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Here we are with the second issue of the EURIALO Project's Newsletter. The Project implementation has been going on, with the adaptation, testing, and transfer of the "Different In More Ways Than One" Best Practice, which was developed in the framework of the previous EU co-financed Triangle Project.

As you might know, EURIALO deals with homosexuality, discrimination based on sexual orientation and the correlations between them and the different cultural backgrounds which coexist in modern societies.

Young people meet every day other peers from China, Bangladesh, Maghreb, etc.. at school, in their friend groups or meeting places. What happens when any of them realises he/she is gay, lesbian, transsexual or bisexual? And how would teachers deal with possible bullying against a LGBT African boy or girl, for instance? Who could they possibly ask for help or support? And how could they talk about the issue in a constructive manner with the young? Who should a LGBT boy or girl be referred to when struggling with his/her homosexuality? A psychologist? A counsellor?

EURIALO would like to answer such questions and, most importantly, would like to do so by proposing tangible tools helping the people that deal with the youth, especially teachers and educators, but also psychologists, psychotherapists, and psycho/social/healthcare workers, if boys and girls feel uncomfortable with their own homosexuality when dealing with their school-mates, friends, or families.

As you can infer from the results of the first stages of our Project all Partner Countries still lack well-structured tools helping the above-mentioned professional figures in their daily activities with boys and girls who are growing up and trying to define their selves – although in some of them the LGBT issues are more debated and there is significant awareness.

The Main Results of EURIALO's Desk and Field Research Studies

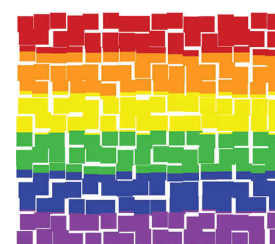
As it was envisaged in Work Package n° 3 of the Project Work Plan, the EURIALO Partners have analysed the contexts where discrimination based on sexual orientation occurs, also with reference to cultural differences, within the Educational and Vocational Training Systems of their Countries; they also examined the features of such discrimination for young people who are about to enter the labour market.

It is worth highlighting that, in Italy, the first research and analysis step was implemented differently compared to the other Countries. As a matter of fact, the Italian partners have simply updated the context analysis that had already been carried out for the development of the Triangle Project's Best Practice; meanwhile, they have developed and tested the tools to be used in order to analyse the needs of the target groups (activity envisaged in Work Package n° 4).

The Partners from all other Countries, instead, have carried out an in-depth context analysis, which was essential to identify the areas of transferability of the tools and methods provided by the Triangle Best Practice.

The following actions were carried out in the various Partner Countries:

- Analysis of the national strategies adopted in the educational and Vocational Training Systems of the Partner Countries, in order to fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation and identity, in view of the entry and stay of young people in the labour market;
- Identification and mapping of any project/initiative targeting discrimination based on sexual orientation in the schools and partner organisations involved in the BP transfer activities.



◆ Comparing The Transnational Research Studies

The equal treatment and non-discrimination principles are key to the European social model, as it was reaffirmed in the “Green Paper” presented by the Commission in Brussels on May 28th 2004. A lot has been done since the EU Member States agreed that joint action was needed to counter discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, personal beliefs, age, sexual choices, and disabilities, but a lot still needs to be done.

The picture outlined by the EURIALO Project Partners confirmed the analysis provided in the second section the Report on discriminations and homophobia in the various EU Countries, drawn up by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). In particular, the aforesaid Report places special focus on the EVT systems and the strategic actions carried out within such systems in order to counter marginalisation and exclusion.

The comparative analysis of the results obtained by the EURIALO Partners allowed outlining the situation in the different Countries involved in the research.

Spain

As to the Spanish regulatory framework, national laws are in force in Spain providing for equality in all respects. A specific law provides for the rights of transsexual people in terms of social services and, as everybody knows, same-sex partnerships and marriages are allowed. As to the initiatives and activities carried out in the Spanish civil society and vocational training system, there are the SOS Homophobia Help Line, some training activities for police personnel helping them to better deal with discrimination; numerous school programs tackling the discrimination topic, as well as support groups for HIV-positive people, and discussion groups with immigrants aiming at fighting discrimination within their communities.

