

Policy Recommendations

A booklet of examples of good practices for educators, social and community workers, decision and policymakers

2023-2024



Co-funded by
the European Union

Project Result #3

Project code: 2021-1-IT02-KA220-ADU-000029989



idrisi
CULTURA E SVILUPPO

Jsem pro
řeknost

Nora



This booklet is the third project result of “Streets Aligned – Supporting educators towards a LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Education” (2021-1-IT02-KA220-ADU-000029989) implemented by four organisations: Idrisi Cultura e Sviluppo ETS from Italy (project coordinator), Gender Information Centre NORA (GIC NORA) from the Czech Republic, ARISTA DEKA Ltd from Cyprus and Istituto Istruzione Superiore Statale Pio La Torre from Italy.

Authors:

Mgr. Tomáš Paul, MgA. Bc. Eva Lukešová, Mgr. Dagmar Matulíková, Mgr. et Mgr. Tamara Jačisko Nasri (Gender Information Centre NORA, o.p.s.)

M.A., Bc. Marcello Caruso, Bc. Stefano Occhipinti (Idrisi Cultura e Sviluppo ETS)

MA, BA. Elizabeth Tziella (Arista Deka Ltd)

Prof., M.A, Michele Nicosia (Istituto Istruzione Superiore Statale Pio La Torre)

“Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them. “

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Examples of good practice in improving educators' competences	6
Inclusive Education Handbook: A Guide for Including Trans Individuals in Public Schools.....	6
A Guide to Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ+ Students in Education.....	6
Empowering Educators: Utilising an Online Platform for Teacher Support.....	7
Webinars to Enhance Teaching for LGBTQ+ Students	8
Infographics and Information Leaflets for Teachers' Bulletin Boards.....	8
Training on Sexting, Cyber Safety, and Safeguarding Minors	9
Exploring Diversity & Inclusion: A Self-Assessment Tool for Teachers and School Leaders	9
Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning: University Program.....	10
Ensuring Respectful Environments: Ongoing Training on Addressing Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment	11
A Comprehensive Four-Tiered Model for LGBT Inclusion in School Curricula.....	12
Examples of good practice in mobilising learners' collectives	12
Gender Equality Challenge: The Gendermania Competition	12
Artistic Initiatives Against Violence and for Gender Equality	13
University Prize for Women.....	13
Lessons, Books, and Posters for Gender and Trans-Positive Education in Elementary Schools....	14
Comprehensive Sexual Health Education: What It Is and Why It Matters	15
Celebrating Diversity: LGBT+ History Month.....	15
Courses to Enhance Skills and Knowledge for Effective Activism.....	16
Art Projects Exhibited in Public Spaces	16
Kicking for Change: Harnessing Football Activities as a Catalyst for Social Transformation	17
Examples of good practice dealing with bullying and discrimination in schools	17
Student Advocacy: Ombudsperson for School Pupils and Girls	17
Mobile App for Crisis Support for LGBT+ Individuals.....	18
Human Library in Action Against Gender Prejudice.....	18

Engaging Workshops for Youth on Exploring Masculinity	19
Safe Spaces: Counselling Rooms for LGBTQ+ Individuals Navigating Religious Constraints.....	19
Inclusive Facilities: Gender-Neutral Changing Rooms and Toilets	20
Examples of good educational policy	20
Governmental Guidance in Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Learners in Schools and Colleges	21
A Checklist for Gender Support for Transgender and Non-Binary Students.....	21
Establishing a School Policy on Romantic/Sexual Relationships Between Teachers and Students	22
Establishment of a Commissioner for Oversight in Equality Protection.....	22
Online platform for LGBT Inclusive Education at National Level	23
Everybody Changes: Respecting Gender Diversity in Changing Rooms	23
Ensuring Inclusive Social Security: Comprehensive Care for LGBT+ Individuals at a National Level	24
Introducing an Official Declaration Rejecting Unacceptable Behaviour	25
Inclusive Education Initiative: Developing Teaching Materials on LGBTQ+ Topics and E-Learning Platform.....	25
An insight on Italy: the current situation of LGBTIQ+ inclusion in educational contexts	26
But the battle isn't over.....	28
What about sexual education?.....	30
An insight on Cyprus: current LGBTIQ+ policies and supporting actions	32
Good Practices in Cyprus	36
Sources:	38
References	38

Introduction

This booklet is a set of policy recommendations, a handy guide for action and policymakers in the field of training and education, but also for anyone interested in easily learning about practices that promote inclusivity and equality in any, possible educational setting. It provides an overview of specific measures designed to meet the educational needs of LGBTIQ+ individuals. These needs are inspired by a research report "Being LGBTIQ+ in the Czech Republic 2022" (Pitoňák and Macháčková 2022), which aimed to understand the challenges faced by gender and sexually diverse people. The report highlights that educational settings can be a place where non-heterosexual, trans, or gender-diverse individuals may encounter their first "feelings of hostility, humiliation, and discrimination" (Pitoňák and Macháčková 2022: 131); thus, efforts to improve this environment are in place.

A further source of inspiration for the current project outcome has been the work of Italian parliamentarian Alessandro Zan, who championed the homonymous bill (commonly known as the anti-LGBTQ+ hate law or, more commonly, the Zan bill). This legislative proposal has faced significant obstacles and, to date, has not been enacted in Italy. Italy remains one of the countries without a specific law addressing anti-LGBTQ+ hate and promoting the development of an authentically inclusive culture for the LGBTQ+ community, deeply addressing educational contexts and settings. Much of the undertaken effort is detailed in the text "Senza Paura. La nostra battaglia contro l'odio" (Alessandro Zan 2021).

The booklet offers inspiration and resources from successful examples globally. It includes measures from foreign sources not only in English but in Dutch, German, Czech, French or others, with non-English sources clearly indicated. The first category of measures focuses on improving action and policymakers' knowledge and skills to support LGBTIQ+ people better, especially addressing common gaps in their education and fostering tolerance among educators, trainers, teachers. The second category aims to support peer-to-peer relationships among people of any age, raising awareness of gender issues to enhance tolerance and understanding within learners and trainers. The third category tackles the challenging topic of handling bullying and discrimination in training contexts, may they be schools, universities, non-formal educational centres, suggesting activities that can be incorporated into any curriculum. While some implementations may require changes at the broader education

policy level, the fourth category highlights good practices worldwide where progress is being made in improving structural conditions for better integration and equality for all people.

Examples of good practice in improving educators' competences

"One teacher made remarks to my gender neutral name in front of the whole class, while another teacher gave me a worse grade on an exam after he found out that I was trans. Furthermore, I was in a dress, yet he addressed me using masculine pronouns throughout the entire examination."

(trans woman, lesbian, 20 years old)¹

The measure	Inclusive Education Handbook: A Guide for Including Trans Individuals in Public Schools
State/region	Belgium
Description of the measure	<p>The Equal Opportunities Department of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation Ministry, in collaboration with the Academy of Research and Higher Education, has crafted a comprehensive support manual aimed at fostering the inclusive integration of transgender individuals within the higher education sector in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.</p> <p>The aim of the guide is to enable not only teachers or educators, but mainly administrators and educational staff to be informed of the legal provisions in this area so that they can strive to implement best practices. It also enables each trans person concerned to exercise their rights in the various procedures that he or she must follow during their studies.</p> <p>In practice, there is often an educational gap in educators' understanding of transgender issues and the current laws (which they may, in some cases, exceed in their behaviour) on the subject. Even a simple handbook created locally for teachers can help bridge this gap.</p>
Source	<p>More information and handbook for the inclusion of trans people in higher education (in French):</p> <p>http://www.egalite.cfwb.be/index.php?id=1874</p>

"During sex education in seventh grade, our teacher mentioned gays, lesbians, bisexuals and trans people. When I included pansexuality in the test, she told me that it was nonsense and probably a sexual perversion."

¹ For anonymised quotation see (Pitoňák and Macháčková 2022: 132)

(female, pansexual, 19 years old)²

The measure	A Guide to Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ+ Students in Education
State / region	USA, International
Description of the measure	<p>The main aim of the guide is to help school leaders, action and policymakers...:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to ensure that all students feel safe, seen and capable of success; - to ensure that the curriculum is as complete and representative as possible; - to ensure that the school climate fosters open and respectful dialogue among all students and staff; - to prepare youth to engage and thrive within our diverse democracy. <p>This manual draws its foundation from the extensive initiative of <i>Teaching Tolerance</i>, established in 1991 as a non-profit organisation devoted to serving educators. Committed to the mission of aiding them and educational contexts in equipping children and youth to actively engage as contributors to a diverse democracy, <i>Teaching Tolerance</i> publishes its magazine three times a year. Furthermore, the organisation offers complimentary educational materials, lessons, and tools to support educators dedicated to the implementation of anti-bias practices within their classrooms and schools.</p>
Source	<p>More about the Tolerance Guide (in English): https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2018-09/TT-LGBTQ-Best-Practices-Guide.pdf</p> <p>More about Teaching Tolerance non-profit (in English): https://www.learningforjustice.org/</p>

"Honestly, I think one of the worst moments was when my high school psychology teacher compared homosexuality to paedophilia in front of the entire class and said: 'Why is one supported and the other cured? Why don't we treat or support both?' And the absolutely worst part was the fact that many of my classmates agreed with that statement."

