

“IDENTIFY (WITH) YOUR WELL-BEING”

A training course for youth workers to explore their
well-being and sexual identity

Public Report



Erasmus + Programme
KA1 –Mobility of Youth Workers



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Introduction

“The Best way to understand people is to listen to them.” -Ralph G. Nichols

When we talk about supporting young people, the only way to understand what they are experiencing, is to be open to listen to them and prepare our response according to what we hear, what we see, what we observe and what we sense. This approach and understanding that young people are not only products of their environment, but also their internal processes – all in dynamic interaction with one another, provides an opportunity to engage with young people on the wholesome level and acknowledges the fact that we all have different ways of expressing your inner self.

This is the approach and the learning we tried to nurture and pass on during the Training Course *“Identify (with) your well-being”*. When we reflect now on the intense experience we shared during those days, we can say that the topic of the project is very important in the present days and represents a necessary shift in the way we talk about diversity of identities and a pathway for creating inclusive environments where expression of young people is supported by the systems around them.

I want to thank everyone involved in this project for their willingness to learn, to be vulnerable, to talk about the diversity of identities and for being brave to step out of your comfort zone.

I believe that for each and every one of us who took part in this project, there was a magic moment that has sparked the change in the way we perceive ourselves and the world around us. I know that you all went home with changed attitudes, skills and competences to build an environment where differences are not only accepted, but also appreciated.

Sandra Gojic
Project Coordinator



Outcomers



is a community centre for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in the NE Region of Ireland. Our drop-in centre, located in the centre of Dundalk, Co. Louth, has been open for 20 years. We offer a 'safe space' for LGBT people to meet, seek support and advice, and host events.

In 2010 we organized and hosted the first Dundalk LGBT Pride. It has since become an annual event and has been participated in by the wider community, family and friends of our service users, as well as attracting visitors from around the country for the last six years. These events have contributed greatly to the wider acceptance of LGBT people in the region, as well as providing opportunities for our service users to become proactively involved in their community, and to be proud of their identity.

Another strand of our work is advocacy and the promotion of LGBT rights. We achieve these through the provision of training and support to the community and voluntary and statutory sectors, and by participating on representative local and national working groups and committees.

We have been involved in ERASMUS+ projects since 2009, and have hosted 6 volunteers through EVS programme.

Partners

Connected Elephant http://connected-elephant.org/	Belgium
National association of resource teachers http://www.narubg.org/	Bulgaria
ICM Jindrichuv Hradec z.s. http://www.icmjh.cz/	Czech Republic
Associazione Culturale "Strativari" https://www.facebook.com/strativari	Italy
Bué Fixe- Associação de Jovens https://www.facebook.com/AssociacaoBUEFIXE/	Portugal
Asociatia ACCEPT http://accept-romania.ro/en/	Romania
Interregional youth social movement of support of voluntary initiatives SFERA http://dobrovolets.ru/en/about-us	Russian Federation
A.D.E.L. - ASSOCIATION FOR DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND LABOUR http://www.adelslovakia.org/en/	Slovakia

“Identity (with) your wellbeing”?

Background and theme of the training course

For most of us there is a gap between the life we are leading and who we really are. We are living in a world based on who we ‘should be’ and what we ‘should do’, and therefore we are losing connection to our true identity and our unique potential. This is damaging our well-being. We believe that gaining a deeper understanding of ‘who we are’ is an empowering process which can lead to positive life changes and minimizes negative impact on one’s mental health and wellbeing. We believe that each individual is unique and by embracing this diversity, we can enrich ourselves and indeed society.

Within the context of this diversity we take into consideration one’s sexual and gender identity and societal norms that define and set up the limits of acceptable behaviour and ways of being and expressing. Sexual and gender identity is a complex issue, influenced by culture and the social environment in which people live. It’s often seen as something that shouldn’t be discussed openly and it still provokes a lot of controversy and shame. In order to live a wholesome and more meaningful life, we need to understand social, cultural and personal aspects that influence one’s identity, and well-being.

An essential question we wanted to address throughout this TC, is how can youth workers and people who work with young people create an environment that empowers young people to freely express their own sexual/gender identity and live a more fulfilling life?



AIM:

enable participants to cultivate capacities in their own environments that encourage and empower young people to discover, understand and express their authentic self and inner diversity.

The Project

Training course took place in Ireland from 09.10.2016 to 15.10.2016. It gathered 23 participants from Ireland, Belgium, Italy, Russia, Slovakia, Portugal, Czech Republic, Romania and Bulgaria.

The working methods included case studies, working in pairs and small groups, visualizations, sensory awareness activities, contemplation, performance, role plays, workshops developed by the participants, discussions, and self-assessment.

The TC also promoted the sharing of best practices in the field of youth work.

Objectives

- ✓ To increase awareness of our own inner processes and capacities in a holistic way and explore how they are contributing to our well-being.
- ✓ To understand social, cultural and environmental aspects that influence our sexual and gender identity.
- ✓ To provide space for participants to understand and overcome blockages related to expressing our inner self.
- ✓ To stimulate the curiosity, vulnerability, confidence and resilience of the participants.
- ✓ To cultivate growth mindset and lifelong learning attitude and approach when supporting young people.