Portugal

As to the Portuguese regulatory framework, besides the possibility for homosexuals to get married, numerous – although recent – laws provide for the equality of all individuals, including in terms of race and sexual orientation.

Some school projects were also mentioned and presented, fighting against discrimination and racism at school (My school against discrimination), as well as projects educating people to deal with differences based on homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgenderism.

Belgium

In Belgium there are numerous laws against discrimination. Same-sex marriage and partnerships are allowed, just like child adoption for homosexual couples. Very innovative and interesting projects against homophobia were implemented by some sport organisations. Moreover, some successful projects were also implemented at various levels of the EVT systems, from kindergarten up to high-school. Interesting teacher training initiatives were also carried out in the fields of discrimination based on sexual orientation and ethnicity, and social operators working with transgender people also underwent special training. It is worth reminding that a bill is being discussed providing for measures to fight against bullying at school; bullying is often linked to lack of understanding of diversities, including those based on gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.

Latvia

In Latvia, besides rules and regulations providing for equality in the educational and vocational training systems for all ethnic groups and genders, there is also the “Adolescents about Intimacy” Handbook for teachers and students, which was drawn up by the Ministry for Education and Science. Focus is placed on “diversity”, and this is also shown in an ongoing research project that tackles two aspects, namely the Latvian people’s attitude vis-à-vis gender minorities and discrimination based on sexual orientation. Furthermore, in late 2009, some Guidelines were published on the 2010-2019 national integration policies.



Italy

Unlike the other above-mentioned Countries, in Italy there exist no specific laws providing for same-sex partnerships and their rights. Among the initiatives implemented by some national associations that have an impact on the Italian civil society, it is worth mentioning the national Gay Help Line and various local ones. In the last five years, some projects have been launched fighting against discrimination based on ethnicity and sexual orientation at school. The organisation and structure of the Italian EVT system – where some management powers are shared by the Central and Regional Governments – make it difficult to provide a general overview of the Regional and even Provincial initiatives carried out. As a matter of fact, there exists no such an actor tasked with centrally monitoring the ongoing projects and activities fighting against discrimination based on ethnicity or sexual orientation.

From the above overview it can clearly be inferred that, in some Countries (including Spain, Belgium, and Portugal), there are effective rules and regulations providing for the equality of rights and duties of non-heterosexual people. As a matter of fact, all Partner Countries have similar laws against discrimination based on ethnicity, while their legislations place different “focus” on discrimination based on sexual orientation.

However, in the Countries lacking an adequate regulatory framework, numerous initiatives and projects are launched and implemented by local Associations and Schools, aiming at raising the awareness and promoting the fight against the above-mentioned types of discrimination. In fact, as it is explained in the FRA Agency Report, where there is a weak regulatory framework, the actors involved in education, vocational training, and social work promote initiatives that are fully in line with the EU recommendations, thus contributing promoting and spreading the culture of knowledge and respect for the individual in his/her entirety. Significant results will be recorded through the activities envisaged in WP4, aiming at analysing the needs of the Eurialo Project’s target groups, namely teachers, school and VT operators, students (including boys and girls). Once such needs are identified, it will then be extremely interesting to assess them against the existing national policies.



♦ Analysing The Needs Of The Target Groups

This field research activity was carried out by using the survey tools developed in the framework of WP3. Actually, after analysing their national legislations fighting specifically against discrimination based on sexual orientation and ethnicity, and mapping the existing initiatives aiming at countering discrimination in the EVT systems, the Partners were tasked with involving the direct beneficiaries of the Eurialo Project – that is, teachers and social/psycho/healthcare workers – as well as its indirect targets – students – and analyse their ideas on the above-mentioned topics, as well as their explicit and implicit education and training needs.

The Italian Partners have then reviewed the questionnaire utilised to develop the triangle Best Practice, by introducing some changes and complementing it, so to make it more suitable to the contexts of the new Partner Countries and more effective in analysing the needs of the target groups.

The questionnaire was then administered in all Partner Countries with a view to understanding the needs of the target group, and the qualitative and quantitative data collected was analysed. Below are some remarks – by Country – on both the field research quantitative results (resistance/problems and type of cooperation) and the information obtained through the questionnaires.