(female, lesbian, 17 years old)³

The measure	Empowering Educators: Utilising an Online Platform for Teacher Support
State / region	Czech Republic

² Ibid.³ Ibid.

Description of the measure	<p>Accessible and systematically structured online materials can serve as a convenient method for educating teaching staff on fundamental LGBTQ+ issues, fostering an understanding of relevant terminology, and addressing key challenges.</p> <p>In partnership with the Faculty of Education at Charles University, the Coalition for Diversity in Schools has orchestrated the creation of a comprehensive website tailored to aid educators in navigating LGBTQ+ subject matter. This resource is designed to facilitate the acquisition of contemporary scientific insights and relevant terminology. It includes downloadable methodological sheets intended for lesson planning and classroom instruction. The platform addresses essential questions, such as 'why integrate LGBTQ+ education' and 'how to effectively incorporate LGBT+ topics into teaching.' Moreover, it equips educators with strategies to navigate potential objections originating from parents, school administrators, or fellow teaching professionals.</p>
Source	<p>Educational interactive website at (in Czech): https://ucimolgbt.praguepride.com/</p>

The measure	Webinars to Enhance Teaching for LGBTQ+ Students
State / region	USA, international
Description of the measure	<p>Webinar is led by distinguished Routledge authors and LGBTQ+ teaching experts, Jen Gilbert and Devika Dibya Choudhuri. The webinar addresses the pivotal question of how higher education teachers can establish an inclusive classroom for LGBTQ+ students. It explores strategies for cultivating a safe learning environment, ensuring the availability of accessible resources, and preparing students for life beyond the classroom. Additionally, the session imparts key advice essential for fostering inclusivity in educational settings.</p>
Source	<p>Registration form for the free Routledge course here (in English): https://www.routledge.com/go/making-your-teaching-inclusive-for-lgbtqia-students</p>

The measure	Infographics and Information Leaflets for Teachers' Bulletin Boards
State / region	Czech Republic
Description of the measure	<p>As part of the international project "WITH YOU*TH towards an active citizenship," a series of infographics has been developed. These visually compelling resources are designed for display on bulletin boards and serve as effective tools for teachers, educators, administrative staff and guidance counsellors. The infographics offer a simplified, graphic format to aid in the explanation of complex topics.</p> <p>The range of infographics pertaining to LGBTQ+ topics includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender-sensitive language 2. Masculinity: pitfalls and benefits 3. Legal aspects of violence and bullying in schools 4. Sexual and gender identity in education

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Sex education in schools 6. Gender in physical education and sport 7. Gender-based violence in schools 8. Non-stereotypical choice of profession 9. Gender-sensitive education 10. Menstruation and teaching about it <p>The infographics aim to enhance understanding and promote discussions on these crucial subjects within the educational environment.</p>
Source	Infographics (e-version and print data in Czech): https://www.gendernora.cz/nase-temata/

The measure	Training on Sexting, Cyber Safety, and Safeguarding Minors
State / region	Belgium
Description of the measure	<p>The Clicksafe initiative is dedicated to providing comprehensive training to primary and secondary school teachers on issues related to cyber safety for minors, emphasising key areas such as online privacy, the risks associated with sexting, and cyber coercion. The training program is designed to illuminate these issues through the presentation of relevant statistics, trends, and an exploration of both risks and benefits associated with teenagers' internet usage. Furthermore, teachers will be equipped with practical pedagogical tools that can be seamlessly integrated into the classroom environment to address online safety.</p> <p>The strategic emphasis on ongoing education for educators is envisioned to yield more substantial and lasting effects compared to one-time educational interventions targeted solely at children. Educators, often responsible for multiple students, can provide continuous guidance and support. Moreover, the strategy recognizes that sensitising children without concurrent educator training may inadvertently widen the 'digital divide' between educators and students in navigating online risks and safety measures.</p>
Source	The Clicksafe initiative (in Dutch): https://childfocus.be/nl-be/Vorming/Professionals/Clicksafe

"A fellow teacher working at the same school told a student that if he was gay, he should try to cure it."

(male, gay, 28 years old)⁴

The measure	Exploring Diversity & Inclusion: A Self-Assessment Tool for Teachers and School Leaders
State / region	Republic of South Africa
Description of the measure	The web platform developed by the <i>Diversity & Inclusion Group for Networking and Action</i> (DIGNA) serves as a diagnostic tool for

⁴ Ibid.

	<p>organisations and civil society movements to conduct a self-assessment of their corporate culture and diversity practices. This tool is instrumental in guiding entities on their journey to become more inclusive, diverse, and attuned to the diverse needs, identities, and backgrounds of their members.</p> <p>It's crucial to note that engaging with this tool does not present a one-size-fits-all solution for addressing discrimination, racism, or workplace harassment. Instead, it offers a valuable snapshot of an organisation's position on the maturity model spectrum concerning diversity and inclusion. The platform provides actionable suggestions for growth in areas that may require attention.</p> <p>Intended for use by both management and staff within an institution, this tool assists in gauging the state of diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace. The comprehensive report generated by the platform serves as a foundation for initiating constructive discussions around improving and fostering a more inclusive organisational culture.</p> <p>The platform is a good way to find out the current status of your educational institution with regard to the inclusion of LGBTQ+ students.</p>
Source	<p>D&I self-diagnostic tool (in English): https://diversitytool.civicus.org/</p> <p>About platform: https://www.civicus.org/index.php/what-we-do/strengthen/diversity-inclusion</p>

"A teacher at the university had very strong views about gay people. Even though I am not ashamed of my orientation, and I make it publicly known, I (unfortunately) did not dare to contradict him in this case, as it would have resulted in repercussions during the examination. I found it sad that a university lecturer advocates the opinion that homosexuality was unnatural, that gays and lesbians should not raise children and basically implied that we were sick."

(female, lesbian, 24 years old)⁵

The measure	Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning: University Program
State / region	USA
Description of the measure	<i>The Community College of Baltimore County presents the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning program (CRTL) to both students and faculty. This program is designed to foster self-reflection and self-awareness regarding personal biases. The competencies acquired through CRTL significantly enhance individuals' communication skills</i>

⁵ Ibid.

	<p>and their capacity to interact effectively with diverse groups of people. The program comprises seminars and workshops, concentrating on four thematic areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Importance of Culture and Race: Understanding the significance of culture and race in educational settings. 2. Overcoming Stereotype Threat: Addressing and mitigating the impact of stereotype threat on teaching and learning. 3. Culture and Mindset: Exploring the intersection of cultural influences and mindset in the learning environment. 4. Social Capital, and Learning and Caring for Others: Emphasising the role of social capital and fostering an environment of care and empathy in the educational community. <p>By focusing on these thematic areas, the CRTL program aims to equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to create inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments.</p>
Source	Program CRTL: https://crt-cc.org/

"A high school professor touched my thigh, then moved his hand to my crotch and indicated with his hand scissors cutting. In this way, he asked me during class if I planned to get 'mutilation surgery'. This situation took place a year after my coming out and six months after my return to school following a break in my studies due to mental health problems and hospitalisation. After subsequently reporting the incident to the principal, the professor was not sufficiently punished, but instead was excused with sentences like 'you know, he's just like that...'. "

(Non-binary, queer, 21 years old)⁶

The measure	Ensuring Respectful Environments: Ongoing Training on Addressing Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment
State / region	Czech Republic
Description of the measure	<p>Providing training for newly enrolled students serves a dual purpose of educating them about their rights and establishing avenues for seeking assistance in the face of uncertainties or challenges. A noteworthy example of such training is evident at <i>The Faculty of Fine Arts of Brno University of Technology</i>, where a mandatory course called <i>FaVU Orientation</i> has been introduced for first-year students.</p> <p>The primary objective of <i>FaVU Orientation</i> is to acclimate students to the faculty environment. Integral to the course is a workshop specifically designed to familiarise students with issues related to pathological and problematic behaviour, encompassing topics such as sexual harassment, bullying, and violence. The workshop aims to equip students with valuable information about the mechanisms and tools available to address such issues, thereby empowering them in their educational</p>

⁶ Ibid.

	journey. This proactive approach not only raises awareness about higher education students' rights but also actively engages them in building a safer and more supportive academic community.
Source	Subject description (in English): https://www.favu.vut.cz/en/students/courses/detail/257773

"I am graduating with a profiling in arts as part of my high school final exams. They say that if our graduation work includes LGBT+ themes, we may not get a high school diploma."

