MANUAL ON HOW TO DEVELOP LGBTIQ INCLUSIVE CURRICULA, AVOIDING STEREOTYPES AND DISCRIMINATORY PATTERNS

WP1: Modelling Non-Discriminatory VET Education Strategy

ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

KA03 SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMON VALUES

THE CONTRIBUTION IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING – LOT 1

EqUal iNclusIon of LGBTIQ stUdents in VET: "UNIQUE"

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The UNIQUE project

The UNIQUE project aims at reversing the perceptions and attitudes towards LGBTIQ[1] learners in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector by introducing innovative, inclusive, and gender-sensitive training materials for VET teachers and trainers, as well as educating them in safeguarding and promoting a non-discriminatory classroom environment.

Over the course of the project, the partnership will conduct a detailed mapping of the discriminatory norms and patterns met in VET Education to design a modern Training Curriculum for VET teachers and trainers. In addition, Ambassadors will be trained and appointed to diffuse the new training strategy through peer learning activities within their VET Providers at European level. The new curriculum developed by the project will be piloted in the participating countries to test its efficacy and relevance to the actual needs.

Within this framework, the UNIQUE project aims to:

- Introduce a "gender-sensitive" approach to reduce early school leaving among LGBTIQ students.
- Develop a mechanism that will detect existing discriminatory patterns in the VET sector.
- Design curricula/courses specifically addressed to VET teachers which will challenge discriminatory patterns and will favour gender diversity.
- Prepare an e-portfolio of relevant educational materials which will be up-to-date, inclusive, and aligned with social reality.
- Introduce Ambassadors to train VET teachers.
- Spread the developed methodologies in the formal VET system.

The project started on the 15th of January 2021 and will be completed after two years. The partnership, led by AKMI S.A., consists of 9 organizations from Greece, the Netherlands, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland, and Germany.

[1] The LGBTIQ acronym stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer people. In some parts of the manual other versions of the acronym may be used when referencing other documents or research which use a specific version (e.g., LGBT, LGBTI, etc.) or when something is relevant to some identities only (e.g., LGB when referring specifically to sexual orientation).

About the manual

The main objective of the present manual, which was created within the framework of the UNIQUE project, is to introduce a non-discriminatory VET educational strategy, promoting the inclusion of LGBTIQ people and challenging discrimination and human rights violations based on sexuality and gender, as well as other forms of exclusion.

The manual is targeted to VET teachers and trainers as well as the developers of training Curricula and materials, and aims to:

- Increase their understanding around sexuality and gender, with a focus on LGBTIQ identities
- Build their capacity to
    - recognise stereotypes and discriminatory patters against LGBTIQ people
    - create VET programmes that are inclusive of sexual and gender diversity
    - evaluate VET curricula from a gender and sexuality informed standpoint

To achieve these aims the manual includes

- Basic information regarding gender, sexuality and LGBTIQ identities.
- Tools to better identify and avoid stereotypes and discriminatory patterns in VET programmes.
- An assessment grid based on which the level of diversity and inclusiveness of each VET programme can be identified.
- Theoretical and practical guidelines on how to design and deliver inclusive VET courses, securing the promotion of diversity, which include examples of good practices and resources for VET teachers.
- A tool for quality assurance and evaluation of curricula.
- A concise glossary.

This manual is meant to aid teachers in creating an inclusive and non-discriminatory environment for VET learners, providing a theoretical basis as well as practical tools. However, it is important to take into account the specific socio-political circumstances of each country, and the needs of both learners and teachers in VET programmes, and make any adaptations needed while implementing the tools and guidelines presented.

Why do we need LGBTIQ inclusive VET programmes?

Although in the recent past the LGBTIQ community has become increasingly more visible and positive steps have been taken in the direction of protecting sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics, LGBTIQ people continue to face discrimination, violence, and exclusion in many sectors of life, including education (FRA, 2020).

