

# **Limited access to active citizenship: Social exclusion patterns affecting young LGBT people in Europe**

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## **1. Recognition and participation**

Introducing citizenship concepts into the discussion of the multidimensional social exclusion mechanisms has several advantages. This approach emphasises that the inability to participate in (and be respected by) mainstream society is a violation of a basic right that should be open to all citizens; and thereby places a burden on society to ensure that it enables participation and integration of all its members. As a result, there is less temptation to blame the excluded for their fate. Instead, citizenship concepts can highlight the role of political, economic and social arrangements in generating exclusion, and the role of solidarity among members in overcoming it. Another advantage is that instead of demanding uniformity of outcomes, it calls for equal freedoms for all to enjoy all aspects of citizenship. The citizenship discourse of social exclusion thus focuses on claims for equal capabilities – to be interpreted as the ability to exercise civil and social citizenship rights – which may necessitate extra efforts by society. In this context it is important to realise that an equal starting point – i.e. providing ‘equal opportunities’ – may not be enough to ensure equal capabilities (Klasen 2002).

Interpreting social exclusion as the denial or non-realisation of civil, political, and social rights of citizenship (Room 1995) – where citizenship is defined as a status enjoyed by persons who are full members of a community (Marshall 1963) – is also a useful approach to highlight the specific nature of social exclusion mechanisms targeting LGBT people in general and LGBT youth in particular.

LGBT is an umbrella term covering a very heterogeneous group of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people who often appear with joint political efforts in the local and international political arena for efficiency: in order to get a better social representation and more political support. While there can be significant differences between the individuals signing up for being politically represented under the LGBT heading, their main uniting force derives from their social minority group membership. LGBT people are members of relatively powerless social groups, but they differ from “traditional” minorities in two main aspects: they are usually not marked by their bodies – for example, by their skin colour –, thus they are not recognisable at first sight; and their existence is still perceived in a lot of places as “challenging the natural order of things” (Gross 1991).

Political scientists emphasize that political exclusion or marginalisation of subordinate groups and persons, including LGBT people, is a wrong and harmful social practice not only because it undermines promises of equal opportunity and political equality implied in democratic commitments, but also because more inclusion of and influence for currently under-represented social groups can help a society confront and find some remedies for structural social inequality (Young 2000). This recognition is reflected in the European Parliament resolution on homophobia in Europe that called on the member states of the European Union to ensure that LGBT people are protected from homophobic hate speech and violence and

ensure that same-sex partners enjoy the same respect, dignity and protection as the rest of society.<sup>1</sup>

LGBT people as social minority group members can suffer from various forms of socio-economic and cultural injustice, but according to Nancy Fraser their political claims can rather be identified as claims for *recognition* aimed at remedying cultural injustice than some sort of political-economic restructuring referred to as *redistribution* aiming at redressing economic injustice. In this context recognition is defined as a cultural or symbolic change involving the upward revaluation of disrespected identities, or even a complete transformation of societal patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication in ways that would change everybody's sense of self.

Sexuality in this conception is a mode of social differentiation whose roots do not lie in the political economy because homosexuals are distributed throughout the entire class structure of capitalist society, occupy no distinctive position in the division of labor, and do not constitute an exploited class. Rather, their mode of collectivity is that of a despised sexuality, rooted in the cultural-valuational structure of society. From this perspective the injustice they suffer is quintessentially a matter of recognition. Gays and lesbians suffer from heterosexism: the authoritative construction of norms that privilege heterosexuality. Along with these goes homophobia: the cultural devaluation of homosexuality. Their sexuality thus disparaged, homosexuals are subject to shaming, harassment, discrimination, and violence, while being denied legal rights and equal protections – all fundamentally denials of recognition. To be sure, gays and lesbian also suffer serious economic injustices; they can be summarily dismissed from paid work and are denied family-based social-welfare benefits. But far from being rooted directly in the economic structure, these derive instead from an unjust cultural-valuational structure (Fraser 1997:18).