(female, asexual, 18 years old)⁷

The measure	A Comprehensive Four-Tiered Model for LGBT Inclusion in School Curricula
State / region	USA, California
Description of the measure	<p>The <i>University of California</i> and the <i>California State University System</i> are teaching James Banks' course and his four-step program to increase the implementation of LGBTIQ+ issues in the classroom. In the state of California, several districts have taken the program as a prototype for implementing LGBTIQ+ themes into the curriculum. Educators can start with the first tier and progress to the final one. Alternatively, they may use lower tiers for earlier grades and higher tiers for advanced grades.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contributions Level: Emphasises heroes, holidays, and specific cultural elements as contributions to already existing curriculums 2. Additive Level: Integrates additional content, concepts, themes, and perspectives into the curriculum without altering its structure. 3. Transformation Level: Modifies the curriculum's structure to prompt students to consider concepts, issues, events, and themes from various perspectives. 4. Social Action Level: Inspires students to decide on and actively address significant social issues.
Source	Summary of the curricula model and its impacts (in English): Moorhead, L. (2018). LGBTQ+ visibility in the K-12 curriculum. <i>Phi Delta Kappan</i> , 100 (2), 22-26. available at: https://kappanonline.org/moorhead-lgbtq-visibility-k-12-curriculum/

Examples of good practice in mobilising learners' collectives

"I'm asexual and I came out when I was twelve or thirteen. When I confided in my classmates that I didn't like any boy, they tried to get me to start dating my friend [who identified as a boy]. I was very uncomfortable. I repeatedly told them to stop, but it took about a month before they let me be."

⁷ Ibid.

(female, asexual, 15 years old)⁸

The measure	Gender Equality Challenge: The Gendermania Competition
State / region	Austria
Description of the measure	<p>The Hertha Firnberg School for Business and Tourism in Vienna organises <i>Die Gendermania</i>, an internal school competition centred around gender mainstreaming. Its primary goal is to serve as an exemplar in the fight against discrimination and gender-based disadvantages, with a specific focus on raising awareness among young male and female students.</p> <p>During the competition, students create and present their entries to a judging audience comprising 2nd and 3rd-year female students, alongside a jury composed of both learners and trainers' representatives. Through this engaging and participatory platform, the school encourages a collective effort to challenge preconceived notions, promote gender equality, and instil a broader understanding of the significance of addressing gender-related issues within the school community.</p>
Source	<p>Hertha Firnberg School of Business and Tourism (in German): http://www.firnbergschulen.at</p> <p>Communication and Media Design - "science class" (in German): http://www.firnbergschulen.at/portfolio-view/die-scienceklasse/</p> <p>Gendermania (in German): http://www.firnbergschulen.at/allgemein/die-gendermania-ein-erfolgsformat/</p>

The measure	Artistic Initiatives Against Violence and for Gender Equality
State / region	Portugal / Minho-Lima
Description of the measure	<p>Engaging in participatory methods and artistic actions that encourage creativity and self-expression, such as wall painting, theatrical performances, photography, and the deconstruction and reconstruction of stories, can significantly contribute to fostering understanding and promoting gender equality and non-violence. The initiative "<i>AtivArte - Against violence and for gender equality</i>" sought to implement these practices across various schools in the region of Braga in northern Portugal.</p> <p>Through this project, emphasis was placed not only on promoting gender equality and non-violence but also on underscoring the significance of cultural diversity and tolerance. By integrating these creative and participatory approaches into educational settings, "AtivArte" aimed to instil a deeper awareness and appreciation for these crucial societal values among students in the region.</p>
Source	<p>Summary of project results (in English): https://eeagrants.org/archive/2009-2014/projects/PT05-0134</p>

⁸ Ibid.

The measure	University Prize for Women
State / region	Belgium
Description of the measure	<p>The non-profit organisation <i>Université des Femmes</i> is dedicated to promoting a critical analysis of society from a feminist perspective. As part of its commitment to advancing women's studies, the organisation annually bestows <i>the Women's University Prize</i> to a noteworthy university paper that makes a substantial contribution to this field. The financial prize is granted to a work from any academic discipline, with the requirement that it significantly enriches knowledge relevant to women and gender relations.</p> <p><i>The Women's University Prize</i> is conferred in three distinct categories based on the academic level of the submitted work. This structured approach ensures recognition and encouragement for outstanding contributions at various stages of academic study.</p>
Source	<p>Competition rules (in French): https://www.universitedesfemmes.be/images/Universite-Femmes/Universite/Reglement-Prix-UF2018.pdf</p> <p>About the competition (in French): https://www.universitedesfemmes.be/universite-des-femmes-bruxelles/prix-universite-des-femmes</p>

The measure	Lessons, Books, and Posters for Gender and Trans-Positive Education in Elementary Schools
State / region	The Great Britain
Description of the measure	<p>This comprehensive set for trans-positive education is curated specifically for elementary schools, encompassing a series of five lessons and three educational posters. Tailored to provide educators with the essential tools, it enables them to approach the subject of trans, non-binary, and cis lives and identities in a positive and informative manner.</p> <p>At the core of this educational package is <i>Alien Nation</i>, a book crafted for primary-aged children. This resource offers a playful exploration of gender, gender expression, gender roles, and provides a clear explanation of various gender identities. It also introduces important terminology, making it an accessible and valuable resource for fostering understanding and inclusivity in the educational environment.</p>
Source	<p>Link to the web page: https://www.theproudtrust.org/schools-and-training/primary-resources/alien-nation-book-and-resources/</p> <p>Link to the example of one of the lessons: https://www.theproudtrust.org/download/lesson-two-alien-nation/?wpdmdl=2599&refresh=647f0f3f002fd1686048575</p> <p>Links to the posters:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alien Nation Exploring Gender A3: https://www.theproudtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/PRINT-Exploring%20Gender.pdf • Alien Nation Respect Pronouns A3: https://www.theproudtrust.org/download/alien-nation-pronouns-a3-poster/?wpdmdl=2608&refresh=647f0f3f082f21686048575 • Alien Nation Trans... Poster A3: https://www.theproudtrust.org/download/alien-nation-trans-a3-poster/?wpdmdl=2609&refresh=647f0f3f0912e1686048575
--	--

"I go to elementary school. In the subject 'health education' we learned about gays and lesbians for one lesson. All we learned was that men can like men and women can like women. But if any of us dared to be gay or lesbian, we would probably die before the age of thirty from venereal disease. The teacher knew nothing about the topic. His explanation made it sound like homosexuality is a choice and anyone who chooses it is an asshole. I have to say, I was really offended."

(male, gay, 14 years old)⁹

The measure	Comprehensive Sexual Health Education: What It Is and Why It Matters
State / region	Canada
Description of the measure	<p>In health and sexual education, there can be knowledge gaps between teachers and students. However, accessible resources exist to bridge these gaps and provide accurate information.</p> <p><i>Comprehensive Sexual Health Education: What It Is and Why It Matters</i> is a webinar designed for teachers and presented by Teachingsexualhealth.ca, a website collaboratively developed by educators and health professionals. This online platform serves as a valuable resource, offering teachers and educators evidence-based sexual health information, along with a repository of lesson plans, tools, and resources.</p> <p>The website <i>teachingsexualhealth.ca</i> actively hosts free webinars and workshops, providing educators with factual and comprehensive data. Importantly, these sessions also include preparation for the challenges that may arise when teaching "Comprehensive Sexual Health Education." This preparation encompasses addressing potentially surprising questions from students and navigating potential disapproval from parents. By empowering educators with information and strategies, the website plays a crucial role in enabling a more informed and supportive approach to sexual health education in educational settings.</p>

⁹ Ibid.