Sun 09/10/16	Mon 10/10/16	Tue 11/10/16	Wed 12/10/16	Thu 13/10/16	Fri 14/10/16	Sat 15/10/16
A R R I V A L	Building the foundation	Inner Leadership	Creativity Day	Inconvenient feelings	Transition	Departure
	Introduction and framing	River of Life	Creativity Day	Resilience	Open Space	D E P A R T U R E
	Team Building	Taking Care	Creativity Day	Resilience	Transition	
	Building a common language	Vulnerability	Creativity Day	Free Afternoon	Accountability	
	Well-being and You	‘Masks’	Debriefing		Erasmus+ Youthpass Evaluation	
	Reflection Groups	Reflection Groups	Reflection Groups		Reflection Groups	
Informal Welcome	Soft Skills	International Evening	Documenting Evening		Farewell Party	

Genderbread Person

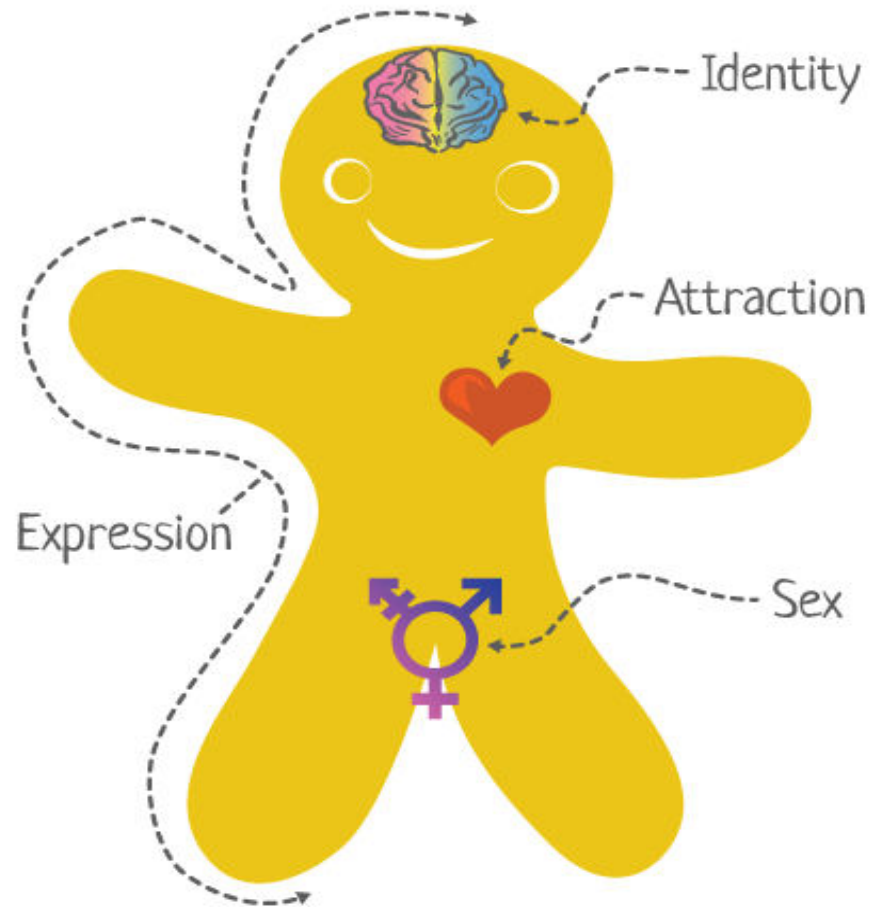
(<http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/>)*

gender identity

a personal internal feeling of belonging to certain gender

gender expression

how do we demonstrate our gender through our clothes, behaviour, interactions



sexual orientation

describes who are we physically, emotionally and romantically attracted to

biological sex

refers to anatomy and includes internal and external sex organs, chromosomes, and hormones

Testimonials



I learned that with the right people next to me I can do anything I want. But for this I'm responsible for the first step.

In this TC you can learn about diversity and 'complex' concepts in a simple way",



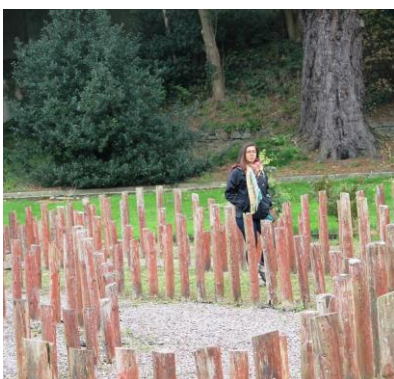
"This TC was a magical place where I became more aware of my own skills and limits"

"This TC turned on a switch in my heart; it made me more emotionally open, connected and human"



"My perception about LGBT people has changed and I feel much more informed"

"I learned that it's always possible to find mutual understanding; kindness stimulates kindness"



"Keep doing this. Continue!"



"This TC helped me to experience real diversity on different levels and to accept others"



Erasmus+ is the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport for the years 2014 to 2020. It provides funding and support for organisations to operate projects consistent with its objectives and which encourage European exchange, co-operation and learning. Erasmus+ is funded by the European Union through the contributions of member states.

The main directives of the programme are: a. Learning Mobility of individuals, b. Cooperation for Innovation and Good Practices, c. Support for Policy Reform. Erasmus+ aims to modernise and improve the quality of teaching, training and youth work across Europe, and to support the development, transfer and implementation of innovative practices.

For more information about the programme, you can read the Guide here:
[ERASMUS+](#)



Léargas manages national and international exchange and cooperation programmes in education, youth and community work, vocational education and training and adult education. Léargas and the Higher Education Authority are appointed by the Department of Education and Skills to jointly manage the Erasmus+ programme in Ireland.

For more information about Léargas, you can click here:
[Leargas](#)



Outcomers is a social and befriending community centre for gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) people in NE Region of Ireland.

For more information about our work, please try:

Email: youth@outcomers.org
Web: www.outcomers.org