Most of the existing data regarding the experiences of LGBTIQ people in educational settings focus on school experiences, with limited studies focusing on the VET sector. As part of the UNIQUE project, desk and field research was conducted in the partner-countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Poland) aiming to detect the forms of discrimination and stereotypes against LGBTIQ people more prevalent in the VET sector (Symplexis, 2021). The findings of the research confirm that anti-LGBTIQ discrimination and stereotypes constitute an important issue, with more than 50% of students and 40% of the teachers agreeing that VET learners are often harassed, bullied, or discriminated against for being LGBTIQ, and 40% of the respondents stating that VET environments are neither safe nor inclusive for LGBTIQ people. Discriminatory behaviours and harassment seem to take many forms, variating in their intensity, such as:

- Verbal abuse: offensive comments, jokes, criticism, gossiping, insults, mockery, humiliation, verbal attacks, etc.
- Social exclusion: exclusion from social or work activities, passive aggression, ignoring, leading eventually to marginalization or self-isolation
- Physical abuse
- Cyber-bullying
- Discriminatory behaviours from teachers, such as giving lower grades to LGBTIQ students, etc.

The invisibility of LGBTIQ people and identities, both from the curriculum as well as from the classroom constitutes another important issue that hinders the promotion of an inclusive and accepting environment for LGBTIQ learners. The findings of UNIQUE's research suggest that LGBTIQ people in the VET sector tend not to share openly their identity, in accordance with other recent surveys in the EU (e.g., FRA's LGBTI survey, 2020). Some VET learners who participated in the focus groups conducted in the participating countries mentioned that they do not know any person who is openly LGBTIQ in their schools, while others mentioned that the topic of sexuality is not generally discussed in their schools. High levels of anti-LGBTIQ discrimination in the school environment can discourage learners from coming out in their

school or discussing more openly issues around gender and sexuality in fear of being outed or stigmatised. VET teachers may also feel hesitant to open up discussions around LGBTIQ identities, something that was also highlighted in UNIQUE's research results.

High levels of discrimination and bullying have been linked to poor academic performance for LGBTIQ students, including higher drop-out rates (American Psychological Association, 2012), lower grades and absenteeism (Kosciw et al., 2012). Anti-LGBTIQ bullying and harassment can also lead to increased mental health challenges, such as higher rates of depression, anxiety, suicidality, and substance abuse (American Psychological Association, 2012). As stated in the recent National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health (The Trevor Project, 2021), 42% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, including more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth. Increased mental health challenges can, in turn, further hamper students' academic participation and success (APA, 2012).

Curricula that include the experiences of LGBTIQ people can assist the creation of a more inclusive environment for LGBTIQ students by promoting acceptance and respect, encouraging students to question stereotypes around gender and sexuality, ensuring that LGBTIQ students feel seen, and creating space for discussions to arise around sexuality and gender. LGBTQ youth who had access to spaces that affirmed their sexual orientation and gender identity reported lower rates of attempting suicide than those who did not. More specifically for transgender youth, affirming their gender by respecting their pronouns and allowing them to change legal documents is associated with lower rates of attempting suicide (The Trevor Project, 2021).

According to the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network's "National School Climate Survey" (Kosciw et al, 2020), at schools with LGBT-inclusive curricula LGBT students rated their experience as less hostile and reported increased feelings of belonging and connectedness with teachers. More specifically, the research showed the LGBT students in schools with an inclusive curriculum:

- were less likely to hear homophobic remarks often or frequently (38.6% vs. 58.3%)
- were less likely to hear negative remarks about gender expression often or frequently (30.1% vs. 47.2%)
- were less likely to hear negative remarks about transgender people often or frequently (41.8% vs. 56.0%)
- were less likely to feel unsafe because of their sexual orientation (44.4% vs. 62.7%) and gender expression (33.5% vs. 44.7%)

- experienced lower levels of victimization related to their sexual orientation and gender expression
- were less likely to miss school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable (23.2% vs. 35.0%)
- performed better academically at school
- were more likely to report that their classmates were somewhat or very accepting of LGBTQ people (66.9% vs. 37.9%)
- felt greater belonging to their school community.

The inclusion of LGBTIQ people and issues in VET curricula can also have a positive impact reaching far beyond the educational context when we look at VET Learners as future professionals who will be asked to provide services to LGBTIQ people. According to the findings of UNIQUE's research, although VET Learners were generally inclined to consider the needs of LGBTIQ clients when offering their services, almost 40% of them responded that they would remain uninterested or indifferent (Symplexis, 2021). Incorporating LGBTIQ issues in the curriculum, in a way that counters stereotypes and provides concrete information on LGBTIQ identities can better equip future professionals, ensuring better access to services for LGBTIQ people.