Source	The teacher portal for educators with evidence-based information on sexual education (in English): https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/teachers/
--------	---

The measure	Celebrating Diversity: LGBT+ History Month
State / region	United Kingdom
Description of the measure	Incorporating an LGBTQ+ themed event or holiday into the classroom or school can contribute to a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ students. <i>The LGBT+ History Month</i> training and education package from the United Kingdom is designed for a broad audience, including those in education, museums, libraries, galleries, shops, services, networks/social groups, and individuals. This educational source serves as the foundation for the annual <i>LGBT+ History Month</i> event celebrated every February in the UK. <i>Schools OUT</i> , the organisation behind this initiative, introduces a different theme each year. They provide free resources tailored for educational establishments, businesses, services, and organisations.
Source	Link to the event website (in English): https://www.theproudtrust.org/schools-and-training/secondary-resources/lgbt-history-month/ Link to the training package: https://www.theproudtrust.org/download/the-proud-trust-lgbt-history-month-pack-2023/?wpdmdl=29699&refresh=647effc8ef4df1686044616

The measure	Courses to Enhance Skills and Knowledge for Effective Activism
State / region	Slovakia
Description of the measure	The project with the name <i>InQubator</i> is dedicated to engaging young individuals in civil society and activism, with a specific focus on the LGBTIQ+ community in Košice. It featured five training programs designed to bolster practical skills for activism, contributing significantly to the empowerment and involvement of young individuals in activism within the LGBTQ+ community. The primary emphasis of the project centered on the situation of LGBTQ+ people in Slovakia, especially the youth. These young individuals not only actively participate in community activities but also aspire to contribute to broader societal initiatives. Many exhibit leadership qualities or possess the potential to become leaders, while others express interest in various community engagement endeavours. The project, through its diverse activities, aimed to address the prevailing societal attitudes in Slovakia, which may not be very positive towards the LGBTQ+ community.
Source	Project website (in Slovak): https://www.pridekosice.sk/inqubator-obcianskej-participacie/ EEA grants summary (in English):

	https://eeagrants.org/archive/2014-2021/projects/SK-ACTIVECITIZENS-0167
--	---

The measure	Art Projects Exhibited in Public Spaces
State / region	Hungary
Description of the measure	<p>The project <i>Labrisz Lesbikus Egyesület</i> aimed to facilitate information exchange among civic organisations and cultivate heightened sensitivity towards diverse minority groups. It involved orchestrating meetings to foster collaborative projects, with a specific emphasis on art workshops as a platform for voluntary activities.</p> <p>Notably, key components of the initiative included the <i>Me the Volunteer</i> metro campaign and a peripatetic exhibition. The project yielded positive outcomes, including heightened visibility of LGBTIQ+ issues in public spaces, education, and culture. This, in turn, contributed to a more diverse civil sector and elevated the quality of voluntary activities.</p>
Source	<p>Website of the movement (in Hungarian):</p> <p>https://labrisz.hu/index.php?&language=hu&language=en</p>

The measure	Kicking for Change: Harnessing Football Activities as a Catalyst for Social Transformation
State / region	Poland
Description of the measure	<p>Football and other team sports emerge as potent instruments in confronting discrimination against women, non-binary individuals, and other historically marginalised people in sports. Their inclusion becomes crucial in spaces traditionally viewed as exclusive. Introducing sports activities explicitly designed for the LGBTQ+ community assumes a pivotal role in combating discrimination within school gym environments.</p> <p>In a notable initiative, <i>Female* Football as Change</i> from Poland, over 200 individuals actively participated in training sessions. This project focused on benefiting those identifying as women, including cisgender, non-binary, transgender, and queer individuals who often face various forms of discrimination. By leveraging sports, particularly football, as a vehicle for positive change, this project not only promotes physical activity but also challenges stereotypes and fosters a more inclusive and supportive environment within the realm of sports.</p>
Source	<p>Project website (in English):</p> <p>https://www.fundacijadlawolnosc.org/en/female-football-as-change/</p>

Examples of good practice dealing with bullying and discrimination in schools

"My classmates in elementary school thought I looked gay, so they used to beat me, stab me with circulars, spit on me, kick me and throw my things out the window."

(male, gay, 16 years old)¹⁰

The measure	Student Advocacy: Ombudsperson for School Pupils and Girls
State / region	Sweden
Description of the measure	<p>The <i>Swedish Child and School Student Representative (BEO)</i> operates as a vital component of the <i>Swedish School Inspectorate</i>, colloquially known as the ombudsperson for schoolchildren. This governmental entity serves as a platform for individuals to file complaints concerning schools that are perceived to inadequately address humiliating treatment or neglect prevention.</p> <p>Endowed with robust legal powers, the representative of the <i>Swedish school children, students, and pupils</i> holds the authority to stipulate that schools must adhere to the Education Act in the future. Additionally, they can pursue compensation on behalf of the child or student affected. In cases where the school is unwilling to provide compensation, the <i>BEO</i> has the authority to represent the children or learners and seek damages through civil action in court. This framework underscores the commitment to ensuring the well-being and rights of students within the educational system.</p>
Source	<p>BEO: information for teachers (in English): https://www.rfsu.se/globalassets/pdf/information-for-teachers.pdf</p> <p>BEO and school inspections (in English): https://www.skolinspektionen.se/other-languages/english-engelska/</p> <p>A case study of the Swedish School Inspectorate (in English): https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1756061617302355</p>

"Reporting it to the school would be pointless. We don't deal with such things at our school. Most people, including teachers and staff, are homophobic."

(non-binary, in search of sexual self-identification, 14 years old)¹¹

The measure	Mobile App for Crisis Support for LGBTQ+ Individuals
State / region	Poland
Description of the measure	<p>A mobile application can serve as a swift and convenient means for LGBTQ+ pupils to access support during crisis situations. Following a validated model of online psychological interventions, the Polish stand-alone app is the outcome of a participatory, multi-stage development process. Actively engaging LGBTQ+ individuals throughout its creation ensures the application is tailored to address their specific needs. This initiative is part of a broader project aimed at supporting the vulnerable LGBTQ+ community confronting exclusion and discrimination in Poland.</p>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

Source	Website of the mobile app (in Polish): https://interwencjelgbt.org.pl/download-app/
--------	---

"A high school class teacher yelled at me in front of my classmates that 'I'm a woman and I'm not remade yet'. After this incident, he openly supported all the taunts, bullying, and transphobic statements made by my classmates, and he himself instigated them with his comments about me in class too. In the following classes, he also harassed me with inappropriate questions about my sex life (I was not even eighteen years old yet) or brought up tabloid articles, for example about the correlation between increased aggression and taking hormones. In this context, he then asked me if I might become a serial killer or a paedophile."
(trans man, gay, 23 years old)¹²

The measure	Human Library in Action Against Gender Prejudice
State / region	Croatia
Description of the measure	Utilising human libraries proves to be a powerful tool in enriching community understanding of marginalised or discriminated groups. An illustrative human library initiative from Croatia aimed to cultivate awareness among the public, fostering acceptance while concurrently reducing prejudice and stereotypes. This action seeks to inform the general public about the challenges faced by vulnerable groups (LGBTIQ+, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and more), elevate the visibility of human rights issues in local communities, empower members of these groups, and enhance the capacity of local Civil Society Organizations. The project significantly contributed to the empowerment of vulnerable group members and increased awareness among visitors. Through engaging with 'books', participants had the opportunity to gain insights into the challenges and discrimination faced by these individuals in their daily lives. This approach proved effective in fostering empathy, breaking down stereotypes, and building bridges of understanding within the community.
Source	Website of the grant financing the human library in Primorsko-goranska županija (in English): https://eeagrants.org/archive/2009-2014/projects/HR02-0023

The measure	Engaging Workshops for Youth on Exploring Masculinity
State / region	Belgium
Description of the measure	Conducting seminars to address specific issues or needs of LGBTIQ+ individuals is another effective approach to raising awareness and fostering understanding. An example is <i>Genderklik</i> , the official website of the Flemish government, which provides educational material for

¹² Ibid.

	young people on masculinity along with a creative guide tailored for teachers and schools. This guide incorporates workshops focused on addressing gender stereotypes, particularly those related to men and masculinity. By offering targeted educational resources and workshops, initiatives like <i>Genderklik</i> contribute to a more informed and inclusive approach to gender-related issues in educational settings.
Source	Educational material for young people about masculinity and a creative guide for teachers and schools (in Dutch): http://genderklikvoorjongens.be/lesmateriaal.html#deboodschap

The measure	Safe Spaces: Counselling Rooms for LGBTQ+ Individuals Navigating Religious Constraints
State / region	International
Description of the measure	These counselling rooms have been established to cater to the needs of LGBTQ+ individuals facing the intersection of their sexual orientation and religious beliefs. Designed as safe and confidential spaces, these rooms offer support and guidance tailored to the unique challenges experienced by individuals navigating both their LGBTQ+ identity and religious affiliations.
Source	Links to particular Counselling Rooms (in English): LGBTQ+ Muslim groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hidayah: https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.hidayahlgbt.co.uk/&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1704473856777862&usg=AOvVaw3L9dJ9B9a40VgwBN58Nh9c ● Imaan: https://imaanlondon.wordpress.com/ ● the Muslim Youth Helpline: https://myh.org.uk/ LGBTQ+ Jewish group: Keshet UK: https://www.keshetuk.org/ LGBTQ+ Christian group: One Body One Faith: https://www.onebodyonefaith.org.uk/ LGBTQ+ Catholic group: Quest: https://questlgbti.uk/

"I have encountered bullying in physical education. When I was still in elementary school, we had PE together with another class. They constantly yelled that I'm a 'faggot' and that I deserved to die. They threatened to hurt me. I was honestly scared, and the physical education started to disgust me."

(female, asexual, 17 years old)¹³

The measure	Inclusive Facilities: Gender-Neutral Changing Rooms and Toilets
-------------	---

¹³ Ibid.

