



Youth against gender discrimination and homophobia

Report of the Study Session
held by

European Educational Exchanges-Youth for Understanding and
The Campaign Against Homophobia
in co-operation with the
European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Strasbourg

4 – 11 October 2009



account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by
ty of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the
official point of view of the Council of Europe.

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Introduction

European Educational Exchanges – Youth for Understanding (EEE-YFU) and the Polish Campaign Against Homophobia (KPH) organized the study session “Youth against gender discrimination and homophobia”, which was held between the 4th and the 10th of October 2009 in the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg, France. The international organizing team (hereinafter IOT), which prepared and led the study session consisted of:

- Pernille Christensen (YFU Denmark)
- Monika Grzywnowicz (ANSO)
- Caren Hollenbach (YFU Germany)
- Jakub Pilch (YFU Poland)
- Jan Świerszcz (KPH)
- Georges Wagner (Council of Europe)

Aims and Objectives of the Study Session

The overall aim of the study session was to raise awareness towards gender discrimination and homophobia to interested volunteers from EEE-YFU and other organisations. We, as the IOT, wanted to give participants space to think, reflect, visualize and share experiences about the topic in general. Furthermore, we wished to share our own knowledge connected to issues of gender and sexual orientation. Last but not least, we wanted to share methods and make everything the participants learned during the week usable for them, so that after the study session they could work on developing their organisations in relation to equality of gender and sexual orientation.

The objectives of the study session aimed at encouraging the participants to:

- learn about the different genders and the biological, sociological and psychological background of sexual identity;
- become aware of their own stereotypes towards sexual identities, gender roles and discriminatory situations;
- learn about methods to tackle gender discrimination and homophobia when working with youths from different cultural backgrounds;
- train key multipliers and create opportunities for the development of competences on gender discrimination and homophobia, which contribute to the development of National Organisations and volunteers;

- enhance co-operation among European YFU organisations and between EEE-YFU and other organisations.

Profile of Participants

Before we sent out the call for participants, we consulted and decided together on the criteria to be fulfilled by applicants in order for their participation to be considered. These criteria were:

- to be actively involved as volunteer in their own national organisation;
- to have an interest in the topic (however there was no need for any prior knowledge of the topic);
- to be aged between 18 and 30 years;
- to be able to attend the whole duration of the study session;
- to be able to work in English;
- to be able to multiply the knowledge gained.

The participants coming from a YFU organisation should mostly be working with teenagers from different cultural backgrounds, preferably through seminars or as mentors/representatives for exchange students and host families. In this way, participants would be able to directly use the knowledge that they have gained during the seminar through multiplying it towards other volunteers or using it in their volunteer work when encountering problems related to gender and homophobia.

Participants from other organisations should have experience in the field of gender/sexual orientation related issues and/or work with youth.

During the selection process we tried to guarantee a group diversity regarding nationality, cultural background, knowledge of the topic, gender (though only the binary system was used) and experience as a volunteer working with youth. The group was quite young, but very diverse on all other matters.

Expected Profile	
How many participants (incl. team) did you apply for to the DYS?	30
How many people (incl. team) applied to participate in the session?	45
How many participants (incl. team) were finally expected?	31

Final Profile	
How many participants (incl. team) actually did attend?	30
How many male participants (incl. team) did attend?	11
How many female participants (incl. team) did attend?	18
From many countries of residents did participants (incl. team) come from?	16
What was the average age of participants (incl. team)?	21,5

Programme flow

The preparation phase included a preparatory meeting (in July) which allowed us to draft the programme, to set several deadlines and to divide tasks and responsibilities among the team members.

After a general introduction of the team, the participants, the place and the topic we started an intense study session which lasted 6 working days.

It started out with confronting the participants with their own identity. They were supposed to look at themselves and their past as to realise who they are, where they stand today and what influenced them throughout their lifetime.

This was followed by a session on stereotypes, where existing stereotypes about men, women, gays and lesbians in our societies were discussed. To discover where these stereotypes come from, the team offered a short session on “socialization”. Media/advertisement were used as examples to show how our opinions, perspectives and lives are shaped by sources which are external to our families. The main issue addressed during this session was the role of women in advertisement.

Then a whole day focused on power and discrimination: who has power, what is discrimination and where does it come from, what kinds of discrimination and micro-inequities exist, etc. Examples were often used from discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation, but not exclusively.

A drag workshop was introduced to explore one’s own gender and get a feeling of what we have talked about the days before.

The last two days focused on finding solutions to personal and organisational discriminatory situations through an individual and a structural action plan. This was supported by an expert from KPH.

Programme

October 4th, 2009

The study session started with a few teambuilding exercises, already at the welcome evening. We had a short introduction round and played different ice-breaking games in order to get to know each other a little bit better.

October 5th, 2009

Introduction

We started the first day of the study session with a general introduction, where we had yet another chance to get to know each other - especially in the case of late-arrivals, who missed the introduction round in the previous evening. During this session, the participants learned more about the history, aims and objectives of the seminar in order to understand what this week was all about. Furthermore, we offered some inputs about the two different organisations and about EEE-YFU, in order to have a common ground of understanding of each other and of the different working methods.

Through the “Facebook profile”, we got to know each other more in-depth and encouraged participants to find out more about each other themselves.