LGBTIQ inclusive curricula and educational programmes however do not favour just students who are LGBTIQ but all students. A human-rights based approach, which promotes equality and diversity, and challenges rigid gender stereotypes can build empathy, acceptance and respect, and create an overall safer environment for all leaners (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2018).

The curriculum constitutes a dialogue between society and schools, conveying messages about what is valued and creating social narratives, not only by what is included in it, but also by what is not (Page, 2017). Introducing curricula that depict LGBTIQ people and their experiences and avoid the reproduction of biases can be of all students' benefit, both those who identify as LGBTIQ as well as cis-heterosexual students, by challenging stereotypes and promoting equality and non-discrimination.

Basic concepts & LGBTIQ identities

One of the very first steps in the effort to create inclusive and non-discriminatory environments in VET is to increase our understanding of the diversity around gender and sexuality and to become more familiar with the terms and language used to describe the experiences and various identities under the LGBTIQ umbrella.

It can be useful to start by examining the basic concepts with which different identities - including, but not limited to, LGBTIQ identities- are connected (Paganis, 2020). These include:

- Sex characteristics & sex assigned at birth
- Gender identity
- Gender expression
- Sexual orientation

Sex characteristics & Gender assigned at birth

Sex characteristics refer to the biological characteristics associated with sex. They include the primary sex characteristics (chromosomes, internal and external reproductive organs, sex hormones, gonads) and the secondary sex characteristics (e.g., breasts' development, muscle and fat distribution, hair growth, etc.).

At birth most people are assigned -based on their primary sex characteristics- either as male (XY chromosomes, penis, testicles, etc.) or female (XX chromosomes, ovaries, vagina, etc.). However not all people's sex characteristics fall within these two strictly defined categories.

Intersex people are born with sex characteristics that do not fall strictly within the category of male or female. Intersex variations include a wide spectrum of biological/anatomical differences – not all intersex people will share the same sex characteristics. Some intersex variations may be noticeable prenatally or at birth (e.g., variations of chromosomes or external reproductive organs), while other may become noticeable later in life (e.g., during puberty a person's hormone levels may not be typical for their assigned sex) or even never.

Intersex people are estimated to account for about 1,7% of the population, which indicates that variations of sex characteristics are not an extremely rare occurrence. However, they are still one of the most invisible and pathologized groups within the LGBTIQ community. Variations of sex characteristics are still categorised as disorders by the World Health Organisation (2018), and not as a normal expression of human diversity, even though they may not pose a threat to a person's health. As a result, many intersex people are forced, even as infants, to undergo surgical or other medical procedures - referred to as "normalising"

surgeries - in order to make their biological characteristics “fit” into one of the two predominant sexes. These procedures may include the removal of internal reproductive organs, modifications on the external reproductive organs and/or hormone-therapy. Such procedures rarely aim to solve an underlying health issue and can negatively affect a person’s physical health, causing pain, scar tissue and loss of sensation, repetitive surgeries, and other health complications. Furthermore, many people who have been subjected to such procedures mention the highly negative impact they had on their mental health, as they are usually accompanied by secrecy and stigma, affecting their self-esteem, their relationship with their family and their sexual and romantic relationships. “Normalising” surgeries and medical interventions have been characterised as torture by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture (Mendez, 2013), who called for an end to coerced and involuntary genital-normalising surgeries.

Gender Identity

Gender Identity refers to a person’s inner sense of their gender. It may or may not match with the gender the person was assigned at birth.

- **Cisgender / Cis:** People whose gender identity is the same as the gender they were assigned at birth.
- **Transgender/Trans**: people who have a gender identity which is different to the gender assigned at birth. It includes multiple gender identities, such as trans man, trans woman, non-binary, agender, genderqueer, gender fluid, etc.
- **Non-binary:** People who do not identify their gender within the male/female binary but somewhere outside or between. Some non-binary use gender neutral pronouns, such as they/them or other neo-pronouns (e.g., ze/zir, etc.). It is often used as an umbrella term which includes many different experiences of gender identity that fall outside the gender binary, such as genderfluid, agender and others.

