape to achieve LGBTQI+ equality

Against discrimination and violence

3.1. High Education Institution's measures to prevent and respond to any form of violence against the LGTBQI+ community: Practices of the project's partner universities

The concept of **gender equality and equity** has been one of the components used by the European Union (EU) to frame its policies in an effort to **improve social practices and shift mentalities to more equal and fair societies**. Additionally, the notions of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression constitute some of the main elements taken into consideration when HEI promote equal opportunities. What is important besides guarantying equal opportunities in HEI, is dealing with incidents of discrimination and violence occurring on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. As reported by the Council of Europe (2011), the biggest challenge HEI are faced with at the moment, is the development and implementation of practices to intervene and/

or prevent incidents of violence and discrimination in university settings. Hei4Diversity aims to make a contribution on mapping **successful practices implemented by various universities around the globe** and design an interactive digital training strong to disseminate this material to agents of the community.

Successful practices are inextricably linked with the context where the practice is implemented. We intentionally avoid the term "best practices", since such terminology despite its potential positive outcomes, is usually bound to a particular context (Flecha, 2015). As the INCLUD-ED project has shown, that successful practices, if tested properly - can be transferable to different contexts.

All four universities participating in this project are concerned with issues regarding violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orien-

tation, gender identity and gender expression. Each universityfollows various practices on how to combat violence and discrimination. All four universities either established or are currently establishing official bodies responsible for policies and/or training relevant with equality and issues of violence and discrimination. Participation in similar projects as HEI4Diversity, active academic engagement with relevant topics, establishment of graduate and post-graduate programs focusing and specializing in gender issues and sexuality and workshops and seminars aiming at enhancing visibility LGBTQI+ issues and voices are some of the ways the four university partners follow as a way to combat violence and discrimination in their environment.

In the following table (Table 1), we present indicative actions or initiatives that each university partner (HEI4Diveristy) followed, in order to contribute in combating discrimination and violence in the university context:

University of Cyprus (UCY)

In 2012, UCY added in its programs the Gender studies degree (can be found here). It aims at the critical study and research in gender issues and at the promotion of gender studies. The University of Cyprus is running this **postgraduate degree in Gender Studies, available on a master's (MA) and doctoral (PhD) level**. Currently, the program is building momentum. A substantial participation has been achieved while its participants are concerned and actively involved in activist movements, academic publications and performances with gender as the topic. Furthermore, in 2021, with the establishment of Diversity, Equality and Inclusivity Office (can be found here) the Equality policy against discrimination is under approval, a policy which points out development of training and policy with the aim to safeguard equal opportunities, respect and understanding of diversity (gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, dogma, nationality, age, language, physical ability or socioeconomic background).

Universidad Rovira I Virgili (URV)

URV organizes and participates in several projects related with LGBTQI+ Issues. Apart from the current project, URV participated in another project under the name Uni4Freedom. The aim of the project was the development of mixed methods to map the prevalence and perception of LGBTQI-phobia in Catalan universities. Additionally, the existence of a protocol for the prevention and action in the field of sexism and LGTBI violence that affects URV students (can be found here), which emphasizes on processes in cases of violence, scientific compromise and support of victims due to their LGBTQI+ status.

Universita Degli Study di Palermo (UNIPA)

UNIPA, created **the "ALIAS" student card which is given to students who are involved in gender transitioning while studying at the university**. The card recognizes the preferred gender and name of the student and represent a support mechanism during the transitioning phase of trans students. Furthermore, the Committee for the Guarantee of Equal Opportunities, Employee Wellbeing and Non-Discrimination (can be found here) at Work at UNIPA, is responsible for developing and sustaining equality and well-being at the University environment. **The Committee organizes seminars for both administration and academic staff** related with LGBTQI+ and gender issues (more info here). The Department of Cultures and Society are also organizing and offering a series of innovative course on LGBTQI+ issues, gender and masculinities, planned to be initiated during 2021.

Akademia Pedagogiki Specjalnej im. Marii Grzegorzewskiej (MGU)

In 2019, MGU along with its LGBTQI+ community (mainly students) organized a **conference on different aspects of LGBTQI+ realities, such as cultural, social and psychological**. This conference intended to raise awareness within university community on LGBT issues through workshops A second follow up conference was organized in May 2020, as a way to raise awareness and give visibility to sexual and gender diversity in HEI. Faculty members, staff and students of MGU are considering necessity to introduce **institutional changes** to improve situation of LGBTQI+ persons at the university, **to build a culture of a diversity-oriented university, which aims at non-discrimination, tolerance, equality, on the basis of a specific system of values, sustainable development in the context of social responsibility of the university**. There is a need to develop in MGU a complex approach to the issue and to coordinate action. A postulate to establish: (1) a short obligatory anti-discrimination training (emphasizing inclusive language) for employees at the beginning of each academic year; (2) web page tab on the MGU webpage to contain all useful information in this regard for employees and students; (3) plenipotentiary for equal treatment all minorities including sexual ones; (4) transparent system of complaints against discrimination; (5) a special body and spokespersons for academic rights and values recruited from academic staff, as well as among students.

Postulates with regard to activity of the MGU on behalf of LGBTQI+ students:

More use of the educational and therapeutic potential of the Psychology Clinic for students, existing at the MGU, as a tool to support LGBTQI+ persons when they encounter discrimination or aggression. Informing that the university is friendly towards LGBTQI+ communities. Value of the e-book available on the web page of the university would emphasize equality and diversity values implemented by the MGU. Changing of the MS Teams settings to enable these persons to use the names they have chosen; a postulate for the MGU to issue „alternative" student ID cards for transsexual students, containing their new name, even if they have not changed their documents yet.

Building on experience of the best Polish universities:

■ The Jagiellonian University: https://safe-student.uj.edu.pl/en_GB/support-for-transgender

■ The Warsaw University: http://en.rownowazni.uw.edu.pl/lgbt-people-in-the-university/

https://notesfrompoland.com/2020/10/04/polands-oldest-university-becomes-first-to-allow-transgender-students-to-use-preferred-name/

Universities in other countries:

■ Imperial College de Londres: https://blogs.imperial.ac.uk/imperial-medicine/2020/06/10/navigating-lgbtq-discrimination-in-academia-where-do-we-go-from-here/

■ University College of London: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/equality-areas/lgbtq-equality

■ Cardiff University: https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/study/student-life/student-support/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender

https://www.cardiffstudents.com/advice/complaints/complainaboutastudent/

Table 2 - Hei4Diversity's Universities' actions against LGBTQI-phobia

Gender Mainstreaming is the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by actors normally involved in policy-making (Council of Europe, 1998)

Amongst practices to enhance visibility and awareness of LGBTQI+ issues, legal recognition and policy making constitutes another aspect of the topic in place. **Formal procedures, designed and implemented through an appropriate body (office), can facilitate the process of combating violence and discrimination** while simultaneously can provide a safe space for people experiencing such struggles.

ACTIVITY 1

Instructions

On the following table, you can find imaginary extracts inspired from the policy documents of the universities participating in HEI4Diversity (extracts have been modified for the purpose of the activity). Read each extract and reflect, write or discuss in couples if possible. The provisional question noted below each policy, can be used as inspiration.

■ Integration of gender dimension on all policies and process of the University (gender mainstreaming)

Question: What is your opinion about gender mainstreaming? Should or should not gender be integrated in all policies and process of a universities? Are there any negative effects of gender mainstreaming?

■ In the case of force or threat towards other to abide with any belief system due their sexual orientation or gender identity, may result in disciplinary action.

Question: What is your opinion on disciplinary actions? Can you think of other ways, apart from disciplinary actions that such incidents should be treated more effectively?

■ All academic and administrative staff must undergo a training course related with gender

identity, expression of sexual orientation.

Question: What is your opinion on the obligatory nature of such a course?

ACTIVITY 2

Instructions

Please, read online materials created for the "Meet the LGBT+ Community" organized in 2021 in Imperial College London. These contain diverse voices of LGBTQI+ students reflecting on their situation at the university: how they feel, what has already been done for minority students and what is still missing.

https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/campaigns/lgbt-history-month-2020/meet-lgbt-community

■ What do you think about the students' statements? Which students do you agree with? Which students do you disagree with? Why?

■ Do you see any connection between the Imperial College LGBTQI+ students' voices and the situation at your own university? Are there any similarities? Why?

■ Are LGBTQI+ students' problems at HEIs universal, regardless of the field of science, or some of them may be more specific for, e.g., STEM or humanities?

3.2. Other international practices to detect and respond to any form of violence against LGTBQI+ groups

In this section, we present some practices concerning LGBTQI+ issues in the international sphere. **In Sweden, an assertion of a new pronoun has been inserted in the Swedish dictionary**. Before this addition, 'han' was used to refer to male (he), while 'hon' was used to refer to female. The pronoun 'hen' has been introduced in the language, which can be used without revealing the gender of the person referred. Zimman (2017) raises the issue of how trans people in the United States use language to identify themselves, as well as with what gender they would like to be referred. He also focuses and demonstrates several challenges involved in such language reform. Since the only option language gives is the option of being a male or a female, a he or a she, a man or a woman, a waiter or a waitress, a sister or a brother, there is no space left for a trans to identify as a non-binary person. Being forced to identify themselves as one of the two – since the option of being both or neither of the two does not exist within the language – the right of choice is being withdrawn as well, taking away their agency as subjects, Zimman (2017) suggests not to predetermine or assume one's gender. Instead, **in any university setting, people could openly talk about what language and what pronouns somebody (or anybody) would prefer other to use when referring to them**. When the situation does not allow somebody to ask directly the relevant person, a more gender-neutral language would be preferable (i.e. server rather than waiter/waitress). It is indeed interesting to observe, that in many discussions, despite the irrelevance of one's gender we either disclose the gender of a person due to the language, while in cases when language does not reveal the gender (while it is still irrelevant) people tend to ask for explicit disclosure of the gender.