Objectives:

- To introduce the topic of the study session as well as its aims and objectives;
- To introduce the two different organisations and to get to know each other more in-depth.

Method:

Starting with an introduction of the team and the history of how it all began, followed by the “Facebook profile” game, where participants had to interview each other in couples on 4 different personal aspects proposed by the team. Those profiles were put on the wall of our plenary room, so that the participants had the chance to look at them all week long. This game was used to get to know each other as well as the different organisations further.

Outcomes:

The participants got to know each other more in-depth and learned about the organisers of this study session, why they decided to do so and which organisations stand behind it.

Expectations

The next session focused on the participants' expectations towards the study session.

Objectives:

- To get to know the expectations but also personal resources and fears, of the participants.
- To get concrete ideas about the participants' expectations to check if these can or can't be integrated in the programme.

Method:

Participants wrote down their expectations, fears and personal resources on post-its of 3 different colours, which were then fixed onto three different posters placed in corners of the plenary room where they stood throughout the whole duration of the study session and which were used for the evaluation.

Outcomes:

“My contributions to this study-session”:

Main clusters included participation and motivation, knowledge and experience in youth work on the topic, and special skills like teaching dances.

“What I'd like to take home from this study session”:

The participants' learning expectations can be summarised and clustered into 5 different categories:

- 1) Improve one's knowledge about “gender discrimination and homophobia”. Examples from the post-its were “deeper understanding” or “new points of view”;
- 2) See how other people work;
- 3) More general aspects of the exchange part of the study-session like “good memories”, “pictures”, “satisfaction”;
- 4) Methods and practical approaches on how to implement the subject in one's own organisation;
- 5) More oriented on “personality factors” including personal contributions like “being open to make friends”, “own motivation”, or “open for challenge and inspiration”.

This gave a good overview about the fears, personal resources and expectations. The fears were used after the presentation of the programme to establish a set of rules participants found necessary to create as to keep a safe working environment.

Programme presentation

The team introduced the programme of the study session and participants were given the chance to ask questions. Afterwards the group continued with establishing a set of common rules within the group.

Rules

That session was dedicated to rules aiming at establishing a common understanding among participants of what would be desirable and of what would not, during the study session.

Objectives:

- To established rules together with participants;
- To make sure that those rules are drawn from expectations;
- To ensure that everyone agrees (if not possible, objections should be explained);
- To allow the team to add on rules but only if an important one wasn't already mentioned;
- To come up with a "group agreement" underlining that the rules come from the group and that they are not imposed on the participants.

Method:

A trainer collected the ideas of participants and wrote them down. Additional rules were written down, followed by an exchange in the group. The group's agreement was written down and posted on the wall.

Outcomes:

A group agreement on a set of rules was established, which strengthened the group as a whole.

Presentation of the Council of Europe

The educational advisor made a short presentation of the Council of Europe in order to provide participants with concrete information about the youth work done by the Council of Europe as well as the framework in which the study session was taking place.

Objectives:

- To introduce the Council of Europe to the participants;
- To provide the group with further information about how it was possible to develop and implement the study session.

Method:

A short PowerPoint presentation was held.

Identity

After lunch, we started digging into the topic and to in order to do so we explored the idea of identity by providing space for the participants to get in touch with their own identities. Furthermore, through drawing our own identity river we worked on demonstrating that identity is usually composed of many different elements (intersectionality), which are reflected in a complex picture of our identity.

Objectives:

- To explore the idea of identity;
- To make the participants reflect about their identities;
- To prepare the participants for the session on stereotypes.

Method:

The session was composed of different parts and was aimed at making the participants reflect on their own identities, however without any focus on terminology or any specific theme. This session was building up on the participants' personal feelings.

The first part consisted of two elements:

- 1) First the participants were asked to sit somewhere on their own and draw a river (an example was shown and explained). They drew a river about who they are – what elements/people/schools/travels/etc. created them the way they are today;
- 2) Then they were divided in groups of three where they shared what they had created.

The second part of the session was about building up on participants' personal reflection. This time, they were asked to write a short story, keeping in mind what they had just drawn.

The story was about something significant and important that had a big influence and impact on their lives and in that sense, helped them become who they are today. Together with a piece of paper they were given an envelope so that they could put their story in it and get back to it whenever they felt like doing so during the week; this was for their personal process.

The session ended up with a short debriefing:

- How was it/ how did it feel to draw/write/share?
- Did you find anything new about yourself?
- Did you become aware of something special?
- Have you been thinking about all of those things (that popped up in the workshop) before?

The participants, who didn't feel like sharing it with the rest of the group were asked to buzz with their neighbours, to ensure that everybody would share something.

Outcomes:

The participants were slowly introduced into the topic by reflecting on their own experiences and life to see where they are today and/or see whether they have found their own identity yet and what influenced them so far. This was basic for working further on the topic of sexual orientation and gender.

Participants' evaluation:

In the evaluation form, the participants gave the *Identity session* 3,7 points in average (1=lowest and 5=highest score), with the highest marks for "usefulness for self-development" and lower marks for "usefulness for youth work" and "appropriate to needs and knowledge". In the comments section of the evaluation form, the session was mentioned both in "most useful" and "least useful" of the seminar.

Intercultural Exchange

Participants were supposed to bring a (personal) item from their country, which could be connected to gender and was meant to be given to somebody else. The aim was to have an additional space to share cultural backgrounds and personal values without only having the standard, and sometimes quite superficial, intercultural evening with booze and sweets.