Lack of social recognition is closely connected to the ambiguous citizen status of LGBT people, especially if we take into consideration that full citizenship “requires that one be recognized not in spite of one’s unusual or minority characteristics, but with those characteristics understood as part of a valid possibility for the conduct of life” (Phelan 2001:15-6).

During the 1990s various models of citizenship – such as feminist citizenship (Walby 1994), sexual citizenship (Evans 1993), intimate citizenship (Giddens 1992; Plummer 1995; 2003) – were introduced, in response to the social changes and the emerging new representational claims that emphasised the necessity to broaden the scope of modern citizenship to consider full participation opportunities for social groups, including LGBT people, being formerly deprived of full community membership. The broader concept of *intimate citizenship* is centred on a fourth component besides social, political and economic rights that examines “rights, obligations, recognition and respect around those most intimate spheres of life – who

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<sup>1</sup> In this resolution of January 2006 homophobia is defined as *an irrational fear of and aversion to homosexuality and to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people based on prejudice and similar to racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and sexism, which can be manifested in the private and public spheres in different forms, such as hate speech and incitement to discrimination, ridicule and verbal, psychological and physical violence, persecution and murder, discrimination in violation of the principle of equality and unjustified and unreasonable limitations of rights, which are often hidden behind justifications based on public order, religious freedom and the right to conscientious objection.* See: European Parliament Resolution 18 January 2006: Homophobia in Europe (P6\_TA-PROV(2006)0018)  
<http://www.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade3?TYPE-DOC=TA&REF=P6-TA-2006-0018&MODE=SIP&L=EN&LSTDOC=N>

to live with, how to raise children, how to handle one's body, how to relate as a gendered being, how to be an erotic person" (Plummer 2001:238).

Similarly, the concept of *sexual citizenship* is concerned with the genders, sexualities and bodies of citizens that matter in politics, and draws attention to all kinds of social exclusions that the various sexual communities can experience in relation to, for example, free expression, bodily autonomy and institutional inclusion (Hekma 2004). Proponents of sexual citizenship point to the necessity of challenging the heterosexist assumptions that govern most societies as well as the potentially dangerous interaction between inclusion and normalization tendencies. According to this approach it is false to interpret the extension of certain rights associated with citizenship to embrace LGBT people as a success, if equality and normality is still defined in terms of sameness with heteronormative mainstream values and practices (Richardson 2004). Without revising these dominant meanings and norms the position of "sexual dissidents" compare with that of the illegal alien: "Both are produced as outside the bounds of normalcy, and of law, and they are strangers; but also the most dangerous strangers of all, in that they are *essentially* different, but also able to 'pass' undetected in the absence of close surveillance" (Stychin 2003: 99).

LGBT people can be provided with full – or closer to full – community membership by broadening the political agenda at least in three dimensions: in gaining respect and representation in national institutions, including the government, the workplaces, schools, families, welfare and health care institutions; in having social dialogues encouraged by institutions, and in the manner of equal partnership where concerns of all the parties can be voiced and heard; and by revisiting the norm of the *good citizen* who tends to be heterosexual, "gender conventional, link sex to love and a marriage-like relationship, defend family values, personify economic individualism, and display national pride" (Seidman 2002:133). The main problem with a narrow rights agenda is that it "leaves the dominant sexual norms, other than gender preference, in place and removed from the political debate", while it "ignores the ways ideas of sexual citizenship establish social boundaries between insiders (good citizens) and outsiders (bad citizens). And, while same- or opposite gender preference is surely one boundary issue, there are many other dimensions of sexuality that are used to separate the good and the bad sexual citizen; for example gender norms, the age of the sex partners, whether sex is private or public, commercial or not, causal or intimate, monogamous or not, gentle or rough" (Seidman 2002:189).