The discussion can be of course broadened up, when we think about disclosure or assumption of one's sexual orientation based on cultural norms that we consider applicable. **Many incidents of violence are based on the assumption of one's sexual orientation** when the right for disclosure of such information should only be part of one's choice.

Besides policies and processes, LGBTQI+ individuals might experience violence and discrimination through the invisibility of their experiences. Research has shown that **"when queer students are not visible in the curriculum or in the social networks of school, when the school is silent about their experience, this creates feelings of disenfranchisement and rejection"** (Page, 2016, p. 5). Enriching the academic curriculum with a representation of sexual and gender diversity can be seen as a twofold process. On one hand, assertion of **material that would be inclusiv**e of the experiences of gender non-conforming individuals. On the other hand, the **existing material can be challenged, revisited, reapproached in an effort for new meaning to be assigned anew**. A great example of the revision of material, has been offered by the American academic Jack Halberstam at Columbia University. Their work the queer art of failure (2011), represents an example of revisiting pop culture animation movies and (re) reading them through a queer lens.

ACTIVITY 3

Instrucciones

First of all, you can watch the video in the large group and then exchange responses and reflections on the questions proposed below for discussion. Watch the following video created by Route Eleven and SOY H.E.A.T. in which the notion of pronouns for self-identification is explained to children.

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?-v=64-WXswR_fA

After viewing this video, reflect, discuss or write in a text on the effectiveness of proper use of pronouns around the University environment.

Questions:

■ Do you believe that use of pronouns is something that a university should take into consideration?

■ Can you think of what could be done at a policy level, to ensure addressing the issue at stake?

■ At what level to you believe, the use of proper pronouns, addresses the bigger issue of violence and discrimination.

■ What challenges can arise, if a policy for addressing the issue at stake was to be established?

ACTIVITY 4

Instructions

Firstly, you can watch the video in the big group and then exchange responses and thoughts on the proposed questions below for discussion.

How I embrace contradiction as a queer Muslim drag queen | Amrou Al-Kadhi | TEDxLondon

Watch the following video created by TEDxLondon Taks in which Amrou Al-Kadhi, discusses their negotiation between queer identity and Islamic heritage. Amrou Al-Kadhi, managed to embrace the contradiction, through the world of quantum physics, a world that allowed her to re-visit the Muslim Quran. In their words "there turns out, the Quran is teeming with queer potential".

Link: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?-v=rw_-lCDOUWc&t=601s**

After viewing this video, start a discussion proposal of revisiting traditional texts as part of the university curriculum in the online forum or face-to-face if possible.

Questions:

■ Do you believe that intersectionality, which means that issues like religion, race or sexual orientation, could be approached properly at higher education institution? How?

■ What would be the challenges of establishing a more inclusive curriculum?

■ In your own discipline, could you think of examples where a more inclusive curriculum could be feasible?

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SECTION 4.
Forms of violence and discrmination in the digital age
Cyberbullying, fake news and prejudices

4.1. The impact of technologies and media in structural LGBTQI+ phobia

Technologies influence the world in which we live. Regardless of whether its influences are positive or negative, **technology changes how people communicate and interact**. The one constant among all technologies, from cave drawings to the Internet to whatever technologies arise next, is that they are inherently relational in their understanding and use. Adapted to accomplish and meet relational needs, all technologies have influenced how we interact and relate with others.

Mass media have huge reach in society and are a key filter through which people learn about each other, yet countless studies demonstrate that these **media continue to reproduce stereotypes, with often harmful effects**. Concretely, traditional mass media refers to all forms of mass communication existing before the advent of digital media, including television, newspapers, magazines, etc.

The resulting pervasiveness of stereotyped representations across media formats and type is partly the outcome of complex media production processes, norms and values, commercial drivers, and a lack of minority-members media producers. Nonetheless, their impact, though hard to measure, is potentially significant. Mass media play a role in shaping collective identities and intergroup attitudes and, by typecasting certain groups, distort the picture that audiences see of different groups (Bird, 2003).

There is evidence to suggest these **skewed media representations can not only promote public hostility toward other groups but also lower minority individuals' self-esteem**. In various mediums – news, drama, and gaming –

minority groups are typically marginalized and overlooked. Very often, when they are represented, they are shown only in narrowly stereotyped roles or depicted negatively as **the problematic "other"**.

Historically, the portrayals of LGBTQI+ communities in mass media have been negative, reflecting the cultural intolerance of LGBTQI+ individuals; however, **from the 1990s to present day**, there has been an increase in the depictions of LGBTQI+ people, issues, and concerns within mainstream media. The LGBTQI+ communities have taken an increasingly proactive stand in defining their own culture with a primary goal of achieving an **affirmative visibility** in mainstream media. The positive portrayal or increased presence of the LGBTQI+ communities in media has served to increase acceptance and support for LGBTQI+ communities, establish LGBTQI+ communities as a norm, and provide information on the topic (Steiner, Fejes & Petrich, 1993).

Media depictions have both benefited and disadvantaged LGBTQI+ communities. Milestones to the lesbian and gay communities such as the magazine Vice Versa and Ellen DeGeneres coming out have encouraged other LGBTQI+ people to come out positively influenced public perception. But often LGBTQI+ in media are highly misrepresented by usually categorizing all of the LGBTQI+ people into just lesbian and gay. There, stereotypes for lesbian and gay characters have been reproduced during decades. This action contradicts the whole purpose of the fictional characters of LGBTQI+ people. It may allow some people to understand that LGBTQI+ people are more common than they realize; however, it still reinforces stereotypes and negative stigmas (Gross, 2001).

New Social Media
In the last decades, the internet has allowed people across the world t**o connect instantaneously and has revolutionised the way we communica-**

te and share information with one another. More than 4 billion people were Internet users in 2018, more than half of the global population. In many ways, the Internet has had a positive influence on society. For example, it helps us to communicate easily and to share knowledge on all kinds of important topics efficiently. But the Internet has also broadened the potential for harm. Being able to communicate with a mass audience has meant that the way we engage with politics, public affairs and each other has also changed. Through social media platforms (such as **Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat**), 3.19 billion users converse and interact with each other by generating and sharing content (O'Regan, 2018).

The model of most social media companies is built on drawing attention, and given that **offensive speech often attracts attention, it can become more audible on social media than it might on traditional mass media**. The age of digital media has allowed online speech and content to be shared anonymously and often without a second thought for the consequences. While the act of publishing online is instantaneous, **mechanisms designed to regulate hate speech are often cumbersome and slow**.

Hateful messages and incitements to violence are distributed and amplified on social media in ways that were not previously possible. Given the growing problem of offensive and harmful speech online, many countries are asking

themselves the challenging question whether they should regulate speech online and if so, how they should legislate to curb these excesses. Moreover, in traditional forms of media, there is editorial oversight from a person other than the author prior to publishing. Historically, this has often provided an effective restraint on hate speech, a mechanism that plainly does not work on self-published social media platforms. **The speed and sheer amount of content, as well as the lack of editorial oversight make social media platforms a particular challenge for regulators**.

Hate speech

Hate speech online is situated at the intersection of multiple tensions: it is **the expression of conflicts between different groups** within and across societies; it is **a vivid example of how technologies** with a transformative potential such as the Internet **bring with them both opportunities and challenges**; and it implies **complex balancing between fundamental rights and principles**, including freedom of expression and the defence of human dignity.

While hate speech online is not intrinsically different from similar expressions found offline, there are peculiar challenges unique to online content and its regulation. Those challenges related to its permanence, itinerancy, anonymity and cross-jurisdictional character are among the most complex to address.

Hate speech online can be itinerant. Even when content is removed, it may find expression elsewhere, possibly on the same platform under a different name or on different online spaces. If a website is shut down, it can quickly reopen using a web-hosting service with less stringent regulations or via the reallocation to a country with laws imposing higher threshold for hate speech. **The itinerant nature of hate speech also means that poorly formulated thoughts that would have not found public expression and support in the past may now land on spaces where they can be visible to large audiences (UNESCO, 2015)**.

Cyberbullying

Despite all the good that the Internet has brought to students, parents, and teachers alike, there are people who use it with malicious intent. And just as bullying has existed, **virtual bullying has existed since the beginning of the Internet**.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. It can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. **Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else**. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation (for example, sexting, doxing, revenge porn). There is variability in how different legal systems define the unlawful or criminal aspect of cyberbullying.

Disinformation

The term **disinformation alludes to reports, images, and videos that are shared to purposefully spread misinformation** i.e. information that is factually incorrect. These news items may appear authentic at first and attempt to attract attention, shock, or shape opinions. Disinformation can be created by individuals or groups who are acting in their own interests or those of third

parties. **The creation of misinformation is usually motivated by personal, political, or economic agendas (IONOS Digital Guide, 2020)**.

Stories related to the phenomena of disinformation have become a permanent feature in the headlines of newspapers since 2016 and are increasingly reflected in the social media. The ability to evaluate information coming also from, it might seem, proven sources is becoming a must-have of the 21st century (Harari, 2018). Furthermore, disinformation and cyberbullying are becoming common strategies followed by **harassers to attack people who protect victims (upstanders), performing second order harassment (Madrid, Joanpere, de Botton & Campdepadros, 2020)**.

ACTIVITY 1

Introduction
One way of explaining the causes and contributing factors of gender-based violence is by using the illustration of a tree, where each part of the tree represents a different aspect of gender-based violence:

■ Root causes
As in any context, a given problem has causes and has effects. The **root causes** of an act of gender-based violence are very often deep and are composed of a number of interconnected factors that make analysing the situation very complex. Consider, for example, the causes that refer to our cultural sphere, which may include:
- ■ Power imbalance
- ■ Disregard for human rights
- ■ Gender inequalities
- ■ Discrimination

The root causes of gender-based violence can be represented by the roots of the tree.