Objectives:

- To enable every participant to present his/her/hir country and culture.
- To provide space to share a connected atmosphere in the group.

Method:

All items were put in a box in the middle of the plenary. One participant started blindly picking one object out of the box. This person then had to guess where and who this object was from. The one who had brought this present had then a chance to explain what this object was standing for and why it was brought.

Outcomes:

Everybody got to hear everyone in the group again and got to know more about somebody's cultural and personal background.

Reflection Groups

Nearly every evening we had a short meeting in small and diverse groups, to reflect on the day, talk about emotions, about what happened, give space to ask questions and the opportunity to speak one's mind in a more comfortable environment. Every team member facilitated one of those reflection groups.

Cultural Evening

The first working day ended with an intercultural evening, where participants had a chance to present the food and drinks they brought from their home countries in a relaxed atmosphere.

Objectives:

- To enable every participant to further present his/her country and culture;
- To create a group feeling;
- To enable the participants to interact with each other;
- To have fun!

Methods:

Lose presentations and an evening without much of a structure, to just get to know each other better and hang around together.

October 6th, 2009

Stereotypes

The 2nd day started with a session on stereotypes, where we addressed the problematic effects of rigidly defined gender roles in society and raised awareness about them.

Objectives:

- To get to know the definition and function of stereotypes;
- To know what existing stereotypes about men, women, gays and lesbians in society are;
- To know the difference between stereotype and prejudice;
- To raise awareness of participants' own gender and sexual orientation stereotypes.

Method:

We used a method from *Gender-in-a-box* from *Gender Matters* (http://www.eycb.coe.int/gendermatters/chapter_4/4_4.asp), which was then adapted to our own needs.

Outcomes:

Participants showed that there are a lot of stereotypes, including stereotypes they themselves have and live by. Awareness was therefore raised about their own stereotypes about gender and sexual orientation. The session not only clarified what stereotypes are about as well as what is their function and reason to be, but also that it is important to challenge those stereotypes over and over again.

Participants' evaluation:

The stereotypes session got an average of 4 in the evaluation form (1=lowest and 5=highest score) with the highest scores for "usefulness for youth work". As in other sessions,

individual comments put the session both in the least useful and also most useful section, but more often it was mentioned as very useful and important.

Socialization

The session on stereotypes was followed by an afternoon session on socialisation, where participants got to know definitions and agents of socialization and became aware of the huge impact of media on formation of gender roles and norms. Furthermore, participants tried to critically analyse advertisements and to identify their sexist and oppressive content.

Objectives:

- To sharing (un)conscious messages participants have about gender and gender roles;
- To understand the term “socialization”;
- To become aware of the impact of media on gender socialization;
- To discuss the possibilities for individuals or groups to influence media.

Method:

At the beginning, the gender cage was introduced. Participants had to write down sentences or messages they have personally heard or experienced towards children and youth, that are concerned with their gender. Afterwards a definition on “socialization” was worked out. In order to go into detail regarding the factors for socialization, we watched the film “Killing us Softly 3”, which showed how women are exploited in media and especially in advertisements. The participants had questions placed below their chairs about one of the five themes tackled in the movie (subjectivity, beauty, making someone silent, power(less) and violence). Participants had to watch the movie in regard to the question they had been given. After the movie, they had to gather in five groups (based on the five themes) and answer their questions together. The results were presented to the whole group. This was followed by a short exchange on how to influence media.

Outcomes:

Participants saw where many of those stereotypes worked on in the morning session come from, and how they are used in advertisements in order to sell different kinds of products or services. The exchanges showed how emotionally affected many of the participants were.

Participants' evaluation:

As before, the session got an average high score (3,9), with the most scores for "usefulness for youth work". In the questions for the three most important things learned during the study session, it was mentioned a couple of times that it was good to hear how great the influence of media and society regarding gender roles actually is.

Terminology

We wrapped up the day with a session on terminology, where we worked to get to know the most important terms and concepts related to LGBTQ issues in a safe space, where it was okay to ask and to answer questions in order to clarify existing misunderstandings.

Objectives:

- To familiarize the participants with LGBTQ terminology;
- To clarify that none of these definitions are unchallenged.

Method:

We had different words written down on small paper as well as matching definitions. The participants had to find and clarify the definitions for their words in small groups which they then presented to the whole group. Questions could be asked in between and afterwards.

Outcomes:

Participants got to know words and their definitions that are used to describe people, actions and concepts around the themes of sexual orientation and gender. They had the chance to ask questions and clarify misunderstandings.

Participants' evaluation:

This session received an average high score in the participants' evaluation forms (4,1), with the highest scores for "appropriate to needs and knowledge". Many mentioned the terminology as one of the most useful things of this seminar, because most participants did not know those definitions or even words before. One person stated that the method was not found as efficient, but the majority liked the way it was done and especially that it was done.

October 7th, 2009

Midterm evaluation

The 3rd day started with a mid-term evaluation in order to get to know the opinion of the group in a participative way as well as to have the chance to use this feedback for the rest of the week.

Objectives:

- To get concrete ideas about what has or can be changed in the programme or the learning environment ;
- To receive feedback.