State / region	USA
Description of the measure	Physical education, changing rooms and school toilets are often situations of frequent conflict and bullying for LGBTIQ+ people. As part of the inclusive LGBTIQ+ policy at <i>Bates College</i> , gender-neutral toilets and changing facilities, or single-person changing and shower facilities, are in place to allow trans and other LGBTIQ+ students to change for physical education classes in a safe environment.
Source	Link to the subpage of the official Bates College website that deals with the topic of LGBTQ+ students (in English): https://www.bates.edu/oie/student-support-resources/lgbtqiap2-bates/#all-gender-restrooms

Examples of good educational policy

“It is very uncomfortable to have my old name, under which I no longer want to be seen, written on my personal belongings (documents, passport, credit card, etc.).”

(trans male, pansexual, 14 years old)¹⁴

The measure	Governmental Guidance in Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Learners in Schools and Colleges
State / region	Wales
Description of the measure	The Welsh Government has produced a comprehensive report to increase LGBTIQ+ people's inclusion in education. The government report summarises the measures as follows: Schools and colleges should: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review curriculum and course content for effective integration of diversity and inclusion, including LGBTIQ+ issues. 2. Record instances of homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying, identifying and addressing trends. 3. Provide regular training for all staff in addressing discrimination and promoting diversity, including LGBTIQ+ issues. Local authorities and consortia should: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Collaborate with external partners to offer professional learning opportunities for primary and secondary school staff. 5. Ensure progression in relationships and sexuality education between primary and secondary school sectors.
Source	Full report (in English): https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-report/celebrating-diversity-and-promoting-inclusion-good-practice-supporting-lesbian-gay

The measure	A Checklist for Gender Support for Transgender and Non-Binary Students
-------------	--

¹⁴ Ibid.

State / region	USA
Description of the measure	The "Gender Support Checklist for Transgender and Non-Binary Students" is a useful tool for school management to assess their current standing on inclusivity. This checklist serves as a comprehensive guide for schools to evaluate and, if necessary, enhance conditions to better support transgender and non-binary learners within the educational environment. By utilising this checklist, institutions can systematically address areas that may require improvement and work towards creating a more inclusive and supportive space for all students, irrespective of their gender identity.
Source	Link to the checklist (in English): https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/welcoming-schools/documents/WS_Gender_Support_Checklist_Transgender_and_Non-Binary_Students.pdf?mtime=20200713131811&focal=none Link to the organisation's website (in English): https://welcomingschools.org/resources

The measure	Establishing a School Policy on Romantic/Sexual Relationships Between Teachers and Students
State / region	USA
Description of the measure	The University of Iowa declares a university policy on romantic/sexual relationships between faculty and students. This policy requires the elimination of potential conflicts of interest when a romantic or sexual relationship exists between a faculty member and a student (teaching, grading, or supervising the academic work of his/her spouse is prohibited).
Source	University of Iowa: https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/community-policies/consensual-relationships-involving-students

The measure	Interdepartmental Action Plan for LGBTQ+ politics
State / region	Berlin
Description of the measure	Berlin is a pioneer in its national LGBTIQ+ policy. Initiative " <i>Berlin supports self-determination and acceptance of sexual diversity</i> " (IGSV) is aimed at all people living in Berlin and it sets the political framework for all the work of the Berlin Senate on LGBTI issues. The IGSV is an action plan with 92 individual measures divided into nine action areas. Two are explicitly dedicated to education. Most of the 92 measures have already been completed or are currently being implemented. The IGSV's initiative aims to mainstream anti-discrimination and diversity as intersection themes in public administration plays an important role in ensuring that public services are more responsive to LGBTI needs. In addition, the Interdepartmental Action Plan increases

	the effectiveness of public administrations by helping to link their different parts, which means that all Senate administrations are involved in its implementation.
Source	https://www.berlin.de/sen/lads/schwerpunkte/lgbti/igsv/

The measure	Establishment of a Commissioner for Oversight in Equality Protection
State / region	Serbia
Description of the measure	<p>Serbia has established the position of Equality Commissioner under the Discrimination Act. This is an independent, autonomous and specialised state body which, among other things, implements educational activities aimed at preventing discrimination and promoting equality.</p> <p>One of them is the "Discrimination Busters" Panel of Young Commissioners. This panel consists of children and young adolescents who participate in workshops and activities prepared by the current Equality Commissioner. The Commissioner explains the issues of discrimination, respect for human rights and equality to the panellists. The panellists learn to express their views on discrimination and its causes, as well as to design effective prevention programmes and activities against discrimination. The programme also relies on the dissemination of the knowledge and expertise gained by the panellists towards the wider community and peer groups.</p>
Source	<p>Position of Equality Commissioner: https://ravnopravnost.gov.rs/en/background-information/ Discrimination Busters" Panel of Young Commissioners: http://ravnopravnost.gov.rs/en/children-should-be-taught-tolerance-and-respect-for-diversity/</p>

The measure	Online platform for LGBT Inclusive Education at National Level
State / region	Scotland
Description of the measure	<p>Since 2021, Scotland has mandated LGBTIQ+ inclusive education as a national requirement for schools. The lgbteducation.scot platform serves as a tool that fully embraces this national approach, encouraging schools to adopt a proactive educational stance against prejudice and bullying. The tool is structured into three phases, each supported by resources such as planning templates and development documents. These resources aid schools in aligning their efforts with their specific values and environment. To support this initiative, the Scottish Government has implemented a two-stage National Training Provision for LGBT Inclusive Education. This training is designed for primary and secondary school teachers in Scotland. Upon successfully completing each stage of the program, schools receive a certificate, marking their commitment to fostering a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for all students.</p>

Source	Link to the implementation tool: https://lgbteducation.scot/toolkit/
--------	--

"I was once locked up by a member of staff in the teachers' toilets, where I had to go 'so the school wouldn't be judged for me going to the boys' toilets'. The worker treated me completely inappropriately and refused to let me go into the boys' toilets despite my insistence that I was allowed to go into the boys' toilets. When I then sought an apology from the headmistress, she came down on me saying that I could not expect special treatment and that I should be grateful that I had been accommodated so far."

(non-binary, bisexual, 19 years old)¹⁵

The measure	Everybody Changes: Respecting Gender Diversity in Changing Rooms
State / region	USA, Santa Monica
Description of the measure	An effective approach to maintaining a safe and inclusive changing rooms environment is exemplified by the online training titled "Everybody Changes: Respecting Gender Diversity in Changing Rooms." This training initiative comprises 13 modules, requiring just over 30 minutes to complete. The comprehensive content of the training covers various topics, including terminology related to gender diversity, the consequences of discrimination against LGBTIQ+ individuals, and the respectful use of pronouns. By providing accessible and informative online training, this example contributes to creating awareness, fostering understanding, and promoting a culture of respect within changing rooms spaces.
Source	Link to the course: https://speakingoftransgender.com/transgender-training-and-course

The measure	Ensuring Inclusive Social Security: Comprehensive Care for LGBT+ Individuals at a National Level
State / region	Netherlands
Description of the measure	The government is working to encourage schools to pay more attention to LGBTIQ+ to improve the social security of queer people. The project was launched by the Ministry and linked to the grant scheme for financing activities in the last two years at primary schools (7th and 8th grade) and the first two years (1st and 2nd) of secondary school. The schools in the pilot project were to introduce at least 6 elements: information meetings with external experts, social interaction lessons for pupils; training or consultancy for teachers; attention to sexual and gender diversity regular lessons; Aftercare; and parental involvement. Schools had to decide for free how to put these elements into practice.
Source	Governmental website: https://english.scp.nl/

¹⁵ Ibid.

The measure	Practical Steps to Enhance Gender Competence in University Processes
State / region	Austria
Description of the measure	<i>The Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science, and Research</i> has taken proactive measures to address gender equality at universities by establishing a working group. This group's mandate is to "develop and expand competences in the field of gender equality at universities." Subsequently, the task force formulated a recommendation titled <i>Enhancement of Gender Competence in University Processes</i> (in original: <i>Verbreiterung von Genderkompetenz in hochschulischen Prozessen</i>). This recommendation outlines practical steps that universities can implement to heighten awareness of gender equality issues within the university environment and integrate them more deeply into <i>Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)</i> . These measures aim to foster a more inclusive and equitable atmosphere within academic institutions in Austria.
Source	Document (in German) - Expanding Gender Competence in University Processes: https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/dam/jcr:e7ed5a8e-bcc3-46c4-b29a-13ec15eedb8c/HSK_Endbericht-Genderkompetenz_Langfassung-bf.pdf

The measure	Introducing an Official Declaration Rejecting Unacceptable Behaviour
State / region	USA and UK
Description of the measure	<i>Harvard University</i> or <i>Oxford University</i> declare any form of sexual harassment an unacceptable behaviour. In order to eliminate the phenomenon, it is useful to establish an official document that defines the term sexual harassment, describes unacceptable and risky behaviour, complaint procedures, case management procedures, suggested sanctions and, where appropriate, makes it mandatory for students, lecturers and other college staff/officers to undergo sexual harassment training. The document is often in the form of a policy of the Rector or Dean, or another document with university-wide implications, or in the form of a subsection of a code of ethics. In foreign universities, both documents usually exist, with the code of ethics being more general and declaring a rejection of sexual harassment or bullying, followed by measures detailing specific mechanisms and procedures.
Source	Official documents (in English): Oxford University: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/harassment-advice#/ ● https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/university-policy-on-harassment Harvard University: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● https://www.hupd.harvard.edu/sexual-and-gender-based-harassment-policy