■ Forms of violence
The concatenation of different causes generates violence that, as seen in paragraph 4.2, can be declined in different forms. In the trunk and branches of the tree are visible the different forms that gender violence can take. Here some examples:

- ■ **Physical violence**: physical intimidation, beating, burning, kicking, punching, biting, maiming or killing, or the use of objects or weapons

- ■ **Verbal violence**: hate speech (which can include jokes, spreading rumours, threats, slander, incitement of violence or hate)

- ■ **Psychological violence**: exclusion from social groups, spreading rumours, insults, intimidating

- ■ **Sexual violence**: sexual advances, inappropriate touching, unconsented sexual or coerced contact, rape

- ■ **Socio-economic violence**: taking away the earnings of the victim

Some of these forms of gender-based violence can be perpetrated both **online** and **offline**.

■ c)   Consequences

The leaves of the tree represent the **consequences** of acts and behaviours, direct or indirect, that affect the victim of the act and create also systemic instability. The following are some examples of consequences on three main aspects of life:

- ■ **Physical health**: physical injury, death.

- ■ **Phycological health**: depression, fear, anxiety.

- ■ **Social and economic**: isolation, stigmatization, decreased earning capacity.

■ Contributing factors

There are other factors that intervene in the generation of gender-based violence, defined as contributing factors, which can aggravate violence and its effects. These can be represented by the weather that hits the tree and vary considerably depending on the context:

- ■ **System**: impunity, lack of protection from police.

- ■ **Behavioural**: drugs, alcohol, boredom.

- ■ **Structural**: poverty, lack of education, access to services.

■ Instructions

Considering the case study presented below, we ask you to read it and at the end of reading to try to trace the root causes, types of violence, the contributing factors of the gender-based violence that you can find in this example and the consequences that these acts generate in the victim. Use the image of the tree at the end of the case study and try to write as many elements as possible. If in group, please have a look at the proposed questions and discuss with others your answers.

■ Case Study*

*Trigger Warning: transphobic violence, threatens, harassment.

"Carlo was born in a body in which he does not recognize himself, he was born as a female but identifies as the opposite sex. Since he was little, he was always trying to act tough and be a boy. In seeing this attitude his family always thought he was a tomboy and he was just going through a phase. They never agreed on how he dressed, cut his hair, or walked. After high school, thanks to the support of his grandmother, he decides to go to university and live in another city. He finally decides to express himself freely, wear what he wants and introduce himself as Carlo. He even starts to get information about the path to take in order to change sex at a local sex change support centre.

He lives his life like any young student and begins to hang out with several people, he tells to some of them about his story and past. Over time he also begins a lasting relationship with a girl. After some time, the girl's brother finds out about this relationship and gets really upset. He doesn't understand his sister's choice and opposes to this relationship with all his strength, involving also his family and friends. He creates a Facebook page in which he puts Carlo in a bad light, insulting him and instigating others to do so too. This causes Carlo to start receiving offensive messages on social networks, anonymous calls, sometimes even threats. These acts become more and more frequent and Carlo starts going out with less frequency, avoiding also the university and his

girlfriend. He is afraid to encounter the authors of these threats.

He would like to go to the police but he fears he will not be understood, he has not changed his personal details yet and has heard from other people that it's not good experience for trans* people. "

■ The Gender Violence Tree:

Contributing Factors

-
-
-

Consequences

-
-
-

Types

-
-
-

Roots

-
-
-

Questions

■ Could you please map Carlo's feelings/response on each of the forms of bullying: physical, cyber, etc.?

■ Could you think of what of those forms are worse and why? For example, is being shoved or threatened in the school yard worse than being called names on a FB page? Why, why not?

4.2. Unmaking structural and symbolic stereotypes and prejudices on LGTBQI+ identities

Stereotyping is a cognitive process by which humans simplify complex information and make sense of the world. Humans tend to generalise complex information by attending to selected features of whatever object or person they are perceiving. This **process of simplification** leads humans to develop categories, concepts and generalisations for efficiently managing and utilising the vast amounts of available data (Taylor et al., 1981). Stereotypes are, accordingly, simplified mental images. People recall information more easily and efficiently when it is consistent with the pre-constructed categories of stereotypes (Bodenhausen, 1988). From a sociocultural perspective, stereotyping is the process of acquiring and transmitting social or cultural knowledge. According to Dovidio (1999), Walter Lippmann, journalist and political commentator, first introduced the word 'stereotype' in 1922 to psychologists to illustrate the typical image that one formulates when thinking about a particular social or cultural group. People use social categories to acquire, organise and process an increasing amount of information about their world and persons of other cultures.

Senior citizens in Italy are as active as ever despite COVID-19's threat

Unfortunately, **these social categories are often constructed and perpetuated based on over-generalised characteristic**s. Stereotypes reflect a culture's beliefs and values about other people or objects. Nachbar and Lause (1992) argue that stereotypes are not mere descriptions of how members of a cultural group view outsiders, but, more importantly, are often prescriptions of how insiders perceive themselves by using prescribed stereotypes to internalise their cultural images which become part of their cultural identity. Members of a cultural group that initiate the classification of other people normally perceive themselves as superior to others (Tajfel, 1981). Therefore, **stereotypes typically contain negative connotations or attitudes**, because the perceivers often subordinate other cultural groups with whom they share little in common either physically or in terms of values. The dominant group or cultural elite uses stereotypes to dehumanise other cultural groups that differ in values, beliefs or physical characteristics to maintain its own political power and social control. Because of this tendency, stereotypes may be used to normalise unjust practices, behaviours and treatments of minority groups such as lesbian and gay people. Since **stereotyping is a frequently used human way of grouping, labelling or categorising information, it is cognitively impossible for humans to avoid stereotyping altogether**. But negative stereotypes can be challenged and replaced with other, more positive stereotypes (Sheng Kuan Chung, 2007).

Exposure to popular media may be the dominant means by which children, as well as most adults, learn about others and acquire and internalise social norms, values and beliefs as manifested in the expressions and presentations of the media (Croteau & Hoynes, 1997) . According to social sciences, **we learn stereotypes from your environment** (e.g., peers, families, and media). Most likely, the media generation learns about social issues like homosexuality not from direct contact with gay people or from their parents, tea-

chers and peers, but from characters and scenes depicted in films, television programmes, fashion magazines and commercial advertisements (Croteau & Hoynes, 1997). When viewers are constantly immersing themselves in value-laden media images and are consistently exposed to the stereotypical portrayal of LGTBGI+, they are likely to develop false assumptions and prejudiced attitudes, possibly even discriminatory behaviour, towards LGTBQI+.

The ways stereotypes and prejudices are structured are various and complex, involving important core mechanisms of our societies. Thus, **transforming stereotypes and prejudices on LGTBQI+ cannot be achieved with a single and generic approach**, but with multiple and targeted actions addressing to the cognitive mechanisms that produce stereotypes and prejudices and to the actors that reproduce them. A combination of tools would be needed to change these empowered and socially structured beliefs:

Awareness-raising
Awareness raising is a process which helps to facilitate the exchange of ideas, improve mutual understanding and develop competencies and skills necessary for societal change (Sayers, 2006). **Raising awareness regarding LGTBQI+ can be introduced in many different ways** and in various environments under different circumstances.

■ Inviting l**ocal activists** or representatives from LGTBQI+ organizations to speak.

■ **Hosting movie nights** with films about LGTBQI+ issues or featuring LGTBQI+ characters.

■ Posting awareness-raising material on social media.

■ Publishing articles on LGTBQI+ issues.

■ Creating a blog, website or zine and publish writing and artwork about LGTBQI+.

■ **Commemorating important people and events** in LGTBQI+ history. Calendars or displays can help raise awareness about the Stonewall riots, Harvey Milk's election or assassination or Lambda Legal's victory in *Lawrence v. Texas*, a Supreme Court decision that marked a new era of legal respect for the LGTBQI+ community.

■ Organizing and hosting Human Library events. Human Library is a public event aimed at reducing stereotypes and prejudices, in **the form of an interactive based intervention**. It employs the logic of a regular library yet with readers "borrowing" Living Books, which are real people representing various minority groups.

Increasing visibility

When people can see something represented, they are better able to understand and grasp who those people are, and this creates an important shift in the social consciousness to include people from a range of different backgrounds. Another crucial piece to consider is that when people see representations of themselves in the media, this can foster a great **sense of affirmation of their identity**. Feeling affirmed with one's own sense of self can boost positive feelings of self-worth, which is quite different than feeling as if you are wrong or bad for being who you are. The message that can come from a society in which LGTBQI+ people are invisible, especially through the lens of the media, is that "you don't exist, and you don't matter" (O'Brien, 2017). **Increasing visibility empowers LGTBQI+ social**

standing and can reduce the impact of disinformation and the number of incidents of hate-speech and cyberbullying against LGTBQI+ individuals.

LGTBQI+ Inclusive Policies

Policies in educational organizations can guarantee a safe environment for employers, peers and students. **Zero tolerance policies against harassment, bullying, cyberbullying, acts of hate and discrimination** as well as the **use of a gender-inclusive languag**e can contribute to a friendly interpersonal environment. At the same time, the adoption of LGTBQI+ policies by an institution/organization can contribute to **social change by setting higher standards of ethics** to be adopted by other organizations/institutions. However, LGBTQI+ supportive policies should be viewed as necessary if organizations do not explicitly connect policies with action.