Method:

The Four Corners: In 4 corners we set up 3 different smiley's from "very happy" to "very unhappy" and a bubble inviting people to speak. The participants stood in the middle of the room and where asked to take a stand (going to one of the corners) to the different points evaluated.

Evaluated subjects

- Programme: content and methods
- Group: cooperation and integration
- Learning environment: rooms, food, working spaces
- Team: respect and space for participation

Outcomes:

In general participants mostly used the smiley corners and gave in majority positive feedback towards the subjects. The bubble was used only twice to say something toward the team and the learning environment.

Power + Discrimination 1

The third day was all dedicated to the work on power and power relations and how these contribute to discriminate different people. We also worked on understanding discrimination, what different forms of discrimination exist and what can be done to act against it. The focus of the first half of the day was on "power".

Objectives:

- To let participants experience mechanisms of discrimination;
- For participants to see exclusion and discrimination from different perspectives;
- For participants to reflect on their own role and behaviour;
- To identify and name components of power;
- To identify power relations in the society.

Method:

The session started with a simulation called the *exclusion task*. In this exercise the group was instructed to develop a special code and taboo words for their discussion, while some participants were outside being told that their task was to join the group. While newcomers entered, the group usually automatically started to exclude and discriminate them, though they weren't instructed to do so. This experience was rich in examples of factors which build unequal treatment and showed that discrimination can happen without awareness and intention.

The *exclusion task* was then debriefed, providing the whole main group – participants who entered the group one after another and participants who observed – with a chance to express what they saw and experienced. In the end, the discussion was led towards the category of power.

Following this, a word shower concerning power was introduced, where participants brainstormed about two questions: "What gives power?" and "What are the elements of power?" Answers were directly put on flipchart.

The final step was to put those elements of power in a "Table of Power" divided in powerful and powerless.

Outcomes:

The exercise showed power relations in the society and gave the chance to reflect about one's own role in the mechanism of exclusion. Participants learned that exclusion can be an automatic group process and became aware of the fact that they are not free from discriminating. Participants learned what methods (elements of power) are used to discriminate and could name privileged groups as well as groups that are marginalised.

The table of power turned into a very long and emotional discussion, possibly due to the fact that the theory of intersectionality had not been introduced at this point.

Power + Discrimination 2

The second part of this day focused on discrimination in its various forms and expressions. Building up on the power part of the morning, participants learned that power in combination with prejudices often leads to discrimination.

Objectives:

- To define and understand discrimination;
- To understand the discrimination equation (stereotypes+emotion=prejudice +power=discrimination);
- For participants to get to know different forms of discrimination;
- To understand micro-inequities.

Method:

The lead-in to the second part of the power and discrimination session was a short fragment of the movie "Silence of the Lambs" (the extract when Clarice Starling comes with her boss to the countryside to investigate the corpse of the first victim: she is not let in). After this input a short discussion was opened with the questions: What happened to Clarice? Is that discrimination?

This was followed by some trainers' input on the discrimination equation – how discrimination comes from stereotypes? Added to this were different forms of discrimination (direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, multiple discrimination, glass ceiling, glass walls and moving stairs) and a discussion. Small groups needed to find examples for different forms of discrimination.

Subsequently the trainer added the definition of micro-inequalities. With this new-gained knowledge the participants watched the same short fragment of the movie again and had some time to analyse the characters' situation and inequalities, in working groups.

As a possible intervention, another fragment of the movie can be shown at the end, where Clarice Starling states that she didn't like what happened and her boss himself explains why he left her behind.

Outcomes:

Participants learned to identify and name different forms of discrimination. Furthermore they became aware of factors that cause discrimination as well as of their consequences. Participants additionally learned that micro-inequalities exist and often generate an unequal atmosphere without leading into direct discrimination.

Participants' evaluation:

The whole day of *Power and Discrimination* got an average score of 4,1 with “usefulness for youth work” and “usefulness for self-development” as most important point. Many commented on the usefulness of this part of the study session in general and the great experience of the exclusion task at the beginning of the day. As negative aspects, some very long and emotional discussions from the group were mentioned.

Tough Guise

In the evening we watched a mandatory film with everybody called “Tough Guise”. This movie is the first educational video geared toward college and high school students to systematically examine the relationship between pop-cultural imagery and the social construction of masculine identities in the U.S. at the dawn of the 21st century.

Objectives:

- To show the construction of masculine identities;
- To provoke participants' reflection and analysis of their own participation in the culture of violent and strong masculinity.

Outcomes:

Participants were impressed by the movie, especially because it was something not often discussed. In the evaluation it was seen as positive to learn more about what kind of gender roles and stereotypes society establishes.

October 8th, 2009

Drag Workshop

The 4th day started with a *drag workshop* to give participants the chance to realise that everybody has gender, gender identity and gender expression and to provide them with a safe space to try and experiment gender.

Objectives:

- To make participants reflect on their own gender;
- To make participants relate power to their gender.

Method:

The session was divided into three parts: introduction, action (so-called dragging), and debriefing. All participants were actively involved in the three parts.

Introduction

The workshop started with a presentation of the idea of dragging and where it comes from. After the presentation, there was an introduction part – the participants were asked to stand in a circle and to slowly start walking around loosely, but always in a circle. The workshop facilitator required them to walk in a very specific way. The aim was to make them aware of different gender expressions and gender representations.