The measure	Inclusive Education Initiative: Developing Teaching Materials on LGBTQ+ Topics and E-Learning Platform
State / region	Romania
Description of the measure	<p>The project called <i>It's time to combat LGBT discrimination in Romanian high schools</i> had the overarching goal of enhancing understanding of LGBTQ+ issues in Romania to effectively combat homophobic discrimination and bullying. As part of its comprehensive approach, the project involved training teachers in implementing new curricula related to Romania's LGBTIQ+ history. Additionally, it led to the creation of a handbook specifically designed for high school students, providing them with information on how to actively fight against discrimination in their immediate environment.</p> <p>As a further outcome, the project established an accessible e-learning platform, reinforcing the dissemination of knowledge and resources related to combating LGBTQ+ discrimination in Romanian high schools. By combining teacher training, curriculum development, student engagement through handbooks, and the utilisation of modern e-learning platforms, the project aimed to create a more inclusive and informed educational environment in Romania.</p>
Source	More project information at: https://eeagrants.org/archive/2009-2014/projects/RO09-0235

An insight on Italy: the current situation of LGBTIQ+ inclusion in educational contexts

Starting from the already discussed and ultimately unsuccessful path of the so-called Zan bill, addressed and analyzed in detail in our initial project outcome, the Italian context unfortunately does not seem particularly favorable regarding LGBTIQ+ inclusion, especially in education at every level and type.

As of today, what is the concrete maneuvering space available to those responsible for managing schools, educational centers, and training institutes, including those for adults, to make their teaching, environments, and curricula more conducive to knowledge, integration, and respect towards any form and expression of sexuality, gender, and identity?

In practice, at the moment, it is possible to proceed only sporadically and based on the specific individual will of the examined educational institution or center, in virtue of its, if applicable, autonomy. A practical and significant example is the so-called "alias career," namely the

possibility, now present in over 200 Italian schools and/or other educational centers, for transgender individuals to change their name in the electronic register and on any other document issued by the institution. Since there are no national or ministerial guidelines, meaning there is no unified and formally "approved" protocol, each individual institution may indeed implement this inclusive practice, but essentially as a kind of "concession": everything depends on the will and sensitivity of the school management and the individual board.

On the other hand, as stated in a recent survey¹⁶, Italian people are largely in favor of recognizing the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals, even within the educational environment, from early childhood up to higher education. This need was strongly emphasized during the protests of the past fall-winter (2022-2023), culminating in the States General of the School, with demands to further "include" LGBTQ+ individuals in the school community, such as the introduction of the "alias" career and "neutral" bathrooms.

Among the 1,800 high school students interviewed in the cited and aforementioned survey, 58% express absolute agreement with a significant extension of LGBTQ+ student rights, with an additional 25% leaning towards approval. However, despite these sentiments, many schools still hesitate to address these issues. Nearly half of the respondents (44%) reveal that in their schools or universities (or any other training centre) topics such as sexual orientation and gender identity are given little consideration. A concerning 34% even describes these topics as almost taboo in their institutions. Only 1 in 5 students frequently has the opportunity to discuss these matters in class.

Notably, not all students share the same perspective. While over 8 out of 10 are fully or partially ready for a change, the remaining 17% is divided between those who are "tendentially against" and those who are absolutely against it. This divergence is partially influenced by the atmosphere at home: only 16% confirm having parents who support the cause, while a substantial 32% report familial opposition to LGBTQ+ inclusivity in schools. Additionally, a shy 19% admits to not discussing these matters at all within their families. Despite progress, there is still much work to be done, especially concerning initiatives like the already described and mentioned "alias career" for students who do not identify as "male" or "female." Only 10% report its activation in their schools. Half of the respondents (50%) state

¹⁶ <https://www.skuola.net/news/inchiesta/scuola-diritti-lgbtq-sondaggio-studenti.html>

that, although potentially usable by some students, the activation of this tool is not currently planned. The rest either lack information or don't have classmates who might need it.

Moreover, in cases where the "alias career" has been activated, the initiative has mostly come from students (77% with specific requests). The introduction of "neutral" bathrooms faces similar challenges, with only 17% having access, while 72% have not found a receptive school, often leading to protests (32%) or at least a formal request (58%). Only 1 in 10 schools autonomously made these decisions.

In the end, complete inclusivity remains a distant goal. Despite more than half confirming the presence of LGBTIQ+ individuals in their schools, with 18% identifying as part of the community, only 28% perceive an inclusive atmosphere. A majority (53%) acknowledges episodes of dissent and discrimination, and 19% report frequent exclusion.

Student testimonies reveal instances of intolerance in schools. Almost two-thirds have never witnessed homophobic violence, but 1 in 4 is aware or has witnessed rare occurrences. One in 10 reports frequent violence, and in cases of repeated violence, the school often took no action (39%) or issued only verbal reprimands (38%). Only 18% mention suspensions against the perpetrators.

Summing up, the outlined scenario underscores the need for more efforts in schools regarding LGBTQ+ rights. Students call for dialogue, wanting to be heard and understood. Proposed solutions include themed days and listening services with experts. Overall, the goal is to promote debate, emphasizing the importance of awareness campaigns and teacher training. The direct involvement of LGBTQ+ individuals in providing courses and sharing personal experiences is considered crucial. Students suffer from the absence of a genuine debate in schools on a topic that should no longer be ignored. "Stop avoiding the subject" stands out as one of the most repeated phrases by students, highlighting that certain social barriers persist.

But the battle isn't over...

"The Capitol Administration intends to propose to schools of all levels in the city the second edition of the "Educational City Map - academic year 2023/2024 - promoted by Rome Capital for the city's schools" (hereinafter referred to as the Map). This initiative represents a broad offering of free educational and formative activities aimed at promoting cultural opportunities, personal growth, the development of critical thinking, engagement with the arts, as well as

*occasions that educate on citizenship and participation. This endeavor seeks to integrate into the schools' educational offerings."*¹⁷

The quoted text is the abstract of an expression of interest promoted and published by the Capitol Administration, i.e., the Municipality of Rome, the capital of Italy. Among the numerous points to be developed in the form of free educational and formative activities for educators and students, ranging from sustainability and environmental protection to citizenship rights, there is also the inclusion of LGBTQ+ topics. Overall, it is a commendable and high-level initiative, not only for the promoted themes but also for the willingness to strengthen and build meaningful relationships between public education and private associations, for example. Furthermore, it is a virtuous path as it operates in the total absence of national and ministerial guidelines, protocols, initiatives, and tenders: once again, it is the "local" institutions moving, with their own autonomy, towards a holistic improvement of our educational settings and their main actors.

In detail, as written above, among the presented ideas, is the introduction of a series of sessions in schools and LGBTIQ+ association locations to "foster awareness of specific issues related to the community" and "prevent potential discriminations based on gender identity and sexual orientation to build a peaceful society founded on respect and the dignity of every individual."

What is of particular interest is the controversy that quickly ensued, underscoring how much still needs to be done to even plan, within the Italian education system, a potential path toward genuine LGBTQ+ cultural inclusion.

"With the pretext of inclusion, the same objective is always concealed: spreading gender ideology among the youngest. At school, we teach, we do not indoctrinate. At school, one should study history, law, Italian. Not LGBTQ sermons." (Baldassarre, League assessor, conservative wing)

"It seems a bit strange that there are no associations with a different point of view, supporting family and life: one thing is to educate about tolerance and respect, another is to instill in

¹⁷ <https://www.comune.roma.it/web/it/informazione-di-servizio.page?contentId=IDS1044162>

children, even young ones, the belief that sexuality and affection are something fluid, to be changed or modified as needed." (Barbato, assessor of Brothers of Italy, conservative wing)

"The behavior of the Capitol is perplexing as it invites children from all schools to educational visits to LGBTQ associations without specifying the contents of these courses and overlooking the right of parents to be informed." (Iannarelli, regional councillor of Lazio, conservative wing, Brothers of Italy)

These are some of the statements, shared on social media or through local and national news outlets, that represent the content and objective of the controversies against the Capitol's roadmap and, in general, against any other possible initiative that, even if optional and extracurricular, chooses to introduce the terms "gender" and "LGBTIQ+" into educational, formative, school, professional, or university contexts in Italy. Clarity and a genuine understanding of the proposal and its contents are needed, as in the case of the already-discussed Zan bill, which can be easily assimilated by other institutions, administrations, and educational institutions to enhance the possibilities of LGBTQ+ inclusive education.