4.3. How to approach, detect and prevent psychological harassment through social media?

Psychological Harassment

One of the ways to approach a problem, any problem, is information. Very often, the opinions we form of what surrounds us are the result of bad or superficial information, also the result of wrong social and media policies. **The problem of harassment**, of any kind, has a common denominator: t**he lack of tolerance towards what society classifies as different**. People may classify beha-

viours into "normal" or "abnormal," not thinking about the how current societies are rapidly changing and old stereotypes and preconceptions are gradually breaking down. **Discrimination has normally been exercised against people belonging to socially stigmatized groups, groups of people quantifiable as a minorit**y; one of the communities targeted in the discriminatory logic is undoubtedly the LGBTQI+ community. Although our focus is on the psychological violence suffered online by the LGBTQI+ community, it is important to understand the context in which it operates, framing it in the macro area of the violence exerted on this community (Figure 1).
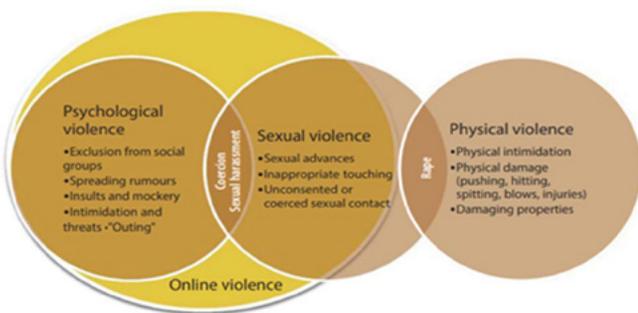

Figure 6 - Homophobic and transphobic violence takes many forms. It can be psychological, physical or sexual. When psychological or sexual, this violence can also occur online, such as via emails, on the web, on social media, instant messaging, etc. This constitutes cyberbullying. Source: https://rm.coe.int/prems-125718-gbr-2575-safe-at-school-a4-web/16809024f5

Violence against LGBTQI+ individuals through Social Media

Most data available on homophobic and transphobic violence focus on bullying. Homophobic and transphobic bullying involves physical bullying (including intimidation, repeated hitting, injuries); and psychological bullying including verbal bullying (repeated mocking, name calling and unwanted teasing) and social or relational bullying (repeated exclusion, gossiping, the spreading of rumours and the withholding of friendship). In this framework, it is relevant to **include also sexual violence** (advances, inappropriate touching) and 'implicit' violence, also referred to as 'symbolic' or 'institutional' violence. When we talk about the last one, we refer to **pervasive representations or attitudes that someti-**

mes feel harmless or natural to the community, but that allow or encourage homophobia and transphobia, including perpetuating harmful stereotypes. An example of implicit violence could be asserting that some subjects, at college, are better suited to students based on their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression (for example, science for heterosexual male students and drama for gay male students).

In this chapter we talk about psychological harassment suffered by LGBTQI+ community, **a violence exercised against an individual on the basis of sexual orientation, sexual expression or gender identity**. It can happen **from LGBTQI+ people to LGBTQI+ people, or from non-LGBTQI+ people to LGBTQI+ people**. Psychological harassment is defined as negative or hostile behaviour by one or more people, directly or indirectly connected to a third person. This behaviour is typically repeated and systematic, over a long period of time, and is designed to attack individuals or groups, isolate or exclude them and possibly force them out of their workplace or educational context or social life. It refers to a combination of events which, when considered individually, may seem harmless, but through their repetition have a destructive effect on the targeted person. It's important to understand when a behaviour qualifies as harassment violence, both for the victims and for witnesses, because people's reaction depends on this.

What is psychological harassment in university environment?

■ Repeated and unjustified criticisms and denigration.

■ Ridicule and humiliation.

■ Refusal to engage, resulting in isolation.

■ Unwanted contact and communications, where you study or elsewhere.

■ Breaches of privacy.

■ Assigning tasks that are far below someone's skills, or obviously too complex.

What is not psychological harassment in university environment?

■ An occasional conflict.

■ Normal study-related requirements.

■ Stress, which may be an indicator of harassment but is not evidence.

These harassment behaviours are a type of violence which becomes even more pernicious because it is systematically repeated over time. When **all of these situations are transferred in the virtual world they are defined as cyberbullying**. The digital age has changed our lives and our habits, improving them very often; but on the other hand, it has brought online the violence, generating new and dangerous forms of harassment. Cyberbullying is therefore a violent behaviour that **takes place online, repeated over time in a systematic way, in which the aggressor or aggressors' insult, threaten and voluntarily try to cause damage to another person or group,**

often unable to defend themselves or perceived as weaker. As the word itself suggests, cyberbullying originates from "traditional" bullying, but the differences between the two practices are important to understand the psychological effects resulting from them.

The first difference between bullying and cyberbullying lies in the fact that in the second case violence extends or takes place online, through the use of messaging platforms, social networks or video game chats, while bullying can also involve physical aggression. The second one could make us more aware about the dangerous extent of this cyber form of violence; **online bullying, in fact, has a more incisive vexatious charge, due to which very often it is more difficult for the victim to avoid or escape**. Access to technology allows the bully to creep into the victim's life in any place and at any time by means of offensive messages, calls, images or videos, thus increasing the threshold of intrusiveness of the violence itself as physical presence is no longer necessary to intimidate or threaten a person. In addition, **online bullying has a much wider potential audience than bullying, which normally is unpredictable and involves a small group of people**, and more people from all over the world are potentially involved. This latter aspect plays a decisive role in the psyche of the victims who may overestimate their exposure and convince themselves that more people are witnessing bullying than they really are. Another aspect to mention is the **anonymity in which the cyber-bully operates**, which says a lot about the psychological element of bullies. The online world offers a high level of anonymity that will lower the inhibitions of cyberbullies. Since in offline bullying, those who have a strong and imposing character generally play the role of the bully, in case of cyber bullying it could be exercised also by people who would never be able to do this physically, thus even a victim in real life can become a cyber-bully.

ACTIVITY 1

Instructions

After working on the materials of the subsections' 4.1. and 4.2., take some time to look at the video on Anti-Bullying by the New South Wales Department of Education (Australia). Please have a look at it closely, reflect and answer to the following questions in a written text:

Access to the video here:

Anti-bullying assembly #CareRespectSupport.

Questions

■ How is the strength of the group being potentiated in the video by the NSW government?

■ What strategies do you think that can improve the group unity and generate positive feelings of belonging in educational settings?

■ What challenges are still pending in detecting and identifying forms of online bullying?

Online Hate speech

"The term "hate speech" should be understood as including all forms of expression aimed at spreading, fomenting, promoting or justifying racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hate based on intolerance, including intolerance expressed in the form of aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility towards minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin." (Council of Europe 1997).

Online hate speech is an **effort to marginalize individuals based on their membership in a group**; using expression that exposes the group to hatred, it seeks to delegitimize group members in the eyes of the majority, reducing their social standing and acceptance within society. As in all those cases in which discrimination takes shape, also in this case the most useful strategy to combat it is the information and the awareness that "respect" is an inalienable human right. In order to give continuity to this discourse, it is significant to mention a recent report by the European Council, that includes the hate speech problem (and consequently online hate speech) in the complex problem of information disorder (Figure 2).
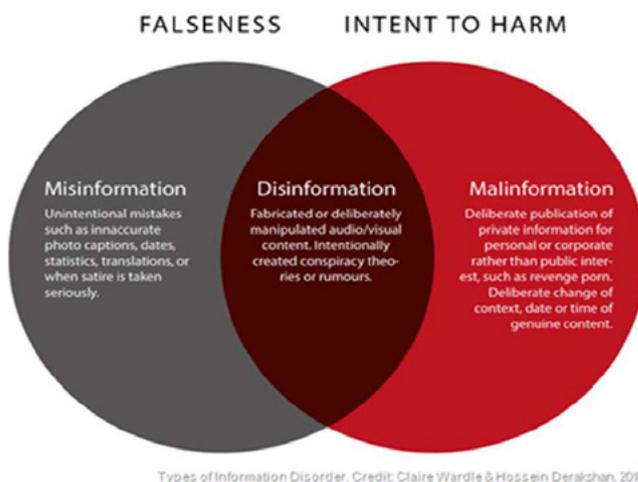

Figure 7 - Types of information disorders. Source: https://shorensteincenter. org/information-disorder-framework-for-research-and-policymaking

The modern **disinformation** problem presents, in fact, a **clear threat to the information ecosystems and the health of democratic values**. It is a very dangerous chain reaction; the disinformation amplifies hate speech and the digital environment amplifies the dissemination of this hate wave travelling online. The free flow of comments and opinions is, definitely, an indispensable condition for the existence of a democratic society.

There is often difficulty in understanding when one person's freedom of expression is in fact

hate speech that is not a protected right. In most cases, the law considers the possibility that a speech or an expression has the potential to incite violence against groups or communities or individuals and views this type of speech as a hate crime. These speeches, in fact, are offensive expressions for which certain people are discriminated against on the basis of their ethnic or national origin, gender, disability, social status, religion or sexual orientation. Sometimes, it can happen that taken from anger or indignation, or convinced of one's own ideas, one decides to comment or post words of hatred towards someone. Remember that in a case of cyberbullying or hate speech there aren't just only the bully and the victim. There is also a third fundamental element: **Bystanders**; people who witness cyberbullying-taking place, whether through seeing it, reading it and/or hearing it. We can group them in two categories:

Hurtful bystanders

A hurtful bystander is a person that **encourages the act by laughing, cheering, making comments or even joining in**, thus encouraging the bully. You can also be a hurtful bystander by choosing to do nothing.

Helpful (active) upstanders

The people **who take positive action when they see or hear about cyberbullying incidents**. By that action, cyberbullying can be stopped or even prevented. Defending the victim by approaching the bully or by giving help and support to the victim, can help ease the problem and put it under control.

How to do your part?

How educators can help the fight against LGBTQ+ cyberbullying

The CDC (Centres for Diseases Control & Prevention) School Health Profiles 2018 report details how

many schools are supporting LGBTQ youth in various ways. Some of the key points considered are:

■ Identifying a **safe space**, for example, a counsellor's office or student organization where LGBTQ youth can expect support from designated school staff.

■ Policies in place that **prohibit harassment** that is based on a students' actual or perceived gender identity, expression or sexual orientation.