They were also asked to be quiet, loud, angry, smiling etc. and the purpose of it was similar to the previous one, though more connected with power.

Dragging

Then it was time for dragging. Participants were presented with the different elements of dragging, which included time to try it on and ask questions about practicalities, etc. There were talking about binders, binding, packing, hair, moustaches, beards, make up, clothes, body.

Each of the participants tried some elements of drag (some more and some less). When they'd put on their drag, they were encouraged to create a character, get into it and be it for a while.

Debriefing

The workshop ended with a detailed debriefing. The debriefing was about feelings, gender, experiences, prejudice and power. The biggest focus, however, was put on personal feelings, as the workshop was quite strong and created a lot of different feelings and reactions.

At the end the participants were asked to either remove the drag or if someone wished so, they could continue being in drag for a longer time.

Outcomes:

The dragging made gender more tangible, created awareness of the power that comes with particular gender and the privileges that come with different genders. The session opened a discussion about gender and challenged potential prejudices among participants and people in general about different genders. Though it was quite a short day, it was a very strong experience followed by a free afternoon in the city of Strasbourg.

Participants' evaluation:

The participants gave the whole session on average a 3,75 with the highest scores in "usefulness for self-development". Even though some found this workshop to be not that useful for themselves, many participants mentioned that they, for the first time, "experienced" what it would be like to be in a minority and how they felt that their "power" within the group changed and made them reflect on gender roles.

October 9th, 2009

EEE-YFU & KPH Presentation

We started the day with Dora Raphael from the board of EEE-YFU, who gave a short but quite interesting introduction to the work of the organisation. Afterwards, we had an expert input by the General Secretary of the Polish Campaign Against Homophobia (KPH) about the organization and its work on LGBT rights. The session was very beneficial to all, and we left the room full of inspiration and new ideas.

Objectives:

- To inform the group about the two different organisations and to make it possible to work on change, for example in the structural action plan.
- To show the types of problems LGBT people still face.

Method:

First, Dora made a presentation about EEE-YFU which was followed by Marta's presentation about the organisation KPH and the situation in Poland concerning LGBT rights, as well as

what the organisation does to fight homophobia. Participants were then divided into groups and requested to come up with different questions, which Marta answered after a little break.

Outcomes:

Participants got information about two very different organisations, one most of the participants were connected with (EEE-YFU) and one organisation which tackles the very issues discussed during the seminar until then (KPH). Furthermore, participants heard about how homophobia still exists in society in general, but also in organisations, in circles of friends etc. They also learned of examples about what can be done against this form of discrimination.

Participants' evaluation:

In the evaluation form, the session (only including the expert input) was given an average of 3,8 with the highest scores in "appropriate to needs and knowledge". As in the other session, some evaluated the expert input as the most useful of the seminar while other participants named it under the least useful of the seminar.

Individual Action Plan

After spending the first couple of days building up a knowledge basis about gender, sexual orientation and connected to this, power and discrimination, the rest of the time was devoted to figure out how to change personal behaviour concerning unequal treatment and discriminatory behaviour and how to change structures in one's own organisation. The individual action plan was concerned with the first, trying to look at oneself.

Objectives:

- To make participants reflect on discriminatory situations in their life;
- To make participants reflect on the role of witness of discrimination;
- To learn different methods of dealing with discrimination;
- To develop assertive presentation of one's opinion;
- To develop creative thinking in order to find solutions to situations of discrimination.

Method:

Part I

The session started out with individual work, in which participants filled out sheets with 4 different positions: a situation where they have been discriminated against or treated unequally because of their gender and/or sexual orientation; a situation where they discriminated against others or treated others unequally because of their gender and/or sexual orientation; a situation where they witnessed a situation like this and reacted; and finally a situation like the ones described above, where they witnessed a situation and didn't react. After about 15 min, all participants had to share their situations in groups of three. These groups were divided, so that there is at least one female and one male participant in every group, by writing numbers beforehand on all the sheets.

Two debriefings followed at the same time, each one consisting of four of the groups where participants shared their situations in before. Different questions were discussed, starting from emotions (when writing down, when sharing) to how participants reacted when they witnessed discriminatory situation and what kept them from reacting in other cases. The debriefing finished with an exchange about moral/civil courage and why it is so important to show civil courage.

Part II

After a trainer's input on models for constructive feedback, participants exchanged in groups of four situations in which they faced or witnessed discrimination and did not react. They chose one situation and based on it, prepared a scene. This scene had to have at least one proposition of reaction and had to involve everyone from the group.

Following this, every group presented their scene. After each presentation, the situation was briefly discussed. The audience could describe what happened, could make comments and the group "on stage" could then comment on what they meant and how they thought about it. This was followed by a debriefing in the whole group leading to one conclusion: reaction is possible and necessary.

Outcomes:

Participants became aware of discriminatory situations and reactions in their personal life. They realised many emotions and situations they were uncomfortable talking about, for example when they themselves discriminated against others or did not react in situations of discrimination. Furthermore, participants became aware of various different real life discriminatory situations. The necessity of civil courage became quite clear, so did the

problems a reaction can generate and the fact that it really requires courage to do something. Participants learned some solutions and felt empowered.

Participants' evaluation:

In the evaluation form the session was ranked quite high, with an average score of 4,3. All three points (usefulness for both self-development and youth work and appropriate to knowledge and needs) had similar results. It was a very personal and emotional session, which made the participants think about their own emotions and behaviour.