Italy

--> Cooperation

Generally speaking, cooperation was good and a proactive attitude was shown by the Partners. All Partners were particularly interested in the Project, and through it would contribute spreading information and educating the target groups in the field of discrimination based on sexual orientation or ethnicity.

--> Qualitative and Quantitative Data

The sample consisted of 77.9% women and 22.1% men. Age ranged between 21 and 60, with all age groups being equally represented, except for a peak between 21 and 40 (which ac-



counted for 36% of the whole sample). Some 50% of the respondents were Christian, while 50% did not declare they belonged to any religious group. The sample consisted of professionals working in the social field (including psychologists, counsellors, educators, therapists, etc.) and teachers mostly working in high-schools.

For the sample, homosexuality is still a problem in our society, although they consider homosexuality as natural as heterosexuality. Moreover, they are mostly in favour of same-sex partnerships and marriage.

As far as their education and training are concerned, 50% of the respondents have tackled the topics of ethnic and cultural differences, while 73% did not get any education or training on homosexuality. As a matter of fact, 80% of them would like to get some support in their teaching and counselling activities with gay and lesbian people.

Most respondents are in favour of tackling the topic of homosexuality with boys and girls both at school and in the social/health sectors, including with boys and girls of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, as they think it might contribute increasing tolerance of gay and lesbian people and making people understand the value of difference.

70% of the respondents have tackled the theme of homosexuality with their targets, but not systematically. Actually, they think their own relational skills are adequate and feel quite confident in dealing openly with homosexuality-related issues. However, they expressed the need to get a deeper understanding of the theme, get more information on both homosexuality and ethnic differences, as many think that gay and lesbian people belonging to ethnic minorities are more vulnerable than Italian gay and lesbians. Most respondents would like the Eurialo Handbook to include information on all aspects of homosexuality and the methods/ways to tackle the topic.

Spain

--> Cooperation

As school-year end was approaching and the respondents were very busy, cooperation was poor. At times, respondents seemed even bored or uninterested. This is why the Spanish Partners think that, in the future, it would be better to administer the questionnaires when there are no school activities and classes going on, so to have more cooperative teachers.

--> Qualitative and Quantitative Data

The survey carried out in Spain reflected the significant recent changes introduced in the Country as to homosexuality. However, some contradictions were detected even in the advanced Spanish context.

The sample was well balanced, in terms of both gender and age. 83% of the respondents were teachers with over 20-year experience, who did not define themselves as being religious. They work with students aged between 11 and 20.

The respondents think that the target group (students) are very influenced by social standards and their families, and are more vulnerable to psychological and social problems. They believe that gays and lesbians have moderately different problems, which are mostly influenced by their ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

There are differences between homosexual men and women in terms of lifestyles and relationships, and many believe that their psychological and health problems are also remarkably different. 66% of the respondents think that homosexuals are still discriminated and are often the victims of assaults. Moreover, almost all respondents think that their homosexual students hide their sexual orientation as they fear possible negative reactions.

All respondents have gay or lesbian friends or colleagues and have participated in LGBT events or activities. Only 17% has dealt with homosexuality during their education and training.

Portugal

--> Cooperation

According to the Portuguese Partners, religious prejudice towards homosexuality is the most significant one. That was probably the reason why they recorded lack of interest and some difficulties in discussing such issues.

--> Qualitative and Quantitative Data

The Portuguese sample consisted of 30 mostly heterosexual, Christian, female teachers aged between 30 and 50, 57% of whom work with adolescents and 30% with young people over 18.

They have learnt what they know about homosexuality mostly from the media (and the Internet for men). Almost none of them has tackled the theme of homosexuality during education or training, while one third of all respondents has dealt with cultural and ethnic diversities. Some 50% of



them know lesbian or gay people.

Teachers described their pupils' attitude towards homosexuality as mostly negative, as it is influenced by stereotypes. This is why almost all teachers think they have a professional obligation to take action in case of discrimination in class.

More than 50% of the Portuguese respondents had to tackle the topic but could not do so systematically, as they are not confident in their own skills. There is obvious need to get some support and information on homosexuality-related issues, so to acquire specific skills.

Belgium

--> Cooperation

The general atmosphere was positive and open. Due to the nature and mission of the Partner organisation, the indirect targets involved were in vocational training and therefore older than the people interviewed in other countries.