Some trans people may choose to make some changes in the way they present themselves to better express their gender identity. This procedure is called **gender transition** and can include some or all the following personal, medical, and legal steps:

- telling one’s family, friends, and co-workers;
- using a different name and new pronouns;
- dressing differently;
- changing one’s name and/or gender marker on legal documents (referred to as legal gender recognition);

- hormone therapy;
- one or more types of surgery (referred to as gender reassignment or gender confirmation surgery).

The exact steps involved in transition vary from person to person, and there is no specific order in which they should be pursued. Some limitations though may apply to legal gender recognition procedures or medical transition, based on each country's laws and regulations. For example, in some countries, it's impossible to have your gender recognized by law, while others place specific requirements such as having a psychiatric diagnosis or having undergone medical transition.

Gender Expression

Gender expression refers to the ways in which a person chooses to express themselves, such as haircuts, clothing, way of speaking, movements and other behaviours or interests. People are expected to express their gender in a manner that is congruent with the norms for the gender they identify as, but this is not always the case. Gender expression does not always follow the social norms for a person's gender, and this applies not only to those who are LGBTIQ, but to cis-heterosexual people as well. Some examples of gender expression that break social expectations may go noticeable (e.g., a woman having short hair), while others may attract more attention and even be met with hostility (e.g., a man wearing make-up).

Gender expression is also commonly used as an indicator of person's sexual orientation, (e.g., it may be assumed that a woman who expresses herself in a masculine way identifies as a lesbian) or their gender identity (e.g., a person who wears dresses and make-up will identify as woman). While of course there are - masculine lesbians and feminine gay men, and many people have a gender expression that is in line with and affirms their gender identity, a person's gender expression cannot tell us anything more than the way they feel comfortable expressing themselves.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation describes the romantic/emotional and sexual attraction a person can feel towards other people, including a wide spectrum of experiences based on the type and level of attraction a person feels, as well as towards whom.

Some people fall within the spectrum of **asexuality**, which means that they may not experience sexual attraction (asexual), or they may experience sexual attraction rarely (graysexual) or under certain circumstance (demisexual). Respectively, some people don't

experience romantic attraction, identifying as **aromantic**, or experience it rarely (grayromantic) or under certain circumstances (demiromantic).

Apart from the type and level of attraction a person experiences, sexual orientation includes identities based on the gender of the person and the gender(s) of the people they are attracted to.

One categorisation of identities regarding sexual orientations is based on whether a person is attracted to people of one gender (***monosexuality***) or people of multiple genders (***polysexuality***).

Monosexual identities include:

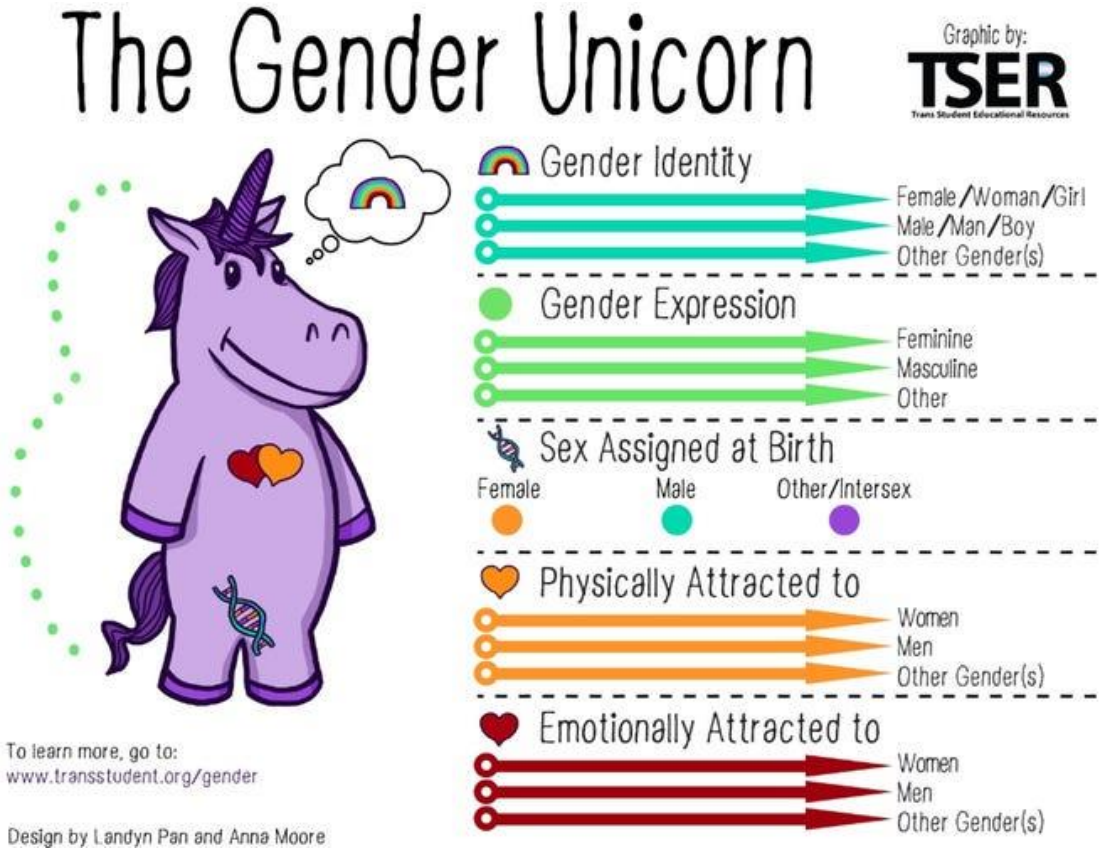
- **Lesbian**: A person that identifies as a woman and is attracted exclusively by other women.
- **Gay**: Mostly used for men who are attracted exclusively to other men. However, some women who are attracted to women may also identify as gay.
- **Heterosexual / Straight**: A person who is attracted to people of a different gender. Often, heterosexuality is described as attraction towards the "opposite" gender, however this approach is based on the view of gender as a binary, erasing the existence of non-binary and intersex people.

Some of the identities that fall within the spectrum of polysexuality are:

- **Bisexual**: A person that experiences romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of two or more genders. It is often used as an umbrella term to describe various forms of polysexuality.
- **Pansexual**: People who are attracted to people of all genders or irrespectively of a person's gender.

People who may use multiple identities to describe their sexual orientation. For example, a person who does not experience romantic attraction but is sexually attracted to people of all genders may identify both as aromantic and pansexual.

Trans Students Educational Resources (TSER) has created the Gender Unicorn Graph, which depicts in an easy to grasp way all the basic concepts regarding gender and sexuality. The graph is available online in multiple languages.



And what does Queer mean?
Queer is a complex term with multiple interpretations. In the past, it was used as derogatory term for LGBT people, but in the 80's it was reclaimed from activists and academics as a positive and confrontational self-description to challenge social norms around sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or other forms of normativity. It is often used by people that do not accept the traditional concepts of gender and sexuality and do not identify with any of the terms of the LGBTI+ acronym, but also as an umbrella term for all LGBTI+ people. As a term, it also identifies with certain parts of the Queer Theory.

Some important thoughts to keep in mind while navigating the different concepts and identities around gender sexuality:

- The four concepts mentioned in this section (sex assigned at birth, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation) are interconnected to a certain degree; however, they are not inextricably linked. We cannot use one of them to assume the rest. For example, a person's gender identity cannot tell us their sexual orientation, we can't assume a person's gender based on their gender expression, and so on.

- When talking about gender we are always referring to the gender a person identifies as. This means, for example, that the term “women” includes both cis and trans women.
- This categorisation is merely a tool to understand the diversity of gender and sexuality. It should not be used as a “checklist” to determine a person’s identities. Self-identification should always be respected. Some people may identify with terms that do not exactly follow this structure, and there may be various reasons for this:
    - a person may feel closer to an identity due to past experiences;
    - they may choose an identity that feels easier to explain or is more visible;
    - they may not find terms that specifically describe their experience, etc.
- The language used to describe experiences around gender and sexuality is tied to the socio-cultural context and a specific period. The creation and use of language is also a dynamic process; as visibility around LGBTIQ identity grows new terms are coined to highlight experiences that have been so far invisible, and older terms are being replaced with others, which carry less stigma.