Several participants named the *Individual Action Plan* in the most useful parts of the seminar. One participant commented that the session left the group in a vulnerable position and without support. We, as a team, would recommend a forum theatre as a better method than simple role play.

Preparation “Structural Action Plan”

We continued with the preparation of the structural action plan, because a vision without action is merely a dream. Participants started to offer issues, projects and ideas they wanted to discuss or further develop the next day in the action plan session. Participants were then introduced to the method of *Open Space Technology*.

Objectives:

- To prepare participants for the session on *Structural Action Plan* the next day;
- To collect topics.

Method:

Introduction to the *Open Space Technology*, via presentation and question/answer system.

October 10th, 2009

Structural Action Plan

The final day of the study session was mainly dedicated to the *Structural Action Plan*. Participants were given the chance to apply their new knowledge and experience in concrete projects.

Objectives:

- To create a link between the topic of the study session and the work of the volunteers;
- To encourage the participants to work on action plans and to help them to plan the implementation or follow-up on the topic on national level.

Method:

Open Space Technology

The Law of Two Feet— a foot of passion and a foot of responsibility — expresses the core idea of taking responsibility for what you love. In practical terms, the law says that if you're neither contributing nor getting value where you are, use your two feet and go somewhere where you can. It is also a reminder to stand up for what you are passionate about. From the law flow four principles:

- Whoever comes are the right people;
- Whatever happens is the only thing that could have;
- Whenever it starts is the right time;
- When it's over, it's over.

The participants could choose different roles during the *Open Space Technology*:

- **Host:** the person who feels a burning passion for the subject and is willing to take responsibility to call the conversation, invite others in and make sure something gets harvested.
- **Participant:** Anyone who is drawn into a conversation wants to stay the whole time and participate fully.
- **Bumble bee:** The ones who move from conversation to conversation cross-pollinating the learning.
- **Butterfly:** A butterfly may not want to be in any conversation, instead it prefers to sit on the lawn and look beautiful. A new, unexpected conversation may happen when two butterflies meet.

The main idea behind *Open Space Technology* is that people who care about the subject will come together.

Outcomes:

Participants engaged actively in the activity and had the chance to put the gained knowledge into their preparation of single projects or ideas. Those ideas were presented and gave everybody the chance to hear what the others worked on during the session.

Participants' evaluation:

This session received highest average score from all sessions with 4,3 points. The "usefulness for youth work" got nearly 5 points and many mentioned this part the most useful of the whole seminar. Everybody had a chance to learn a lot there and use everything that has been talked about during the whole study session.

Summary and Lookout

To sum up the whole study session and put the week in perspective, a short summary including a lookout was presented through a PowerPoint presentation and closure of the contents.

Objectives:

- To compare the achieved goals with what we intended at the beginning of the seminar;
- To reflect upon the whole week's contents of the session as well as personal development;
- To see whether the study session lived up to the expectations mentioned at the beginning of the seminar.

Method:

Looking back on the week

This was only supposed to be a little review on the whole week, talking about all workshops in chronological order, what we did, what happened etc. It took place in the plenary, using the programme of the study session as well as a PowerPoint presentation (with pictures, phrases etc.) in order to also have a visual support.

It continued right away with:

Goals we achieved

A little motivational speech about all that we achieved and how good we were at it (hopefully thanks to our great participants) – was included in the PowerPoint.

Lookout on the last day

This was mainly about technical information, what was going to happen next, and what was going to happen tomorrow.

Lookout into the future

There, we talked about how this knowledge can be used by each individual who had taken part in the study session; to do so, we used a “motivational” speech.

Outcomes:

Participants got a summary of the seminar, and the view, the main points and the results were mentioned again while the feeling of the end, of de-grouping set in.

Final Evaluation

But as all good things have to come to an end, we continued after lunch with an evaluation of the whole study session using different methods.

Objectives:

- To get feedback on the study session as a whole and to see what everybody takes home for themselves;
- To have feedback on the different workshops offered throughout the whole week;
- To check how far the expectations were fulfilled or not and if fears could be avoided;
- To start with de-grouping;
- To provide a closure to the workshop;
- To induce on an analogue level (associations, “pictures”, symbols,...) in the evaluation process with the whole group;
- To end the evaluation process by a ritual;
- To get acquainted with different forms of evaluation.

Methods:

Part I – The Sculpture

We closed the study session with a sculpture allowing people to become individuals again. After the common creation of the study session's sculpture, participants were willing to tackle in a more in-depth way different aspects of the evaluation. They felt as a group for the last time but were already oriented to their near future. The participants put a lot of objects (markers, posters, cups, cards and even furniture such as a table) in the middle of the plenary circle and turned those into a sculpture.

In a first round, every third participant presented his or her symbol and related it to the study session. One example was the choice of a poster about stereotypes to express one's own concern that these stereotypes are still so deeply rooted in society.

Part II – Revisiting Fears, Expectations and Contributions

Directly after the sculpture, in which the whole study session was looked at in a retrospective way and from a very personal perspective, we got back to one of the first sessions: "Expectations". Participants were asked to walk around the room and look at the post-its on the three different posters we put there at the beginning of the week. They were then supposed to take those post-its down, which they thought were fulfilled (expectations), which did not come true (fears) and which they made happen (things I want to contribute). Afterwards a team member read out aloud all the things that were still left.