Following Carl F. Stychin's (2001) analysis, sexual citizenship in the European Union, involving the achievement of rights through social struggle, can be interpreted as an active, public, and potentially democratic endeavour in national as well as in broader, European trans-national contexts – as opposed to, for example, the passivity of European citizenship characterised by enjoyment of rights, which are centred in a private, depoliticized sphere and handed down from above. In this context sexual orientation can be seen as becoming an identity with anti-discrimination rights attachments, which according to Stychin "raises the possibility of a movement towards a European-wide consensus around the *meaning* of sexuality, not only as warranting anti-discrimination protection, but also more fundamentally as a politicized identity" (2001:295). However, this "politicized identity" must be understood as an element of a coalition-based model that allows for the effective political cooperation of heterogeneous LGBT crowds. In this context sexual citizenship is seen as increasingly being grounded in a *politics of affinity* operating with politicized flexible affinities and coalitions, rather than with fixed, monolithic identities (Phelan 1995). Stychin also points to the active, democratic political strategies through which coalitions will continually emerge, change, and

evolve as individuals may identify with certain elements of rights struggles, while not with others, and emphasizes that sexual identification “undoubtedly is a bond which may bring people together, but the differences between them seem far too great to establish anything like a fixed and stable identity” (2001:295).

Applying a coalition based strategy can be useful in activating transgender citizenship: “An example could be common endeavours and mutual support around rights struggles between transgendered people and lesbians, gays, and bisexuals [...]. While dialogue across identifications here may prove valuable, any attempt to construct a single, dialogic public sphere grounded in a fixed identity would not reflect the differently located subjects at issue” (Stychin 2001:295). A wide variety of people transgressing the traditional gender binaries can identify themselves as transgender persons including “transsexuals, transgenderists, transvestites, cross-dressers, third sex, intersex, non-labelled, drag queens, drag kings, gender challenged, gender-gifted, shapeshifters etc.” (Nataf 1996:16), thus it wouldn’t be easy to use the transgender category in the course of a unifying sexual identity based politics either. Nowadays we can witness the effective functioning of transgender rights coalitions – such as the Press for Change<sup>2</sup> in the UK – in gaining gradually fuller community membership for some transgender people in some cases, while being aware of the fact that “fighting for rights for all transgender people would entail substantial social change, such as the creating of ‘third and other’ sex/gender categories and legislative support for marriage between people of all genders” (Monro – Warren 2004:357).

Concepts of intimate and sexual citizenship underline the need not only to broaden the scope of modern citizenship, but also to revise its normative content. This need can be reflected by the formation of broader temporary “plastic coalitions” to fight against social exclusion practices denying certain citizenship rights from overlapping segments of otherwise potentially very different populations.

Identifying as LGBT and being young, LGBT youth often become victims of multidimensional mechanisms of social exclusion and multiple forms of discrimination on the basis of age and sexual orientation. These overlapping aspects of vulnerability imply that they can be socially excluded as a result of their low incomes, unemployment, poor education, health, and housing conditions, gender, religion, ethnic origin, as well as the inability to realise their autonomy and citizenship rights.

In the following I will focus on barriers preventing the successful social integration of LGBT youth, reflected by accounts of real life experiences of young LGBT people from 37 European countries.

## **2. Barriers preventing active citizenship of young LGBT people – Survey results**

This part of the paper is based on an original survey research (N=754)<sup>3</sup> conducted by the ILGA-Europe and IGLYO social exclusion research team in 2006. The main goal of the research was to illustrate how mechanisms of social exclusion work in everyday life to prevent the successful social integration of LGBT youth. From individual accounts reflecting real life experiences of young LGBT people (collected from 37 European countries) similar patterns of social exclusion emerged: families, schools, religious communities, workplaces,

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pfc.org.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> This research was conducted as part of producing a report on the *Social exclusion of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people*, published by ILGA-Europe and IGLYO in April 2006.

and symbolic media environments were shown to be potentially threatening places to grow up and live in/with for young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

According to our findings young LGBT people have a lot of trouble with the main agents of socialisation: family, school, peer group and media. School and family seemed to be especially problematic social contexts for LGBT youth to fit into.