--> Qualitative and Quantitative Data

The respondent sample consisted of 50 people, with more than 50% being teachers while the others were school operators or social workers. Mean age was 36, and they were city men and women.

Most of them are tolerant and respectful vis-à-vis homosexuality and, generally speaking, they have a minimum knowledge of the topics tackled, although they have not been specifically trained during their professional education. All of them are in touch with homosexual people and they declared they worked with them without any problem.

The main difference shown by the Belgian society is that almost one third of the respondents believe that their target groups have a positive attitude vis-à-vis homosexuality. They think it is important to tackle these topics, and it is more difficult to do so with people belonging to ethnic or religious minorities. Almost all respondents are very inclined to intervene should their targets show any negative attitude, but when they did, only 60% of them had specific support tools available.

Generally speaking, the respondents think that gay and lesbian people are more vulnerable and have special needs, which should be considered during counselling. They also said they need more tools and material helping them to better tackle the topics with their target groups.

They did not express any need for additional information on homosexuality. However, they expressed the need for tools to deal with or fight against homophobia in class.

Latvia

--> Cooperation

Better cooperation and more interest than expected by the Project Partners.

--> Qualitative and Quantitative Data

The sample consisted of 40 people, 90% of whom were women. 50% were aged between 40 and 50, and 35% between 20 and 30. 60% of them do not practice any religion, while 40% are Christian. Teachers and social/school operators were equally represented. They all declared they were heterosexual, and 50% of their target group consists of young people over 18. Most of them believe that the attitude of people vis-à-vis homosexuality is still a problem in their Country, and heterosexuals still show significant prejudice. Most respondents feel they are not trained and knowledgeable enough on the topics under consideration, although some 50% of them have regular interactions with homosexual people.

The respondents think that their target groups show a generally negative attitude vis-à-vis homosexuality, and LGBT people fear non acceptance should they come out. Most respondents have never tackled these topics in one-to-one or group activities, and they do not envisage they will in the future.

The respondents do not consider homosexuality as being a priority topic to be tackled in their professional activities. Their answers to the questionnaire show that homosexuals tend to stay isolated and live separate lives for fear of negative reactions.



Summary

In analysing the questionnaire results, the various teams realised that many answers did not show clear agreement or disagreement. This made us think that, probably, respondents in various Countries were faced for the first time with LGBT-related issues.

These topics are not commonly dealt with in any Country, regardless of the procedures and regulations protecting LGBT rights and combating discrimination of LGBT people.

Most respondents think that people's attitude vis-à-vis homosexuality is still a problem in the various Countries involved, and heterosexuals still show significant prejudice. Moreover, school is undoubtedly the most affected environment by discrimination, prejudice, situations of injustice and suffering.

The school personnel are certainly aware of the issues of homosexuality and discrimination, and defend student right to be helped understanding or protected if they are the targets of discrimination. However, in essence, they do not know how to do that in the framework of their activities.

Almost none of the teachers interviewed has dealt with the topic of homosexuality during their training and education, while they have tackled the themes of cultural and ethnic differences.

Almost all teachers think it is their professional duty to take action in the event of discrimination in class, but they expressed the need to be supported and informed on homosexuality-related issues, so to acquire specific skills.

Even in the most advanced Country – Belgium – only 60% of the teachers think they have all the necessary specific support material and tools.

The least favourable contexts are the Latvian and Italian ones. Suffice it to think that, in Italy, 73% of the people interviewed did not get any training or education on the theme of homosexuality. However, the questionnaire results clearly show that the respondents are well aware of the issues and need help, as 80% of them declared they would like to get some support when carrying out teaching or counselling activities with gay and lesbian people.

Last – as it can be inferred from the Spanish data analysis – even in the Countries where significant progress has been recorded in dealing with homosexuality, a lot still needs to be done to help teachers and counsellors dealing with homophobia. Some specific needs have also been pointed out, such as support in dealing with homosexuality with people from ethnic minorities and the need for methods to tackle the topic in class.

The field survey has therefore confirmed the need to provide teachers and EVT operators with some support in developing their skills, designing methodologies and designing some tools to deal with discrimination and help the victims of homophobic and racist violence.