Part III – Evaluation Form

All participants were asked to fill out a written evaluation form individually.

Part IV – The Final Round

After the evaluation form was done, we gathered everybody in a circle for the last time, to give those who wanted to speak a chance to give feedback according to the five fingers and say their "goodbye" to the group as a whole.

The last night

The team used the last evening to fill out the different evaluation forms for the Youth and Sport Directorate's European Youth Centre, to evaluate the week and to give each other intense feedback as team members, course director and educational advisor. Afterwards we had a great farewell evening, where we handed over the certificates and enjoyed ourselves with everybody.

Conclusions

Participants Evaluation

Participants were quite content with the study session, as it can be seen in the filled out evaluation forms. They all gave positive feedback on the week in general and high scores on the fulfilment of their expectations. Different reasons for those good evaluations were named: often the gain of new knowledge and tools on the topic of gender and sexual orientation was one of it, self-exploration and self-development were another one, as well as the atmosphere and people taking part in the session and the empowerment that was given to change something after this week. Many of the participants also mentioned that they were impressed by the fact that YFU deals with this topic in such an in-depth manner and that the study session exceeded their expectations.

Still, comments were made that some more academically challenging knowledge as well as going more in-depth into the topic would have been appreciated.

Participants were furthermore asked to write down the three most important things they have learned during this seminar. Those answers were as diverse as participants attending the study session. It ranged from terminology and the great influence of society on gender roles, different kinds of discrimination and what can be done to act out against it, self-development to new tools to work on this issue. As one person commented: *“For me the session wasn’t based on knowledge (which I had before), but experience, emotions which I had during this “event” and that was so amazing that I’m not able to express”*.

However, we offered the participants the possibility to express which parts of the study session should be different in order to respond to their expectations. Different answers included: more information and academically challenging knowledge (in other words, more tough presentations), work more often in smaller groups, more input from the team members, show more examples of discrimination and homophobia, but also of positive actions and situations. One participant wrote: *“Maybe in one of the first days I’d have said, that we should have jumped to the actual topic faster but now I understand the structure, the process was just right!”*

Team Evaluation

We as a team were very happy with our study session. Looking back on that week, we think it was important to take this step and introduce the topic of gender discrimination and homophobia to volunteers from EEE-YFU and other organisations. Because our participants' profile was mainly directed towards young adults with no knowledge on the topic, we only scratched the surface of everything that is included in this area of work. We know that some participants will not have gained as much new factual knowledge as it would have been possible in other circumstances, but we hope they had at least the opportunity to share their experiences and background with others and still learn from the study session and used the chance for self-development.

Many sessions could of course possibly be improved in the future, but we are happy with the work we did and the impact it had on all the different people gathered at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg.

Recommendations

As it has been mentioned before, we think that some things can be changed: some more small group-work, different methods at different times. Still, we believe that the contents, the structure and the study session in general were great and important. Great were the daily reflection groups at the end of the day, which gave us an opportunity to talk in-depth with small groups of participants and get to know their feelings, thoughts and questions.

Should this kind of event be repeated in the future (which we hope), we would encourage to offer maybe two different sessions – one with the basics and one where it is possible to go more in-depth into the topic and according to already existing knowledge of it. This can also be offered at national level, so more volunteers who in the future will have the opportunity to work together, can be reached.

Final Words

We are pleased to announce that the study session “Youth against gender discrimination and homophobia” was successful, and that all aims and objectives were achieved from the team's point of view. The opportunity given to KPH and EEE- YFU to run the study session in cooperation with the Council of Europe raised awareness among our members and taught us about the challenges of international youth work

We can see that the current challenges in our society demand our persistent work in order to create a more tolerant and open society to all. A society that sees the added value of diversity and that is not based on ignorance and fears.

There is a clear need among young people from all over Europe to exchange their views about gender and discrimination. This study session enabled young people from different realities and contexts to come together and to explore this complex topic. We would also like to recommend the continuation of the work done on gender discrimination and homophobia.

In name of organising team coming from EEE-YFU and KPH, we would like to thank everybody who contributed to this event and put so much effort to make it happen.