Almost two thirds of respondents (61.2%) referred to negative personal experiences at **school** related to their LGBT status. More than half of them (53.0%) reported **bullying** that included a wide spectrum of negative experiences from name calling through ostracism to physical attacks. Longer term or repeated bullying was shown to have serious consequences on the victims. Some of them became withdrawn and socially isolated, or dropped out of school. Respondents claimed that mostly their peers were responsible for their negative experiences and especially for suffering from bullying. Bullying was often interpreted as being related to or being the consequence of gender nonconforming behaviour, character and look – or what was perceived to be such by others. Perceived nonconforming gender behaviour leading to assumptions and suspicions of being non-heterosexual leading to anti-gay/lesbian victimisation in school could equally affect non-heterosexual as well heterosexual youth. Many respondents gained negative experiences of anxiety related to fear of discrimination or bullying. In this context revealing one's true – LGBT – self could be seen as a luxury with dangerous consequences.

A number of respondents mentioned **teachers** as being the source, or being a part of their problems. These teachers were described as passive outsiders failing to provide help for the isolated, hurt and/or bullied students. Homophobic and heterosexist manifestations of teachers were also shown, including for example, intrusions into the personal lives of students. Teachers' offensive and/or threatening language use could also indicate their homophobic attitudes. In this context the need for teachers' training to present or handle LGBT issues was highlighted. Lack of openly LGBT teachers – serving as potential positive role models for LGBT students – was also perceived to indicate the general problems of acceptance. Among those who did not have any negative experiences in school, 4% mentioned good attitudes, respectful treatment and acceptance from teachers.

While 43% of respondents found that their **school curriculum** expressed prejudice or included discriminative elements targeting LGBT people, more people referred to the lack of representation of LGBT issues in the school curriculum as a deceptive representation of real life. The fact that LGBT issues are not included, mentioned and covered in school curriculum, was interpreted by many respondents as an institutional tool for maintaining LGBT invisibility in school and as such being discrimination in itself.

More than half of our respondents (51.2%) reported experiences of prejudice and/or discrimination in their **family**. Typical family reactions to revealing one's LGBT identity to close family was shown to be disbelief, denial and demands for “changing back to normal”. Stereotypical misconceptions of what it means to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transsexual greatly contributed to the non-accepting attitudes towards LGBT family members. Transgender respondents mentioned that they had to go through a double coming out with a double burden: since before identifying as a trans-person most of them believed to be gay or lesbian. Being rejected as an LGBT person by close family members was shown to force young people into self-denial and/or constructing a double life strategy. In some cases coming out to parents could pose the threat of or actually lead to being forced to leave the family

home. Rejection by family members often reflected fear of social stigmatization affecting the parents and the family as a whole in a heterosexist environment. Many respondents were/are unable or unwilling to reveal their LGBT identity within their family because the discouraging homophobic environment of the family itself. In contrast with the many negative experiences of most of the respondents, there were a few reports on positive, accepting family atmosphere. In some of these families there were already openly gay or lesbian family members providing positive role models for young LGBT people.

Less than one third of our respondents (29.8%) reported experiences of prejudice and/or discrimination targeting them as LGBT people in their **close circle of friends**. In comparison to the relative hostility of the family environment they seemed to find more acceptance and recognition in their friends' circles. After revealing their LGBT identity, some respondents indicated a certain restructuring in their friends' circle: some old friends they lost, while finding new ones – especially from the LGBT community. In the lives of young LGBT people friends can play a very significant role by providing them with the sense of belonging and being accepted that is often refused to them by their family of origin. Friends – especially LGBT friends and LGBT community members – can become members of a family of choice that can provide young LGBT people with an accepting family-like environment where they can feel at home.