Identifying stereotypes and discriminatory patterns

Forms of anti-LGBTIQ discrimination

Anti-LGBTIQ behaviours and attitudes can manifest in many ways. Although some of them may be more prominent and easier to identify, such as verbal abuse or physical violence, there are many other forms that can be more challenging to detect or recognise as such.

Anti-LGBTIQ discrimination: Relevant terms	
Biphobia	The fear, unreasonable anger, intolerance or/and hatred towards bisexuality and bisexual people. It can include a wide range of negative beliefs, stances, and behaviours, from stereotyping to extreme violence incidents. Bisexual people can also face homophobia due to their same-gender attraction, however biphobia is not the same as homophobia. It includes beliefs and stereotypes that are specifically targeted to bisexual people (e.g., that bisexual people are confused / greedy / unable to commit to a relationship, etc.)
Cis-sexism	The pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people whose gender and/or gender expression fall outside of cis-normative constructs. This system is founded on the belief that there are, and should be, only two genders, and that a person's gender must coincide with their assigned sex.
Heteronormativity	Refers to cultural and social practices where men and women are led to believe that heterosexuality is the only conceivable sexuality. It implies that heterosexuality is the only way of being "normal". This belief results in the invisibility, stigmatisation and discrimination against people who are not or are perceived not to be heterosexual.
Homophobia	The fear, unreasonable anger, intolerance or/and hatred directed towards homosexuality. It can include a wide range of negative beliefs, stances, and behaviours, from stereotyping to extreme violence incidents.

Interphobia	Negative stances, attitudes, and emotions towards people who (are thought to) have sex characteristics that do not fall within the binary of biological sex (Costello, 2010).
Transphobia	A matrix of cultural and personal beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and aggressive behaviours based on prejudice, disgust, fear and/or hatred directed against individuals or groups who do not conform to, or who transgress societal gender expectations and norms. It particularly affects individuals whose lived gender identity or gender expression differs from the gender role assigned to them at birth.
Source: Based on the definitions provided in Theofilopoulos & Paganis (2019)	

Below you can find some examples of the various forms of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics may take, aiming to aid VET teachers and trainers in identifying such incidents.

Common forms of anti-LGBTIQ discrimination and violence:

- Name-calling: using stigmatising and hurtful language regarding a person's sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics.
- Spreading rumours and gossiping about a person's identity or relationships.
- Making "jokes" about LGBTIQ people.
- Making fun of a person's gender expression (e.g., mocking someone's voice or way walking).
- Outing**:** Sharing a person's sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics without their consent.
- Being excluded from group activities.
- Teachers expressing anti-LGBTIQ beliefs or using stigmatising language to refer to LGBTIQ people.
- Teachers and other staff members not intervening or taking a neutral stance in cases of discrimination/abuse.
- Cyber-bullying: sending threats or verbally harassing through online platforms (e.g., social media, texts, emails, etc), spreading rumours, sharing a person's pictures and personal information, or outing them online.

- Sexual harassment**:** making sexually suggestive comments or gestures, groping, showing sexually explicit images, sexual abuse.
- Physical violence

Trans and intersex learners may face some unique forms of discrimination. For example:

- Not being able to register under the name and gender they identify as.
- Not being able to use bathrooms and other gender-segregated facilities according to their gender identity.
- Not being allowed to dress according to their gender identity.
- Misgendering: Referring to a trans person with pronouns other than the ones they use (e.g., using male pronouns when addressing or referring to a trans woman). Misgendering can also include de-gendering: deliberately avoiding gendered pronouns when referring to a trans person while knowing that they use male or female pronouns (e.g., using gender neutral pronouns to refer to a trans man who uses male pronouns)
- Deadnaming: Using the name a trans person is listed under in their legal documents to refer to them, instead of their chosen name.
- Receiving intrusive questions and inappropriate comments about their body and/or genitals.