■ Encouraging programs whereby **staff participates in professional development programs** to learn about creating a supportive and safe environment for all students.

■ Helping to facilitate a**ccess to health service providers** off school property, including HIV/STD testing and counselling, and social and psychological services.

■ Having a **gay/straight alliance** club or other groups with similar goals.

Reporting on online platforms

Most social media platforms have some rules that address online bullying to some extent. Many enable you to report specific content or other users. Here are some relevant pages that explain how to report abuse on popular platforms:

■ Twitter.
■ Facebook.
■ Instagram.
■ TikTok.

Tips on how to react to psychological violence

How can people do their part?

■ Never forget that the person reading your mail or posting is a real person, with **feelings that can be hurt**.

■ Remember that we are all **humans**.

■ Act the **same way** online that you would in real life.

■ **Be ethical** and look before you send. It's fine to think that what you're doing at the moment is the most important thing in the world, but don't expect everyone to agree with you.

■ Check the discussion first to see if you're posting in the intended group. In the case of something private, **send it to the person in private message/ e-mail**.

■ Respect other **people's time and place**.

■ When sending messages or e-mails: **identify yourself by ending with your name**; try to include a subject title in the message header; send the message only to relevant people.

■ Use the **right emoticons and acronym**s where and when appropriate in your message.

■ Choose your **words carefully** in terms of your language.

■ Don't curse or use sarcasm unless you know for

■ If you see something wrong be a **helpful active bystander** to definitively reject the hate!

ACTIVITY 2

Instructions
Take some time to read the following case and advices to change and prevent cyberbullying behaviours. Then, please take some time to reflect and answer the following questions:

Introduction
Alex is a nineteen-year-old young man who moved to another city to start the university with the hope to be, finally, free to express himself. He joined a social dating app for the

first time. He is excited at the prospect of meeting someone. Before long, Alex receives his first message and begins responding. As the conversation progresses, Alex is asked to send a picture of his body. He decides to send the requested picture, however suddenly the messages stop. The next day at the university, Alex notices people are laughing and pointing at him. Feeling confused and not knowing what is going on, he runs to the bathroom. There to his surprise, the image he sent yesterday is now hanging on the walls of the bathroom. The picture has been edited and now contains the phrase "Alex is a Fag" across it. He doesn't know what to do!

■ What would have you done if you had been Alex?

■ What would have you done if you had seen the picture in the bathroom?

■ Have you ever experienced or witnessed any of these psychological harassments?
■ What did you do?

We offer you some tips that could help you change or prevent your behaviour in any case and in any position, you might find:

■ Stop and think before you say something that could hurt someone.

■ Talk to someone you trust. They can help you find ways to be nicer to others.

■ Respect other people by keeping in mind that everyone is different. Not better or worse. Just different.

■ If you think you have cyberbullied someone, the first step would be apologizing and then taking steps in removing any related content. Everyone will feel better.

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■ Take responsibility and become empathetic. Treat others the same way you would like to be treated.

■ If you have a fight or a disagreement with someone, think before you post something mean online. It would be wiser to take deep breaths before you do something you will regret or cause harm to that person.

■ Remember you can always change your behaviour.

■ Don't respond to and don't forward cyberbullying messages.

■ Keep evidence of cyberbullying. Record the dates, times, and descriptions of instances when cyberbullying has occurred. Save and print screenshots, emails, and text messages. Use this evidence to report cyberbullying to web and cell phone service providers.

■ Block the person who is cyberbullying.

Questions

■ How do you think that social media and internet determine and influence discriminatory and violence behaviours?

■ Do you think that LGBTQI-phobic behaviours are present and aggravated in social media and online spaces? Could you please elaborate on your answer?

4.4. Evidence and social compromise in communication: intervening in the era of disinformation

Much of the discourse on 'disinformation' conflates three notions: mis-information, disinformation and mal-information. But it's important to distinguish messages that are true from those that are false, and messages that are created, produced or distributed by agents who intend to do harm from those that are not. While mal-information is based on reality, misinformation and disinformation are both, at their core, incorrect information. However, the motivation for sharing the content and the actors who share it are very different. Mis-information sometimes refers to an "honest mistake" — for example when an article written by a generally reputable media property includes an error and it spreads organically. Dis-information, by contrast, is deliberately wrong and spread tactically; it is explicitly intended to cause confusion or to lead the target audience to believe a lie.

In our specific case, when we talk about disinformation related to the target in question, the LGBTQI+ community, we talk about pure disinformation, which often implements political propaganda campaigns made in order to denigrate people based on their identity first and their sexual orientation then. All this has a double impact, because while it ghettoizes victims and makes them vulnerable, it also stirs up hatred. As already addressed in the previous paragraph, hate speech has an exponential sounding board within our digitized world. We have previously talked about a chain reaction under which disinformation amplifies hate speech and digitization amplifies the dissemination of hate travelling online. The following image can be taken into consideration to explain better the process:
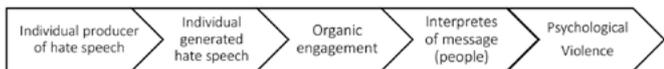
Dis-information
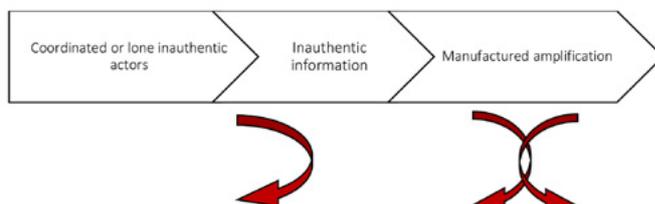
Online hate speech

Figure 8 - Disinformation campaigns and hate speech. Source: https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/2019_ifes_disinformation_campaigns_and_hate_speech_briefing_paper.pdf

Who are the Actors: the perpetrators of disinformation campaigns that may be lone **individuals motivated by ideology, but also coordinated actors intending to suppress political participation, create confusion and distrust to spread content virally**.

Inauthentic content: the creation of content intended to deceive the public amplifies and reinforces narrative already in circulation. These messages are created to receive maximum visibility and calculated to play on the cognitive biases of those who engage with them.

What do the several Modes of dissemination: through paid engagement and networks of coordinated social media accounts inauthentic content is unleashed to flood the information space. As this content gains the appearance of credibility through high levels of engagement, users become increasingly likely to re-share content.

Who are the Interpreters: manufactured amplification can make hate speech massages seem more widely held and prevalent than they are emboldening normally passive citizens?

What are the Risks: risks multiply as citizens' ability to distinguish true and false narratives diminishes and a sense of instability rises.

With this scheme, how much dis-information may fit into the generation of online hate speech and how it can amplify its effects is explained. Those who produce hate speech do this with the belief that their ideas are better than those of others. Once this mechanism has been triggered, the **massive media allow these speeches to reach as many people as possible, who perceive this message of**

hatred and can take it on their own. According to previous research the result of this hate speech is isolation of a group and the exposition of the victims to acts of physical/psychological violence.

On the one hand, disinformation arises the danger of hate speech and, using the same means of dissemination, they may arrive at a wide number of people. On the other hand, the people who interpret the message, literally bombarded with a lot of information around social media, are no longer able to distinguish real news from a false one. The risk is enormous, because as mentioned, in addition to **categorizing and ghettoizing a group, there is a risk of offering the collectively messages so wrong that could put people's lives at risk**.

The following example is useful to understand how a **fake new can endanger a life**; as reported by NHS' article, in UK for many years there was a common misconception that lesbian women would never have had the cervical cancer. Since they have sex with other women, they not need to be screened to prevent this possibility, even though the virus that causes cervical cancer is passed on through any type of sexual activity. This example of misinformation allows us to become aware, as disinformation could be dangerous not only for the emotional sphere but also for people's lives.

Figure 9 Beyond Disinformation: 10 types of misleading news. Source: https://eavi.eu/beyond-fake-news-10-types-misleading-info/.

There are different kinds of misleading news. This infographic created by the **EAVI - Media Literacy for Citizenship** shows the ten most common types of disinformation and how to recognize them:

There are other examples of disinformation regarding LGBTQ+ community. The picture (Figure 5) shows a post shared on the web thousands of times with a clear but false headline: "Gay party in Italy few weeks before COVID-19". This picture is nothing more than an image taken from a carnival in Brazil in February 2018, two years before Italy's first confirmed COVID-19 case in 2020. This form of disinformation has the purpose of justifying and amplifying fear towards gay people, reproducing the stereotype that they are irresponsible, and the reason COVID-19 is spreading.

Figure 10 - Example of fake new spread on Facebook

Another example, this time related to discriminatory propaganda, comes from Poland, where local governors have received instructions to refrain from encouraging any policy that guarantees respect for the LGBTQI+ community through the rights granted to them. The aim would be to block funds for all those organizations working to promote equal rights.

Local municipalities across a third of Poland have adopted resolutions "against LGBTQI+ propaganda" or "pro-family", discriminating LGBTQI+ people. Many local governments and city councils have adopted the discriminatory resolutions that created the so-called "LGBT-free zones". The European Commission, with its President Ursula von der Leyen, has already expressed its point of view, saying that **"LGBTI-free-zones are humanity-free zones and have no place in our Union."**

How do we save ourselves from disinformation?