In the context of being discriminated in different **community settings**<sup>4</sup> respondents referred to negative experiences in relation to the **workplace** by mentioning a wide spectrum of phenomena including not getting promoted, being dismissed – or not even getting the job in the first place –, having their freedom of expression curtailed, being ostracised, isolated, or subjected to unwanted moralising. Revealing one's LGBT identity at the workplace seemed to be a risky endeavour, therefore some respondents preferred to hide this aspect of their lives. Sometimes they were forced into subterfuge and deception, while the energy spent in concealing identity and inventing stories could be better devoted to the work at hand.

Many respondents referred to instances of **institutionalised discrimination** – affecting them as citizens whose full community membership is denied by heteronormative institutional policy designs – including discriminative legislation failing to provide heterosexual and non-heterosexual citizens with equal rights, restrictions on giving blood, discriminative insurance policies and everyday practices. A lot of respondents felt restricted in their use of public spaces – for example, walking on the streets – without being harassed. Safety is a basic concern for everyone but it seems that it cannot be taken for granted so readily by LGBT people who are often reminded to be aware of potential attacks, abuse and other acts of hostility.

More than a quarter of respondents (28%) identified themselves as being religious, and one third of them (33%) reported to have encountered prejudice or discrimination in their **religious community**. Church institutions were often described as inherently homophobic – leading to the development of internalised homophobia. Many formally religious respondents reported leaving their church as they found the religious teachings to be incompatible with their own life experience. In spite of the seemingly inherent incompatibility of religion and

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<sup>4</sup> 38% of our respondents gave affirmative answer to the question whether they experienced prejudice or discrimination targeting them as an LGBT person in any community they belong to.

homosexuality a number of responses illustrated that it is possible to reconcile faith and sexual difference.

Three quarters of the respondents (75%) found that the **media products** of their country expressed prejudice or included discriminative elements. LGBT people and issues were seen to be excluded from media in the sense that if they are shown at all, it is in a negative or stereotypical setting.

When we asked our respondents what they consider the most important cause of social exclusion of LGBT youth in their country, we found the following general themes recurring in most of the countries: lack of knowledge; ignorance as well as misinformation; fear of the unknown; homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia; lack of full community membership, equal rights, respect and recognition; distorted representation or invisibility in media and all spheres of life; lack of LGBT activism; lack of a public awareness and debate; stigmatisation and marginalisation; patriarchy, heteronormativity, homonegativity, and heterosexism.

While these – often interrelated – causes can explain social exclusion of LGBT people in general, LGBT youth was shown to be especially vulnerable to social exclusion because of additional, youth-specific reasons including their economic as well as emotional dependence on parents and adults in general; lack of resources and support; lack of positive role models; heterosexist socialisation – through which they learn that *heterosexuality guarantees social inclusion, whereas non-heterosexuality leads to marginalization, to being thought of as somewhat less of a person*; <sup>5</sup> lack of courage (to come out) and groups to belong to; being silenced and isolated; feeling a freak, different, and lonely; rejection by friends and family; parents' disappointment and feelings of failure; school culture in general: lack of education and communication on LGBT issues in school, lack of teachers' and parents' training; lack of representation in school curricula, and failing to acknowledge bullying in school as a problem.

Heteronormative practices of families, schools, different community settings, workplaces, and symbolic media environments were shown to have disempowering effects on LGBT youth: the pervasive silence concerning LGBT experiences and lifestyles contributed to their feelings of isolation and invisibility, resulting in the perception that coming out would endanger their physical and emotional well-being and in their choice of disguising their identities (Quinlivan 1999). Many of them become withdrawn and socially isolated in the period while most other young people learn to express themselves socially (Martin 1982), as they spend enormous amount of energy and time with monitoring their own behaviour and using hiding strategies to minimalise the risk of being found out, often at a cost to their mental health (Rivers – Carragher 2003).