In fact, the only (unfortunately) point in the Capitol's roadmap specifically focused on LGBTQ+ issues is project number 2 (out of 190 total) on the map, which the administration has titled "Ti presento Andrea – Journey into the LGBTQIA+ Community," with the support of the Equal Opportunities Department.

In detail, what is it, and what would it entail? Targeted at students from middle and high schools, technical institutes, but also and especially at adults and families, the program would consist of a substantially limited number of monthly sessions, each lasting a few hours, to be held at educational and training institutions or at the locations of "category" associations. Italian entities active for decades in promoting rights, culture, LGBTQ+ inclusion in any field would participate in this project: Famiglie Arcobaleno, Genderlens, Arcigay, as well as the Red Cross and AICS. The workshop program, still quite preliminary, would focus on a generic "basic awareness" of LGBTQ+ matters, addressing themes such as same-sex families and their children, the importance of the spread of the "alias career," providing an overview of the vast world of affective and relational orientations. In essence, not very different from the resources and content promoted and produced by the Streets Aligned partnership.

The significant controversy arises from the fact that, in the draft, parental consent for potential underage participants does not seem to be specified. But, above all, there is an absence of "different perspectives," namely conservative and religious-inspired views, as if these were not already widely represented in every possible Italian educational or training setting.

What about sexual education?

Already in 2018, UNESCO asserted that "sexual education in schools enables children and adolescents to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that will empower them to realize themselves, respecting their health, well-being, and dignity".¹⁸

In Italy, the discussion dates back to the distant year of 1902 when the Ministry of Education responded to an inquiry requesting the establishment of courses for the prevention of venereal diseases. The initial attempt to pass a law introducing sexual education lessons can be traced back to 1975, with at least 16 parliamentary proposals since then, **all unsuccessful**.

More recently, on 22 November 2023, four days after the discovery of Giulia Cecchettin's body, the young Venetian murdered by her ex-boyfriend, a case of femicide that has deeply resonated with the public, garnering significant attention from the Italian media, Minister G. Valditara presented the project to introduce "Relationship Education": 30 hours per year of lessons for high school students, aiming to make them aware of their behaviors and the consequences, including legal ones. These lessons should remain outside the curriculum, taking place voluntarily after school. In translation, a law on sexual education within the school curriculum will not be enacted this time either.

The result is that today, educational activities are inconsistent and left, again, to the goodwill of school administrators and regions. In the academic year 2016/2017, the most recently analyzed, out of 5,364 public high schools, not even 1,400 implemented sexual education and safe behavior promotion programs. In many cases, the duration of activities was merely three sessions, totaling six hours, mainly focusing on communicable diseases, relationships, and sexuality. Schools in the central-northern regions and major cities are the most active, with only 17% of activities involving youth in the South. Only 13 projects (out of 232) targeted primary schools, despite WHO's recommendation that children should "learn the concept of

¹⁸ https://media2-col.corriereobjects.it/dataroom/2023/rapporto_unesco.pdf

acceptable, voluntary, equal, age-appropriate, and context-appropriate sex" from elementary school onwards. Of course, the exceptions were almost exclusively centered on heterosexual behaviors and tendencies, with a total silence regarding homosexuality or any other form of sexual expression.

As already emphasized in other project results, Italy stands as the exception, not the European rule: sexual education remains non-mandatory and entirely absent only in 7 countries: Hungary, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Romania, Lithuania, Poland, and, indeed, Italy. The absence of this curriculum is primarily due to political directives and guidance. For instance, in France, sexual education has been mandatory since 2001 in any educational context, from childhood to adulthood. In courses typically lasting 30 hours, biological, social, and ethical aspects are analyzed, providing space for various forms of sexual, emotional, and relational expression. Spain, since 2005, has also incorporated sexual education within the broader framework of Citizenship Education, equivalent to our Civic Education. Even Ireland, a country with a strong Catholic tradition, has been implementing mandatory sexual education programs for students of all ages since 2003.

So, in practical terms and within the regulatory vacuum, what can civil society, educational communities, and the leadership of our educational and training centers at all levels do?

They can continue to take grassroots action and come together, as suggested by AIED (Italian Association for Demographic Education), to appeal to the government and every political entity to "immediately resume work on adapting the European WHO Standards for Sexual Education to the Italian school system." This work was concluded in 2017 by the joint committee of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education (Miur), with the participation of scientific experts and various secular and non-secular associations. The goal is to make operational the integration of guidelines for sexual and emotional education in Italian schools from the academic year 2024/2025.

An insight on Cyprus: current LGBTIQ+ policies and supporting actions

Alecos Modinos, who founded the Cypriot Gay Liberation Movement in 1987, is credited with initiating the Greek-Cypriot LGBTIQ movement through his activism. In an atmosphere that was both anti-LGBTQ and patriotic, which made it difficult for people to come together and organise, Modinos used his connections to the Greek-Cypriot political class to advocate for the legalisation of same-sex relationships. He went to the European Court of Human Rights

(ECHR), which ruled in his favour in 1993 after his attempts had failed. The Republic of Cyprus parliament was compelled to decriminalise same-sex sexual conduct in 1998 after being threatened with expulsion by the Council of Europe. This decision was met with strong opposition from the Orthodox Church of Cyprus and conservative political figures. LGBTIQ problems were once again marginalised after the late 1990s until 2009, when Accept-LGBTI Cyprus (Accept), a new LGBTIQ organisation, was founded.⁵ Accept developed an elite-targeting strategy and fought for LGBTIQ legal recognition, taking advantage of Cyprus's reluctance to disregard LGBTIQ rights issues due to its EU membership fully entails duties and certain politicians' need to appear to be "EU-friendly".

LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) rights in Cyprus have changed recently, although there are still obstacles to the law that non-LGBT citizens do not have to deal with. Since 1998, same-sex relationships between men and women have been permitted in Cyprus. Since December 2015, civil unions, which confer many of the rights and advantages of marriage, have also been allowed. Cyprus outlawed conversion therapy in May 2023.

The socially conservative Greek Orthodox Church has historically influenced politics and public opinion on LGBT rights. However, Cyprus has had to amend its human rights laws, particularly those pertaining to sexual orientation and gender identity, ever since it applied to join the European Union. The majority of Cypriots favour the legal recognition of same-sex couples as civil unions, according to recent opinion polls, indicating that attitudes towards LGBT people are changing and becoming more tolerant and welcoming.

After gaining independence from the United Kingdom in 1960, Cyprus kept virtually all of its British colonial laws; the pertinent provisions of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 were incorporated into Chapter 154, Articles 171–174 of the Cypriot Criminal Code. The articles were first contested in 1993 when Cypriot architect and homosexual rights activist Alexandros Modinos, as stated above, prevailed in a dispute at the European Court of Human Rights against the Government of Cyprus. The case was named *Modinos v. Cyprus*. The Court held that Modinos's right to a private life—which is safeguarded by the European Convention on Human Rights, an international accord Cyprus accepted in 1962—was breached by section 171 of the Criminal Code of Cyprus.

Cyprus did not formally amend its Criminal Code to conform with the verdict until 1998, despite the legal ruling. Even back then, the legal age of consent was sixteen for heterosexual behaviour and eighteen for homosexual behaviour. In addition to the different ages of

consent, the amended Criminal Code criminalised "promote" homosexuality, a measure intended to stifle the LGBT rights movement. The age of consent was equalised in 2002 after the discriminatory prohibition on "promoting" homosexuality was abolished in 2000. The standard age of consent nowadays is seventeen.

For years, the military in Cyprus prohibited homosexuals from enlisting, citing homosexuality as a "mental illness". But this excluding factor has now been eliminated.

Cyprus's existing legal system exclusively recognises marriage as a partnership between a single man and a single woman. The government does not recognise same-sex unions.

Same-sex couples can now have their relationships registered through civil unions as of 2015. The House of Representatives passed a law pertaining to civil unions on November 26, 2015, with 39 votes in favour, 12 against, and 3 abstentions. On December 9, 2015, the law was published and went into force on the same day.

Cyprus enacted an anti-discrimination law in 2004 that specifically prohibits discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation; The Equal Treatment in Employment and Occupation Law 2004. It is not illegal to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in contexts other than the workplace or on the basis of gender identity in general.

Violence against members of the LGBT community is now considered an aggravating element for punishment under the modified Cypriot Penal Code. "Intentionally, publicly or in manner which is threatening or insulting or offensive in nature, urges or incites, orally or in writing, violence or hatred against a group, person, or a member of a group of persons on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity" is punishable under Article 99 of the code, "Incitement to violence or hatred due to sexual orientation or gender identity," by up to three years in prison or a fine of up to 5,000 euros.

The Ministry of Education launched the "HOMBAT-Combating Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying at Schools" campaign in 2017 in an effort to educate and prepare educators for the harassment and bullying that LGBT students may face.