Appendix

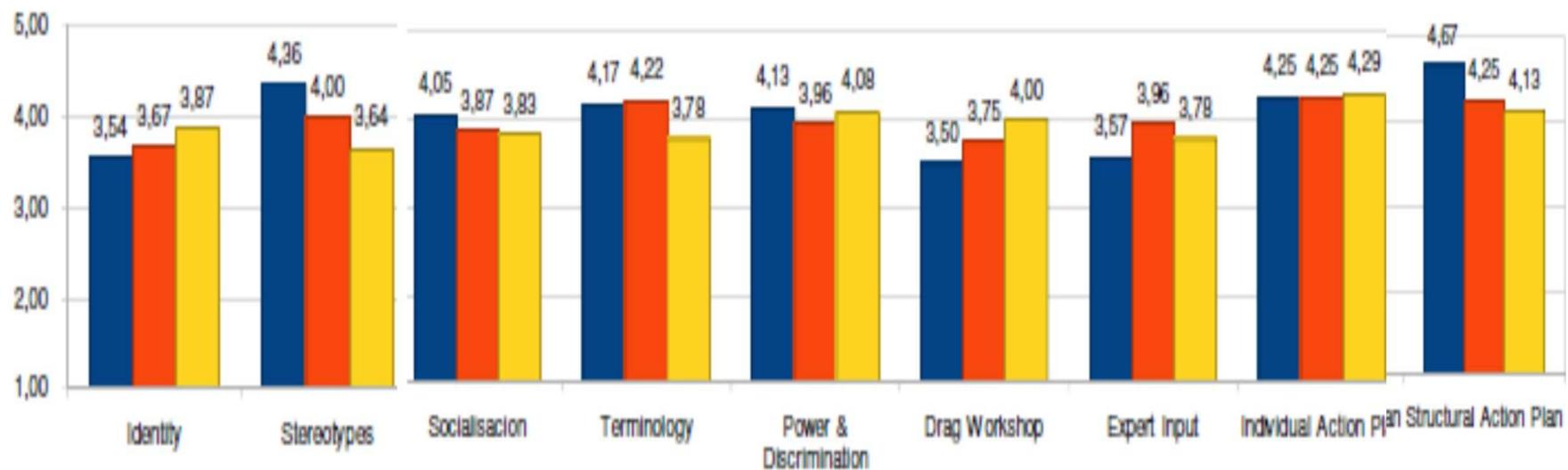
Programme

		S T U D Y S E S S I O N							
	Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast	8:00 9:00								
	09:30		Introduction Expectations	Stereotypes	Midterm Evaluation	Drag Workshop	EEE-YFU presentation Expert Input "LGBT"	Structural Action Plan	DEPARTURE ALL
	11:30		Program presentation Rules Presentation of CoE		Power + Discrimination I	Reflection Groups	Individual Action Plan I		
Lunch	13:00 14:00								
	14:30	ARRIVAL	Identity	Movie	Power + Discrimination II	FREE AFTERNOON	Individual Action Plan II	Summary Lookout	
	16:30		Intercultural Exchange	Terminology			Reflection Groups	Preparation "Structural Action Plan"	
			Reflection Groups	Reflection Groups	Reflection Groups		Reflection Groups		
Dinner	19:00								
		Welcome	Cultural Evening		Movie		Alcohol free evening - activities	Farewell Party	

Participants' Evaluation

	Usefulness for youth work	Appropriate to needs and knowledge	Usefulness for self-development
Identity	3,54	3,67	3,87
Stereotypes	4,36	4,00	3,64
Socialisation	4,05	3,87	3,83
Terminology	4,17	4,22	3,78
Power & Discrimination	4,13	3,96	4,08
Drag Workshop	3,50	3,75	4,00
Expert Input	3,57	3,96	3,78
Individual Action Plan	4,25	4,25	4,29
Structural Action Plan	4,67	4,25	4,13

■ Usefulness for youth work ■ Appropriate to needs and knowledge ■ Usefulness for self-development



List of Participants and Team

Family Name	Firstname	ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
SARAJLI	NADIR	AISEC	Azerbaijan
FATALIYEVA	GULAR	Women and Modern World	Azerbaijan
VERMANDER	MARIJKE	Youth For Understanding Flanders	Belgium
TRIFONOVA	SVETLANA	Youth For Understanding Bulgaria	Bulgaria
VASILEV	IVAN	Youth For Understanding Bulgaria	Bulgaria
BUTTER	ADAM	Youth For Understanding Denmark	Denmark
CHRISTENSEN	PERNILLE	Youth For Understanding Denmark	Denmark
KALEV	JAANA	Youth For Understanding Estonia	Estonia
KÖÖMNEMÄGI	MAE	Youth For Understanding Estonia	Estonia
REPO	MADIS	Youth For Understanding Estonia	Estonia
SIRÉN	HEIDI	Youth For Understanding Finland	Finland
LERAT	CHARLOTTE	Jeunes Européens	France
BAJARCHUU	MELMUN	Youth For Understanding Germany	Germany
HOLLENBACH	CAREN	Youth For Understanding Germany	Germany
WASSERSLEBEN	MARIA	Youth For Understanding Germany	Germany
RAPHAEL	DORA	European Educational Exchanges - Youth For Understanding	Hungary
VERES	EDIT	Youth For Understanding Hungary	Hungary
ABIQUDAIRI	AREEJ	FORWARD UK	Jordan
NAMYSSOVA	GULNARA	Youth For Understanding Kazhahstan	Kazhastan
PETRAUSKAS	SIMAS	Youth For Understanding Lithuania	Lithuania
VAITIEKĖNAS	SAULIUS	Youth For Understanding Lithuania	Lithuania
WAGNER	GEORGES	Council of Europe	Luxembourg
WOERTMANN	ANNE	Youth For Understanding Netherlands	Netherlands
ARNESEN	LARS ANDRE STROM	Youth For Understanding Norway	Norway

GRZYWNOWICZ	MONIKA	ANSO	Poland
PILCH	JAKUB	Youth For Understanding Poland	Poland
SROKA	MAŁGARZOTA	Youth For Understanding Poland	Poland
ŚWIERSZCZ	JAN	Campaign Against Homophobia (KPH)	Poland
SZUROWKA	MARIA	Campaign Against Homophobia (KPH)	Poland
BZDAK	BARTOSZ	Youth for Exchange and Understanding (YEU)	Portugal