The best way to avoid mystification based on disinformation is to learn to use social media and to discern good news from a fake one.
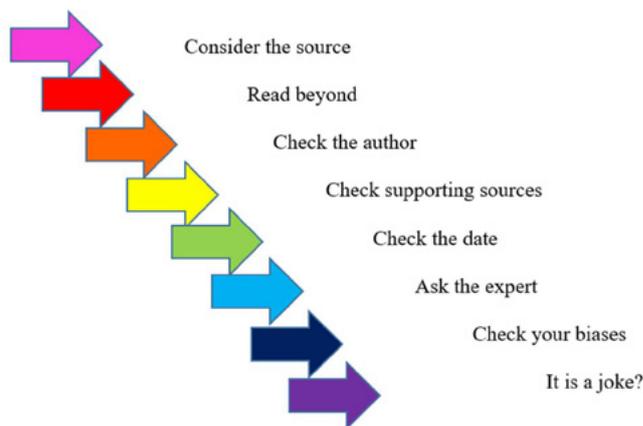

Figure 11 - What to do to avoid disinformation

Remember:
Learn about Search Engine Ranking
When we search for information, we often use a search engine and the amount of information that is retrieved is always overwhelming. But we often don't look at links beyond the first page of results, and most people never get beyond the second link on the first page. This makes users very vulnerable to receiving and accepting misleading or even fake information.

Learning how the ranking of websites is accomplished can at least forewarn users about what to look for. In this sense, it's important to know that the ranking is accomplished taking into account keywords targeting, title and header tags, meta

description, images, in addition to other issues depending on the specific search engine that may be subject to contracts, privileges and private aspects.

Read before Sharing

Headlines are used to capture the attention, and they are often written to provoke a strong reaction.

Sharing the link with others without looking at the story attached can result in the spread of disinformation. Read the content of a link before sharing it.

Be critical of free "news" sites and
Be critical always!

The internet has made it possible for everyone to be a publisher. And while that's brought us a lot of amazing things, it's also created an environment where disinformation is a real and consistent problem.

But, remember, we have the opportunity to verify any story that seems suspect ourselves.

So let's do it!!

Read always a variety of sources

See what different outlets are saying about the same issue. At this point, it's hard to argue that even the oldest news sources are actually impartial, but by reading multiple sources, you can figure out what's fact and what's bias.

Fact-Check

There are a growing number of fact-checking sites that make it their business to find out whether a story, caption, or headline is true or false. Instead of sharing the fake story with others, it could be a good practice to check with a fact-checking site first to see what it has to say about the story.

ACTIVITY 1

Instructions

After working on the materials of the previous subsections, take some time to look at the TEDxTalk at the University of Nevada by Sharyl Attkisson of 2018. Please have a look at it closely, reflect and answer to the following questions in a written text:

Access to the video here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQcCIz-jz9_s

Questions

■ How does the phenomena of disinformation have manifested in your context recently?

■ Since when have disinformation have existed or have been conceived? Could you please elaborate on your answer?

■ How do you think that disinformation has affected to the collective memory on important facts or milestones?

■ After working on the provided materials on disinformation and social media, how do you think that this phenomenon contributes to structural forms of hate and discrimination?

■ Have you ever witnessed or read any form of LGBTQI-phobic disinformation? Could you please share your examples?

Related links:

■ https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/types-of-gender-based-violence

■ https://rm.coe.int/information-disorder-report-november-2017/1680764666

■ https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/2019_ifes_disinformation_campaigns_and_hate_speech_briefing_paper.pdf

■ https://www.england.nhs.uk/2019/06/fake-news-putting-50000-lesbian-gay-and-bisexual-women-at-risk-of-cancer/

■ https://factcheck.afp.com/video-shows-brazil-carnival-2018-not-party-italy

■ https://www.dw.com/en/how-the-eu-can-stop-polands-lgbt-free-zones/a-55042896https://opentextbc.ca/socialpsychology/chapter/social-categorization-and-stereotyping/
■ https://www.gale.info/doc/unesco/INT-2016-UNESCO-OutInTheOpen.pdf

■ https://www.unil.ch/help/en/home/menuinst/Etudiant%c2%b7e%c2%b7s/Psychological%20harassment.html

■ https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/how-to-report

■ https://www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression/hate-speech#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Committee%20of,speech%20has%20been%20brought%20about

■ https://rm.coe.int/information-disorder-report-november-2017/1680764666?ct=t()

■ https://www.linc.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Towards-Anti-Cyberbullying_LGBT.pdf

■ https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/how-to-report

■ https://www.journals.ala.org/index.php/ltr/issue/viewFile/662/423

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■ Harari Y. N. (2018). 21 Lessons for the 21st Century. Penguin Books. London
Gross, L. (2001). Up From Invisibility: Lesbians, Gay men, And The Media in America,. Columbia. University Press.

■ Madrid, A., Joanpere, M., de Botton, L., & Campdepadrós, R. (2020). Media Manipulation Against Social Justice Researchers: Second-Order Sexual Harassment. Qualitative Inquiry, 26 (8-9), 983-988. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800420938853

■ O' Regan, C. (2018). Hate speech regulation on social media: An intractable contemporary challenge. Current Legal Problems. 71, 403-429. Retrieved from https://researchoutreach.org/articles/hate-speech-regulation-social-media-intractable-contemporary-challenge/

■ UNESCO. (2015). Countering Online Hate Speech. París. UNESCO

SECTION 5.
Challenges of preventing and responding to violence against the LGBQI+ population
In Higher Education Institutions

5.1.　Frame within the European Commission goals

Since 1999 European Commission (EC) has approached a set of different policies and directives addressing LGBT rights. Firstly, along this section we will briefly introduce a summary of the most relevant steps carried out by EC and European institutions on LGBTIQ+ issues. Secondly, we will pay attention to the challenges addressed during the last 5 years and to the strategy developed for the next 5 years, until 2025.

As presented in the Figure 1 - European Commission Political Steps, the EC has taken diverse and staggered steps addressing LGBT rights and in the fight against violence against this community 647. In 1999 the Treaty of Amsterdam set a precedent in the European context when addressing the problem of violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation as well as others. This first stage of pointing and denouncing this

form of violence establishes a framework for the imminent Directive 2000/78/EC approved in 2000 to tackle discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the fields of employment and occupation. As numerous fields were not contemplated in this fight against LGBT-phobia, in 2008 the COM(2008)426 final proposed a Council Directive to ensure the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective on sexual orientation and other issues, even though it has not been yet approved. The EU continues its work in 2010, by creating a platform for exchanging and sharing experiences and good practices called EU Platform of Diversity Characters. The EC sets in 2015 a List of Actions that brands all the relevant areas that need to be taken into account when working on LGBTQI issues. Finally, in 2020 the EC has presented the first-ever EU LGBTQI+ Equality Strategy, which aims to put an end on violence and discrimination against the LGBTQI+ community through the following

pillars: tackling discrimination, ensuring safety and building inclusive societies.

Figure 12 - European Commission Political Steps

LGBTIQ+ in Europe step by step
1999 - Treaty of Amsterdam

Since 1999, the European Union has identified specific bodies with competencies to act in cases of discrimination based on sexual orientation. Since then, European legislation has developed measures to ensure the juridical and social protection of people who were discriminated or suffered violence due to their sexual orientation.

The EU had for the first time the possibility to intervene and take adequate measures to fight discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.
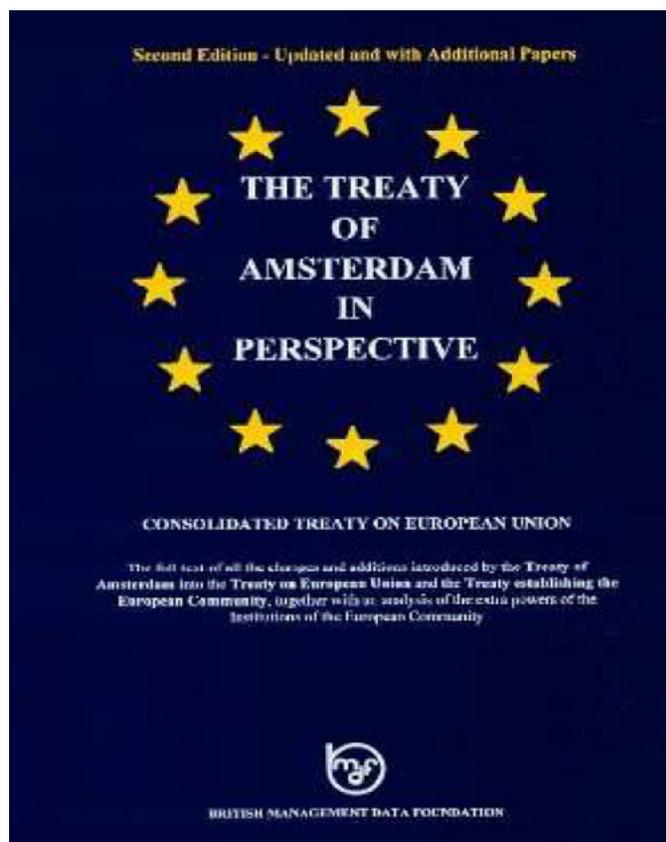

Figure 13 - The Treaty of Amsterdam in Perspective

2000 - Directive 2000/78/EC

Since the year 2000, discrimination on the basis of – inter alia – sexual orientation in the field of employment and occupation is prohibited under Directive 2000/78/EC. This meant that in the European Union:

■ People are protected by the law if, for example, they think they are being treated unfairly when applying for a job because of the sexual orientation.

■ Everyone is protected by the law if, for example, in a working environment where colleagues discriminate against their co-workers – such as by calling them names or making jokes at their expense because of their sexual orientation.

■ People are protected by the law if, for example, their boss refuses their promotion or training because of their sexual orientation.

This new legal basis to fight discrimination and violence on the ground of sexual orientations in the field of employment and occupation sets a significant precedent in the European context. This first Directive on the discrimination based on sexual orientation had important impact in the fight of one very invisible form of discrimination and violence that occurs in a field highly relevant to determine the quality of life and future perspective of people, namely professional growth and equal opportunities in the workplace.

2003 - Directive 2000/78/EC application into National Laws

After the adoption of the Directive in 2000 by the EU Council and the European Parliament, it was transposed into the National legislations of the European Union members. This was done by the then Members States of the EU (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands; Portugal,

Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom) on 2 December 2003.Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia did so on 1 May 2004), while, Romania and Bulgaria adopted the Directive on 1 January 2007.