Cyprus received seven recommendations regarding LGBT rights as part of its 2019 Universal Periodic Review. These recommendations included enacting a gender recognition law, criminalising harassment, battling homophobia and transphobia, and fighting discrimination and violence. It agreed with each of the seven suggestions.

The President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades, met with the advocacy group Accept-LGBT Cyprus in November 2017 to talk about concerns related to transgender rights.

The President and the Justice Minister endorse a bill that has been written to let transgender people change their legal sex. Four parents of transgender children spoke in favour of the measure and advocated for its "speedy adoption" on June 10, 2019, after months of delaying and delay. The law would grant transgender adults over the age of eighteen the freedom to change their legal gender based only on their own self-determination, without the need for a diagnosis, hormone therapy, or sex reassignment surgery.

1. Equality and Non-discrimination

Constitution: The RoC does not specifically prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics. Nevertheless, Article 28 (2) does prohibit discrimination 'based on community, race, colour, religion, language, sex, political affiliation, ethnic origin, social status wealth or any other reason' (Cyprus Bar Association, 2019).

Employment: Discrimination based on sexual orientation has been prohibited since 1 May 2004 by The Equal Treatment in Employment and Labour Law of 2004 (58 (I)/2004) – i.e., the harmonisation law for EU Directive 2000/78/EC. This law does not specifically prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or sex characteristics, although it is considered to include these grounds indirectly.

Goods & Services: No law prohibiting discrimination of goods or services based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics exists. Health: No law prohibiting discrimination in the provision of health services due to sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics exists.

Education: No law prohibiting discrimination in the provision of education due to sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics exists.

Equality Body Mandate: The Office of the Commissioner for Administration is acting as the National Antidiscrimination Body. It is officially mandated to oversee discrimination based on sexual orientation, but not gender identity or sex characteristics, although it has been acting against such types of discrimination, and it is generally regarded to be responsible for addressing them.

Blood Donations: There is no prohibition for allowing blood donations due to sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics.

Gender Affirming Medical Procedures: There is no specific legislation prohibiting gender-affirming medical procedures.

Military Service: Gay men are allowed to serve in the Greek-Cypriot National Guard. LGBTI soldiers who cannot cope due to poor mental condition can submit a request based on their mental health status, which is then evaluated under these conditions. However for the time being, it is not expressly forbidden for trans men to serve due to their gender identity, there is a provision for a compulsory exemption in the latest draft of the legal gender recognition draft bill currently examined by the Ministry of Interior as of December 2019.

Family

Marriage Equality & Civil Unions: Marriage between same-sex partners is not allowed in the Republic of Cyprus. Civil Unions have been allowed since 9 December 2015, offering same-sex couples and married heterosexual couples equal rights, apart, apart from the right to adoption.

Adoption: Joint or second-parent adoption is not allowed. Single-parent adoption, with no limitation on the sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics of the parent, is allowed but generally not practised.

Medically-Assisted Insemination: Not allowed for same-sex couples. It can be allowed to a single person following approval of an application by the Ministry of Health.

3. Hate Crime & Hate Speech

Hate Crime Law: Sexual orientation and gender identity are expressly included in hate crime legislation as an aggravating factor. Sex characteristics are not expressly included but are implied.

Hate Speech Law: Sexual orientation and gender identity are expressly included in hate speech legislation. This is included in the Penal Legislation under article 99A - Penal Legislation (Ch. 154/99A), 2015). Nevertheless, in the past, this prohibition has been deemed ineffective in providing adequate protection. Almost no cases can be brought to justice due to the request for proof of motive, which needs to prove hatred.

Legal Gender Recognition & Bodily Integrity

Legal Gender Recognition: There is currently no law covering legal gender recognition, although there are policies set in place allowing for a trans person to change their gender and name on their national identification card (ID) only, based on self-determination and without the need for any surgical interventions. A draft bill that will clarify the procedure in full for all official documents is currently being prepared by the Government and it is envisioned that this will reach the Parliament at the beginning of 2020 for voting.

De-pathologisation: Currently, no law exists. Nevertheless, recent policies put in place by the Ministry of Interior specifically state that no medical intervention is needed to change the gender of a trans person's ID. In the Legal Gender Recognition draft bill currently proposed by the Ministry, this is also noted in a similar way.

Access to and Cost Coverage for Trans-specific Healthcare (TSHC): The state currently covers the costs for hormone treatments when a trans person request those. As no gender-affirming procedures are carried out in Cyprus, the state is obliged by EU law to send trans persons abroad to complete their treatment. Unfortunately, the current law specifically prohibits this.

Good Practices in Cyprus

Accept-LGBT Cyprus was the first organisation to be officially registered in Cyprus dealing with LGBT rights on the 8th of September 2011. It has the support of many citizens, assisted by various NGOs, the European Parliament and foreign embassies operating in Cyprus. The organisation has also had, at times, assistance from local municipalities and often had events held under the auspices of local city mayors.

Accept-LGBT Cyprus organised the first pride parade in the areas controlled by the Republic on 31 May 2014. The parade was successful, with over 4,500 marching or attending the day's events. The group had expected several hundred participants but was overwhelmed by the event's popularity. The march received extensive political support from almost all parties across the political spectrum, as well as support from former President George Vasiliou, the European Parliament's Office in Cyprus, the European Commission's Representation in Cyprus and 15 embassies who marched with the parade including ambassadors and embassy staff (Austria, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States). Furthermore, the embassies of Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States hoisted a rainbow flag. Cypriot-born international pop singer Anna Vissi also attended the march. The 81-year-old Alexandros Modinos, who won a 1993 European Court of Human Rights case against Cyprus for its laws criminalising homosexuality, headed the procession. Scuffles broke out between a group of Orthodox Christian protesters, including clerics who denounced the event they called "shameful", demonstrating outside the Parliament. During a press release, Accept-LGBT Cyprus President Costa Gavrielides expressed his surprise and joy at the turnout. The event was preceded by the Cyprus Pride Festival, which took place between 17 May 2014 (International Day Against Homophobia) and 31 May 2014. The first day of the event, a

Rainbow Walk took place to the north of Nicosia with the collaboration of Accept-LGBT Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot organisation Queer Cyprus Association, amongst others.

Queer Collective Cy (www.queercollective.cy) was formed in the early part of 2022. It is a community-driven, grassroots organisation which aims to promote empowerment within the local community across the island, and fight against discrimination related to gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. On the 18th of June 2022, they successfully co-organised and co-hosted the first-ever Intercommunal Pride on the island with the slogan United by Pride, together with the groups Queer Cyprus, LGBT Pilipinas, LGBT Africa and LGBT+ and Friends UCY Student Club. The event was warmly welcomed as the first of its kind, bringing together various LGBTQI+ communities on the island. It consisted of two separate marches, one from the South of Nicosia, beginning from Freedom Square (Plateia Eleftherias) and one from the North of Nicosia, which began from Kugulu Park. Both marches ended in the UN Buffer Zone, where in a strong act of symbolism, sewed together two pride flags that were carried throughout both respective marches.

Sources:

- Hana Tenglerová (ed.), Kamila Šimandlová, Ester Šebestová, Jana Dvořáčková, Marcela Linková. *Genderová rovnost ve vědě, výzkumu a vysokém školství: příklady praxe*, [Gender equality in science, research and higher education: examples of practice], Národní kontaktní centrum – gender a věda, Sociologický ústav AV ČR, v. v. i., Praha 2018.
- *Gender Equality Commission: Compilation of good practices to promote an education free from gender stereotypes and identifying ways to implement the measures which are included in the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on gender mainstreaming in education*, Council of Europe 2015.
- Irena Smetáčková, Petr Pavlík, Kateřina Kolářová. *Sexuální obtěžování na vysokých školách: Proč vzniká, jak se projevuje, co lze proti němu dělat. Příručka pro vedení vysokých škol a vyučující*, [Sexual harassment in universities: why it occurs, how it manifests itself, what can be done about it. A guide for university administrators and faculty], Fakulta humanitních studií Univerzity Karlovy v Praze, Praha 2009. ISBN 978-80-87398-02-9.
- Data and Results Portal." EEA Grants: Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway grants. Accessed November 25, 2023. <https://data.eeagrants.org/2014-2021/>.
- Milena Gabbanelli, *Educazione sessuale a scuola in Italia: ecco perché si è indietro anni luce* [Sexual education in schools in Italy: here's why we are light-years behind.], published on Corriere della Sera, 29 November 2023. Available online on: <https://www.corriere.it/dataroom-milena-gabanelli/educazione-sessuale-scuola->

italia-ecco-perche-si-indietro-anni-luce/b4b56b8c-8e01-11ee-80d7-6428e39ac8b7-va.shtml

References

- Pitoňák, Michal & Macháčková, Marcela. *Být LGBTQ+ v Česku 2022 - Výzkumná zpráva*, [Being LGBTQ+ in the Czech Republic 2022 - Research Report], 2023