### **3. Getting Involved**

While our research findings demonstrated how social exclusion practices function as barriers limiting access to active citizenship and prevent LGBT youth to contribute to society, we can also find opportunities to promote their successful social integration.

Even in places where the situation of LGBT people was characterised by the lack of state recognition in the form of rights for a long time, there have been citizenship practices constructed by them in the form of community building, creation of cultural and social spaces

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<sup>5</sup> 27 year old Dutch male respondent

and participation in civic associations and other everyday life practices (Grundy – Smiths 2005). LGBT youth can also activate these forms of citizenship practices. In the following I will introduce a few examples of these existing opportunities:

**1.) *Get involved – A guide to active citizenship for LGBT people***<sup>6</sup> is a publication of Stonewall UK, a non-profit civic organisation for the equality and justice for lesbians gay men and bisexuals. This guide describes some of the main areas of public life that provide the chance for LGBT people to play an active role in various fields of social, political, cultural life, including the community and voluntary sector, the criminal justice system, democratic participation, education, health, housing, industry and economic development, and social services. It provides information, from a LGBT perspective, on how to get involved in a range of activities and areas – from volunteering with a community group to being on the board of a housing association or sitting as a magistrate.

For example, within the community and voluntary sector they focus on volunteering within the LGBT community and wider society, and the roles of LGBT forum members, charity trustees, and volunteer fundraisers, while it is pointed out that the *“community and voluntary sector provides LGBT people with a unique opportunity to get involved and have a voice in the local community. LGBT people have a long history of participation in the voluntary sector, working on issues relating to sexual orientation and other subjects. [...] It cannot be assumed that all mainstream voluntary and community groups will be 'gay friendly' or that all LGBT groups are free from prejudice, for example against trans or disabled people. Eliminating these prejudices - both in LGBT and other groups - is one of the main challenges and responsibilities of getting involved.”*<sup>7</sup>

In the context of the getting involved in the criminal justice system it is emphasised that traditionally *“many parts of the sector have been the territory of straight men and ‘old boy’ networks. Indeed, because consensual gay sex was illegal for so long many gay men, rather than being able to be part of the system, were wrongly criminalised by it. But times are changing fast. Now, LGBT people can expect to receive protection rather than harassment from the police and equal treatment rather than a criminal record from magistrates.”*<sup>8</sup>

In the context of democratic participation the idea of “change from within” is underlined: *“With a history of activism and self-help in the face of criminalisation and social exclusion, participation in the official democratic process may not seem to be the most natural home for LGBT people. And it is important that we do not lose our role of challenging the system from the outside. However, it is also increasingly important and possible to use the experience and skills gained from our history to campaign for change from within. The formal system, for example of local councillors, is where important decisions are made that affect our lives. So, as LGBT people it is essential that we are actively engaged and involved with the democratic process at a local and national level, pushing for positive change in relation to sexual orientation and other crucial issues affecting our society.”*<sup>9</sup>

While for those who want to activate themselves in the field of education the main message is that as *“an LGBT individual or group involved in this area, you may find that the first thing you need to do is carry out some education of your own by raising awareness among*

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.stonewall.org.uk/information\\_bank/community/64.asp](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/information_bank/community/64.asp)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/Section\\_1.pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/Section_1.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/Section\\_2.pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/Section_2.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/Section\\_3.pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/Section_3.pdf)



*colleagues about why LGBT issues matter and why schools are an appropriate place to address them.”<sup>10</sup>*

*In the field of health care it is emphasized that “LGBT people’s experiences with health care professionals show that many have misconceptions, such as that all gay men are automatically at risk of HIV infection and all lesbians have no sexual health needs because they do not require family planning. Some argue that this shows that homophobia is rife within the NHS, affecting patients and staff alike, and making involvement in the sector an uphill struggle for LGBT people. However, others argue that, as part of a rapidly modernising system, now is the perfect time to change things for the better. This can be achieved by influencing the way that health services are planned and provided, including those that affect marginalised groups, such as LGBT people.”<sup>11</sup>*