The Third Transnational Meeting

The Third Transnational meeting was held on October **19th and 20th 2010** in Gent (Belgium), together with the first EURIALO dissemination seminar.

During the meeting, the Project Partners presented the results of the Focus Group activities they had previously organised in the framework of WP5 (Analysis of the Best Practice), which envisaged analysing and assessing the *"Different In More Ways Than One"* Handbook and enclosed tools, by collecting feedback from teachers, psychologists, and counsellors who had already been involved in the testing of the Best Practice.



This activity aimed at:

- ◆ Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the Best Practice
- ◆ Collecting information and data to be used for the adaptation and development of the innovative contents of the Best Practice, so to be used in other contexts and with a wider range of targets (namely boys and girls in the EVT systems, and young people accessing counselling, psychological support, and health services).
- ◆ Identifying the method's sustainability elements and the tools to be widespread.
- ◆ Analysing the content to be transferred.



A SWOT analysis was carried out in all Partner Countries to collect information about the Best Practice. Therefore, Focus Group meetings were organised with Eurialo target groups, in-



cluding teachers, psychologists, and social/health operators.

Therefore, each Partner has organised a Focus Group meeting, allowing analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the *“Different In More Ways Than One”* Handbook and Theme Guides, and collecting useful information for the subsequent Best Practice adaptation step.

The analysis of the Best Practice was carried out through 6 Focus Group meetings organised as follows:

ITALIA	LATVIA	PORTOGALLO	SPAGNA	BELGIO
2	1	1	1	1

The discussion was conducted based on some guidelines designed by the Italian working group.

The meetings were organised in order to analyse all the Best Practice’s elements and aspects, highlight the sections that needed to be changed and/or supplemented, also with respect to the needs expressed by the target groups interviewed during the Need Assessment Questionnaire administration stage.

The above-mentioned guidelines included:

- ◆ a short methodological guide to conduct the discussion;
- ◆ an outline of the meeting schedule and structure;
- ◆ a data collection and result analysis form (table)

One table was designed for each aspect/element of the Best Practice to be analysed and assessed that is, the *“Different In More Ways Than One”* Handbook (consisting of the Text, glossary, and References) and 9 Theme Guides.

The following items were included in the tables:

* Different In More Ways Than One – The Handbook

- Focus on the topic
- Applicability to one’s context
- Comprehensiveness of the approach
- Methodology
- User friendliness
- Innovative nature
- Language clarity
- Usefulness in improving one’s skills
- Usefulness in fighting against discrimination
- Ability to place new focus and raise awareness on discrimination-related issues

- Ability to change attitudes
 - Graphic layout
- * Theme Guides
- Interest
 - Innovative nature
 - User friendliness
 - Thoroughness of the contents
 - Writing style
 - Graphic layout

The results of the SWOT Analysis carried out through the Focus Group meetings will be presented in the next Issue, which will deal with the adaptation of the Best Practice.

On October 20th, 2010 the EURIALO first Dissemination Workshop also took place in Gent. The Belgian organising Partner – Cavaria – invited some LGBT experts who were presented the Project and the activities carried out during the first phases. An interesting debate took place on some issues and concepts that were already dealt with in “Different In More Ways Than One”, and will certainly be included in the new version of the Handbook and Theme Guides to be developed in the next stage of the Project. The discussion focused on the meaning of some concepts such as sexual orientation, the problems relating to coming out – especially for people with backgrounds other than the Western one – and on how to provide teachers and socio/psycho/health with effective tools to tackle the topic of discrimination with the youth.

The experts invited by Cavaria showed special interest in the discussion on coming out. Mr. Kenneth Mills – who had already been involved in a Project aiming at favouring access to the LGBT community to homosexuals, and is now supporting homo/bi/transsexuals asylum seekers in Belgium – highlighted that our multiethnic societies make up an increasingly complex world, where a plethora of diversities meet and, at times, clash due to different cultures, traditions, lifestyles. In this context, sexual orientation-related issues are very delicate topics to tackle and areas for continuous “negotiation” along the way leading to respect and coexistence for all, with each individual having his/her own way of being and living in the world.



LEARN MORE...

The Summary and Comparison Reports relating to the target groups' context and need analysis stages can be downloaded at www.eurialo.eu.

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