2008 - COM(2008)426 final

In 2008 The EC published a proposal for a Council Directive on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, with the aim of eradicating any form of discrimination within the European Union. This proposal defines equal treatment as the absence of direct or indirect discrimination on any grounds. The Directive frames for the first-time different forms of discrimination and violence to ensure equal treatment of everyone as follows:

■ Firstly, it introduces the concept of direct discrimination as the form of unequal treatment to someone when they are treated less favourably than others on the above-mentioned grounds.

■ Secondly, indirect discrimination is defined as, when in an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice, a disadvantage suffered by someone from a particular religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

■ Thirdly, harassment is also framed as a form of violence that violates the dignity of the person and creates hostile environments through intimidation, humiliation or offence.

This proposed Directive aims to reach the prohibition of discrimination to all persons within the European Union, in both the public and private sector and with a special emphasis on social protection (including social security and healthcare), social inclusion and education. This strategy was implemented in the different countries of the EU through the creation of specific equality bodies These bodies could be part of National Agencies

and had the aim of defencing Human Rights and protecting individual rights.

2010 - EU Platform of Diversity Characters

The EU Platform of Diversity Charters was created in 2010 under the initiative of and with funding from the European Commission. The Platform offers a space for existing European Diversity Charters (currently 26) to exchange and share experience and good practices more easily through Platform meetings, expert seminars and annual high-level forums.

Diversity Charters encourage organisations (NGOs, public bodies, private companies) to develop and implement diversity and inclusion policies. By signing a charter, the organisation voluntarily commits to promote diversity and equal opportunities in the workplace, regardless of, for example, age, disability, gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation. Becoming a signatory to a Diversity Charter provides for example access to vast peer network, publications and supporting tools for benchmarking, measuring and monitoring. Through the platform, promoters could meet regularly, to share their experience and develop common tools and practices.

2015 - List of Actions

In 2015 the List of Actions to improve the rights and ensure legal protection of LGBTI people was developed in different key areas of EU competences. This new strategy intended to cover the equal treatment of all LGBTQI people and their families by proposing good practices and their implementation in the Equality bodies' decision-making, advisory function and to foster follow-up in the EU member States. As most of the States members of the EU showed no enough familiarity to the application of the regulation, further training for authorities at national level was recommended for better implementation of the Actions. One of the most visible changes implemented was related to the regulations on the property regimes of international couples, marriages and registered part-

nerships, which was gender neutral and included same-sex couples as well. These new regulations were adopted by almost all the Member States in 2019.

This strategy also aimed to monitor and enforce the existing rights of LGBTQI+ people and their families under the EU Law. In this sense, the development of the Victims' Right Directive contains general norms that ensure that all victims are recognised and treated in a respectful, sensitive, professional and non-discriminatory manner. As the case of LGBTI is especially vulnerable when suffering crimes, there is a special emphasis in identifying their needs, receive a timely and individual assessment for specific protection. As well, this action also affects the way in which the concept of 'family members' is formulated in National Laws in terms of inclusion of same-sex couples; for that, this Directive requires to recognize the right to support and protection of same-sex and the inclusion of unmarried partners as well.

Dissemination and reach out to the whole society are another key area of the inclusion of the LGBTQI+ community and prevention of their discrimination by the EU. The EU has created different tools to make this reality visible, the importance of supporting and fostering diversity and working on a non-discriminatory perspective. In order to achieve the highest impact in the prevention of discrimination and promotion of rights for LGBTQI+ people in the EU, there are few areas that have been promoted for to support the key actors and agents who are responsible for this transformation. The case of hate crime and hate speech has been targeted by EU politics in order to combat certain forms of discrimination and hate such as racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. For that, the European Commission has worked on improving the National Authorities' efforts and the private companies' involvement to improve the responses to these virtual forms of intolerance, including those based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

Finally, the EU combined all the already mentioned areas of work along with plans for data collection and promotion of research activities that impact policy makers on LGBTQI+ challenges. The best-known practices according to this plan are listed below:

■ **Eurobarometer:** It is s a series of surveys that aim to monitor the evolution of public opinion in all EU Member States. Its aim is to assess EU citizens' awareness of and support to the European Union's activities. On 23 September 2019, during the conference 'Advancing LGBTI equality in the EU: from 2020 and beyond', the Commission presented the results of the Special Eurobarometer 'Discrimination in the EU'.

■ **FRA LGBTI Survey:** It's a project that carries out an annual survey on discrimination against and victimisation of LGBTI people across the EU.

■ **Transgender people in the EU:** In 2019, the Commission ordered a study on the condition of transgender people in the EU18. The study focussed on the demographics and social-economic position of transgender people in the EU and on how inclusive legal gender recognition policy measures and practices.

2020 - LGBTIQ Equality Strategy

The first ever LGBTIQ+ strategy presented by the Commission is built on key actions and objectives for the next five years and around four pillars. This strategy foresees the reinforcement of the role of equality bodies, ensures gender equality is implemented correctly with regards to gender reassignment, covering all spheres of life and tackling every form of discrimination, bullying and stereotyping through policy making and sharing of best practices.

In line with the pillars of this LGBTIQ+ Strategy, we will present the four axes to understand how the EU intended to respond and transform the European societies in terms of Human Rights, protection and support of LGBTIQ+ people:

■ **Fighting Discrimination:** It aims to ensure legal protection against discrimination as a key for advancing towards LGBTIQ+ equality. For that, a report on the application of Employment Equality Directive will be published by 2022 and afterwards the Commission will put forward new legislation, namely on strengthening the role of equality bodies. The Commission will also put forward a regulatory framework that will specifically address the risk of bias and inherent discrimination in artificial intelligence (AI) systems.

■ **Ensuring Safety:** LGBTIQ+ people disproportionately suffer from hate crimes, hate speech and violence while the under-reporting of hate crimes remains a serious problem. To harmonise protection against anti-LGBTIQ+ hate crime and hate speech, the Commission will present an initiative in 2021 to extend the list of hate crime and hate speech crimes, including when targeted at LGBTIQ+ people. In addition, the Commission will provide funding opportunities for initiatives that aim to combat hate crime, hate speech and violence against LGBTIQ people.

■ **Protecting the rights of rainbow families:** due to differences in national legislations across Member States, family ties may not always be recognised when rainbow families cross the EU's internal borders. The Commission aimed to bring forward a legislative initiative on the mutual recognition of parenthood in order to contribute exploring possible measures to support the mutual recognition of same-gender partnership between Member States.

■ **LGBTIQ+ equality around the world:** giving the extremely precarious situation of the LGBTIQ+ community in various parts of the world, the EC will be committed to protecting them and assert their rights. This will be achieved with the maximization of the EU impact and support, using all tools and resources at their disposal. The EU will then conduct political dialogs with other countries to address discriminatory laws, policies and practices that affect LGBTIQ+ people.

Policies on Higher Education and Discrimination

The European Union has been involved in several EU-wide challenges and has generated changes within its network for the promotion of gender equality and the inclusion of all students in the Education System. The most relevant politics on anti-discrimination at HEI's developed by the European Union are listed below:

■ Through the European Semester framework, the EC is able to monitor all the challenges related to Higher Education Institutions.

■ Taking into account the new compromises of the EU with HEI's, under the renewed EU agenda, we find several strategies to integrate inclusion and gender equality through the Erasmus+ Programme and their Strategic Partnerships.

■ In order to generate data on the social dimension, the EC has also contributed to the Euro student project. The project aims to map the impact of admission systems on higher education outcomes as well as the countries' policies and strategies in secondary education and the autonomy of HEI's.

■ The implementation of in-depth case studies of students from eight partner countries have supported the process of reviewing and giving recommendations to schools and HEI's to improve their connections and students access.

■ In April 2019, a peer learning activity was conducted on social inclusion in EU Members States by the ET2020 Working Group in Higher Education. In this activity the groups reviewed the national strategies and comprehensive approaches with long-term policy commitment on social inclusion in HEI's. As a conclusion, HEI's policies need to be included in a broader framework of transversal policies, which strengthen, develop and expand HEI's links with other educational institutions to improve inclusivity.

In order to achieve more inclusion among the EU higher education a set of evidence-based policies are required, as well as the investment in the identification of disadvantaged and target groups and the ex-post monitoring of the effects of newly introduced inclusion policies. In addition, inclusive training of HEI's staff to enhance and adapt learning and teaching practices to vulnerable and disadvantaged students is necessary to achieve real impact in the university environment.

Find in Figure 14 – Main working areas regarding LGBTI+ inclusion in HEI's the main working areas regarding LGBT+ inclusion in HEI's on which EU Member countries are currently working and generating impact:

Support on-campus
- Existing LGBT+ student societies and LGBT+ social events.
- Wide offer of support, advice and friendships networks by the institutions.

Socialising off-campus
- Existing social groups, bars and other LGBT+ spaces in the area.
- Broad set of activites for celebration, socialization and making visible equal rights and stand against discrimination such as Pride events.

Get involved in LGBT organisations
- IGLYO: Interantional LGBTQI+ youth and students organisation and network in Europe.
- EMA LGBT Network: Erasmus Mundus, Master and PhD Programs students and alumi concerned about LGBT+ issues.

Figure 14 – Main working areas regarding LGBTI+ inclusion in HEI's

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ACTIVITY 1

Instructions

According to the last progresses of the EC and European Parliament on LGTBIQ+ issues, there is a relevant stratgy on this matter for the following years 2020-2025. Please take some time to read the materials and answer to the following questions.