## **2.) Različnost bogati: ne siromaši<sup>12</sup> (Diversity Makes Us Richer: Not Poorer)**

“Diversity Makes Us Richer, Not Poorer: The Everyday Life of Gays and Lesbians” is a CD-rom produced in Slovenia: a teaching aid for teachers to use during the educational process. It is intended to assist in classroom discussions on homosexuality; to provide information for employers on how to ensure safe working environment for gays and lesbians; to support gays and lesbians, their parents and friends. The CD-rom includes short movies about everyday life of gays and lesbians and interviews with gays and lesbians which are designed to enhance a better understanding and knowledge of the everyday life of lesbians and gays. This project is part of a wider project “Intimate Citizenship: The Right to Have Rights”, which is supported by the European Commission’s *Promotion of Active European Citizenship* programme.

## **3.) Enabling Safety for LesBiGay Teachers<sup>13</sup> 2002-2005**

This Dutch project focussed on the employment situation of lesbian, bisexual and gay teachers. The project included: comparative research on heterosexual/ bisexual/homosexual education personnel (published as “Healthy Teacher, Healthy School”); an analysis of school guidelines on safety, bullying and sexual intimidation; pilot projects in 15 schools (primary schools, secondary schools, regional training centres for young adults and adults) on how to improve their LGB policy; a manual to support LGB specific school policies; organisation of a European Sexual Orientation Mainstreaming Conference.

## **4.) School Book Review on LGB Content<sup>14</sup>**

The Dutch Ministry of Education commissioned a review of all school books and methods to establish the content about LGBT issues. The National Information Centre on Teaching Resources did the review on 63 school books, which included all primary school resources and the resources for Biology, Social Issues and Care in secondary schools. The Information Centre does not give a qualitative judgment of the resources, but offers copies of the relevant pages in an elaborate annex. The National Pedagogical Institute, which coordinates the Dutch efforts to make schools safer, used the results of the review to advise the government to start a

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/Section\\_4.pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/Section_4.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/Section\\_5.pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/Section_5.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [www.mirovni-institut.si/razlicnost](http://www.mirovni-institut.si/razlicnost)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.lesbigayteachers.nl>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.tolerantescholen.net>

dialogue with the commercial school book publishers, who are responsible for the content of school books.

#### **5.) Torna a l'escola! – ¡Vuelve al cole! (Back to School)<sup>15</sup>**

It is an ongoing awareness raising campaign for including gay and lesbian issues into the school curricula (an adaptation of the “Go Back to School” program of the GLSEN, US) from Catalonia, Spain. Gays and lesbians are asked to write letters or postcards to the director of their former schools and point out the importance to include gay and lesbian issues into the school curricula and apply more gay and lesbian friendly teaching methods. There is reference given to available lesbian/gay-friendly teaching material collected by the INCLOU organisation, from where further assistance can be asked. Into these letters former students can also include references to their personal experiences from school that can help teachers to understand what kind of difficulties homophobic school environment can cause for students.

#### **6.) Different in More Ways than One: Providing Guidance for Teenagers on Their Way to Identity, Sexuality and Respect<sup>16</sup>**

It is a manual for educators and counsellors on how to deal with lesbian, bisexual and gay issues in multicultural contexts, which was developed (as the main outcome of the European project-team called “TRIANGLE”, i.e. Transfer of Information to Combat Discrimination Against Gays and Lesbians in Europe) to be used as a tool to combat discrimination especially among young people. The manual pays special attention to situations involving double discrimination where individuals face discrimination on the grounds of their race or ethnic origin as well as of their sexual preference.

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<sup>15</sup> [www.inclou.org/torna/](http://www.inclou.org/torna/)

<sup>16</sup> [www.diversity-in-europe.org/](http://www.diversity-in-europe.org/)

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