Questions

■ Taking the effective practices described in previous sections into account, which weaknesses do you think European Inssitutions' measures have? And which strengths? Fill the following table with both elements:

Weaknesses

_____
_____
_____

Strengths

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

■ In this activity, you should act as a policy maker within your university of your higher education system in your country. Drawing on all the steps achieved by the EC, you should propose and draft, as detailed as possible, a set of five priorities for the further 4 years:

1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____
5._____

5.2. Belonging to the Sustainable Development Goals

Precedents on the United Nations

As introduced in section 1 of this course, the United Nations (UN) has historically advocated against systematic forms of violence and discrimination and for a more equal and sustainable world. The definition of the sustainable development goals included in the Agenda 2030 has been preceded by considerable efforts in detecting, proposing and developing activities and actions by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Starting in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), the UN gathered more than 178 countries and adopted a plan of action to create a global partnership for sustainable development called Agenda 21, aiming at improvement of human life and to ensure the protection of the environment. In 2000 the UN member states in New York decided to stablish some minimums standards to reduce inequalities and poverty by 2015: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While the MDGs were still under implementation, the UN adopted the World Summit on Sustainable Development (South Africa) in 2002 which reaffirmed the need of global and community commitments to poverty eradication and environment protection. All these measures were elaborated on the Agenda 21 and the Millennium Declaration, including new goals and giving more emphasis on strategic partnerships and international collaboration.

In 2012 the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) took place in Rio de Janeiro and it led to the adoption of an outcome document, the "The Future We Want", a plan of action to develop the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A year after, the General Assembly of the UN created a 30-member Open Working group to develop the proposal on the SDGs. Consequently, the General Assembly started in 2015 the negotiation process on the post-2015 Agenda with all the Member States. The output of these negotiation ended with a new proposal of Development action, called the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This outcome presented the most recent measure for Sustainability by the UN, establishing 17 SDGs as its core in 2015. Gathering such a multilateral and international policymaking, the UN Member States arrived to some of the most relevant agreements in terms of rights, development and climate change:

■ Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

■ Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development.

■ Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

■ Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Agenda 2015 – Millennium Development Goals

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) generated a common plan by some of the world's countries and leading development institutions to target all the challenges that damage our world and society. Ranging from extreme poverty to HIV/AIDS infection and universal primary education, such agenda extended all singular and national efforts for the world sustainability to a global strategy to eradicate the major threatens to the global balance. In the present section the MDGs directly or indirectly connected with violence against vulnerable groups such as LGBTIQ+ people are presented.

The third MDG focuses on gender equality and the empowerment of women, addressing one of the biggest challenges of the world: ensuring the same universal rights for all, women and men. This is done also though the reduction of inequalities on access to education, as the latter is indeed paramount to ensure equal opportunities for all. Education was then addressed as both the source of socio-cultural discrimination and the main tool to transform and counteract this global problem. For that reason, the strategic action plan programmed for this MDG has focussed on transforming all stages of education, generating social impact in all primary, secondary, tertiary education levels, as well as in the labour market. Through all these action points the UN set the baseline to build a more equal and safer world in which the main manifestations of gender discrimination would disappear:

■ Violence against girls and women.

■ Men's and women's unequal opportunities and success in the labour market.

■ Gender-based discrimination in Law and practice.

■ The unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work.

■ Women's limited control over financial means and assets.

■ Women's unequal representation in public and private decision-making fora.

Within these areas of action, LGBTIQ+ community is also considered. In fact, there is an important amount of data which illustrates the inequal situation faced by transgender women in the labour market, or the high percentage of bullying received by homosexual men as well as episodes of sexual harassment suffered by transgender people.

ACTIVITY 1

Instructions
After reading the materials of the previous subsections, please take some time to navigate through the related links.

Questions
We would like you to reflect and share your thoughts on the following questions:

■ Can you name 3 National Laws adopted in compliance with the UN Agendas?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

■ Do you know any National workplan or strategy that has been introduce in your country in line with the adoption of the UN agendas?

_____

_____

_____

_____

■ Why do you think that the explicit mention of the LGBTQI+ rights and the violence on the ground on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression was lacking in the international agendas until very recently?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

Agenda 2030 of the United Nations

After the successful planning of the Agenda 2015, the UN Member States worked for another policy-making plan in order to work towards a peaceful and prosper future for the planet and humanity. In 2015 all the Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, built on 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets to be achieved by 2030. The Agenda 2030 moves forwards from a narrow definition of development used in the MDGs towards a transformative vision focused on the so called '5 Ps', people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. Such plan had an urgent implementation and intended to go hand-in-hand with alternative strategies for the improvement of health, education, the reduction of inequalities, economic growth and climate change.

This next step in social, economic and environmental transformation was taken to tackle different scourges that affect the world: poverty, hunger and diseases, among others. Of all the 17 goals,

health and the promotion of quality between all human beings is in the core of the Agenda, organizing all targets and areas of action around these objectives for sustainability. In this central place, the SDG 3 "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages" underpinned by 13 targets that cover a wide spectrum of realities and circumstances that threatens the health and liveability of human beings in different parts of the world. All these actions, goals and areas of work aim to promote prosperity and the protection of the environment at the same time as tackling climate change, with a strong focus on improving equity to meet the needs of all human beings where "no one is left behind".

Being our aim the understanding of how the UN has been approaching and tackling violence and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development, we should take a look at the crosscutting actions that aim to ensure equity, health and education for all among several SGDs. Specifically, we need to review three SDGs: Objective 4, 5 and 10.

Objective 4 – Quality Education

Under the fourth objective of the Agenda 2030, quality education is described by the UN as a basic human right. Quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all are central in this objective to ensuring a full and productive life to all individual no matter their origin, country, economic situation, religion or belief, sex, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Despite the last changes in universal educational opportunities around the

world, education is still not a fundamental right for children and many populations still struggle to access education.

Besides being an indicator for the future quality of life, education affects current and future labour opportunities, it also reveals vulnerabilities, structural problems and specificities, such as gender discrimination. These social and cultural problems can be solved with education, that's the reason why Quality Education is so much relevant in International Agendas and policies. For such transformation it is paramount that all nations work to ensure the universal right to education equally to all citizens.

Concerning LGBTIQ+ community, there is significant evidence, as previously mentioned in this course, of the difficult situation that this community commonly face at school, being one of the main targets of harassment. Therefore, as it is mentioned in the Stonewall International association's report, zero tolerance to violence and safe educational environment should be priorities around the world.

Objective 5 – Gender Equality

Achieving gender equality and working for gender empowerment is the innovative action included in the current agenda of the UN. Apart from being recognized as human beings, people must be considered in terms of gender diversity. Therefore, gender equality is established in this Agenda as an urgent need for a sustainable and healthy global development. This goal aims to stop ì the most visible and structural forms of gender discrimination and violence:

■ Gender discrimination in the labour market.
■ Unequal division of unpaid work: domestic and care work.
■ Sexual exploitation and violence.
■ Discrimination in decision-making.

All these areas intend to not only tackle the social problem of gender inequality and all the forms of

violence against women, but to improve the quality of life of those affected by structural and systematic forms of discrimination which prevent them to fully enjoy their fundamental rights. In this regard, it is worth stressing the UNDP-backed campaign leave no one behind where several strategies to foster equal treatment for the LGBTIQ+ community are pointed out.

Objective 10 – Reduced inequalities

Reducing inequalities is a crucial achievement to ensure that no one is left behind. Inequality is a source of distress between governments. Despite some positive sings towards inequality reduction, income gaps are deepening for vulnerable populations and COVID-19 has increased the already existing ones, hitting the poorest and most vulnerable communities the hardest.

Among the targets of objective 10, we find:

■ Empower and promote the social economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status,
■ Ensure equal opportunities and reduce inequalities, by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices

The 'other status' is a classification commonly interpreted as inclusive of LGBTIQ+ persons. While often disputed, the alleged inclusion of LGBTIQ+ persons within the 'other status' category has been made when implementing key international treaties and it is meant to capture the experience of social groups that have suffered and continue to suffer marginalization.

LGBTIQ+ persons seem to be in general more vulnerable to suffering from financial needs than heterosexual people due to stigma, discrimination and exclusion. In some developing counties, LGBTIQ+ persons can be banned from accessing to financial resources, land, and other forms of social protection, and are unable to secure income. Mo-

reover, discrimination against LGBTIQ+ persons in the familiar context, local community and other social network prevent them from accessing to economic opportunities and serve as safety nets during financial hardships.

ACTIVITY 2

Instructions

After studying the most recent challenges identified by the United Nations in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, please try to design a political strategy based on the framework of this agenda aimed at improving the reality of LGBTIQ+ community in your country.

The criteria to design this strategy would be:

■ Consider at least one of the SDG presented in this section

■ Contextualize the reasons why this strategy it is necessary in y-our country.

■ Develop a set of indicators that the strategy should achieve.

■ Indicate the targets groups this strategy will prioritize.

■ Explain which cross cutting areas (health, employment) this strategy will consider.

■ Propose an evaluation instrument aimed at measuring the impact achieved by the strategy.

Enlaces relacionados:

■ https://ec.europa.eu/info/site/files/report_list_of_actions_2015-19.pdf

■ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/tackling-discrimination/diversity-management/eu-platform-diversity-charters_en

■ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/637950/EPRS_BRI(2019)637950_EN.pdf

■ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2068

■ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/lgbtiq_factsheet_2020-2025_en.pdf

■ https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europaeu/files/docs/body/treaty_of_amsterdam_en.pdf

■ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32000L0078

■ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_08_69

■ https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/higher-education/inclusive-and-connected-higher-education_en

■ https://ec.europa.eu/education/study-in-europe/news/lgbt-europe_en

■ https://sdgs.un.org/es/goals

■ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/globalsdreport/

■ https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/millennium-development-goals-(mdgs)

■ https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20(July%201).pdf

■ https://www.mdgmonitor.org/mdg-3-promote-gender-equality-and-empower-women/

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■ Setting the EU's political agenda. (2020). http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/european-council/role-setting-eu-political-agenda/

■ Tackling discrimination. (2020). [Text]. European Commission - European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/tackling-discrimination_en