It is important to have in mind that anti-LGBTIQ discrimination and harassment can affect not only LGBTIQ students, but also teachers and trainers who identify as LGBTIQ, as well as students who have LGBTIQ parents, other family members or friends, and those who are perceived to be LGBTIQ or do not conform to gender stereotypes.

Bias and stereotypes in VET curricula and textbooks

As anti-LGBTIQ stereotypes and attitudes are widespread and deeply engrained in our society, it is difficult for VET curricula and textbooks to be bias-free. Bias can be intentional or unintentional, overt, or covert.

The most common bias when it comes to LGBTIQ issues in educational curricula is i**nvisibility**. LGBTIQ people and identities are completely excluded both from the narrative and the illustrations of textbooks. Some examples of invisibility are:

- LGBTIQ identities and people are not mentioned in the content of a course.

- The LGBTIQ identity of important people (in history, science, arts, etc.) is not mentioned.
- Historical events that are relevant to or include LGBTIQ people are not mentioned.
- Texts and resources with LGBTIQ themes are not included in the curriculum.
- Examples and exercises include only cis-heterosexual people (e.g., only families that have a traditional structure are used as examples)
- Illustrations only include couples of different genders and traditional families.
- There is a lack of depictions of people who don't conform to gender roles.

Another form of bias commonly encountered is the **promotion of stereotypes.** In this case LGBTIQ identities are included in the curriculum but in a way that perpetuates (negative) stereotypes, myths, or negative attitudes. For example:

- LGBTIQ identities are described as mental illnesses;
- LGBTIQ identities are characterised as a "new trend";
- LGBTIQ people are associated with HIV/AIDS and/or other sexually transmitted infections;
- LGBTIQ people are portrayed as unfit to become parents;
- LGBTIQ people are associated with certain professions or interests (e.g., gay men as hairdressers, etc.)

The **use of biased language** can also promote stereotypes. LGBTIQ identities may be referred to with language that is stigmatising or pathologising. Some examples of biased language may include:

- referring to trans people as "transsexuals" or "transvestites";
- using the word "hermaphrodites" to refer to intersex people;
- referring to non-heterosexual sexual orientations as a "fad", "trend" or "life-style";
- using terms that are related to women/girls or femininity as insults (e.g., saying that someone "acts like a girl").

Biased language can also promote gender stereotypes, for example by associating certain roles or professions with a specific gender (e.g., presenting women as caretakers), using masculine words and adjectives to refer to people of all genders, etc.

Fragmentation is another form of bias that can be found in curricula. Fragmentation refers to when LGBTIQ issues are taught in isolation and without context or are introduced in a way that makes it difficult to connect to the broader topic studied. It can also include mentioning some identities only, while excluding other (e.g., referring only to gay and lesbian people) or portraying LGBTIQ people as a homogenous group, leaving out the various other identities related to race, ethnicity, class, disability, and other characteristics (GLSEN, 2019).

How can VET programmes be LGBTIQ-inclusive?

The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organization has published concrete recommendations on making schools safer and more inclusive for LGBTQI+ students (IGLYO & OBESSU, 2014). Although IGLYO's recommendations do not focus specifically on the VET sector, some of the most core principles and guidelines proposed can be applied to VET to create a more LGBTIQ-inclusive environment:

I. **Human-rights based education:** Fundamental human rights should be an integral part of education at all levels. Incorporating human rights in education, both in the overall educational approach as well as in the educational material, can play a crucial role in helping students understand that all people deserve equal rights and raising awareness about the rights to equality, freedom from discrimination, and freedom from harassment.

II. **Curriculum and learning materials**: Curricular materials should include LGBTIQ perspectives and portray the experiences of all students, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or sex characteristics. LGBTIQ identities and issues should be incorporated in the curriculum both as part of generic materials, and when possible, as standalone materials that specifically cover LGBTIQ issues.

III. **Anti-discrimination policies:** Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic discrimination should be dealt with in the same way any other identity-based discrimination would be.

IV. **Access to information and support:** Learners should be able to access both information and support on issues regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, expression and sex characteristics.

V. **Safe and inclusive environment**: Schools must be safe and inclusive spaces for all learners. Intimidation or discrimination of any sort, including homophobia, biphobia and transphobia should not be tolerated, with penalties for those who do not respect school safety.

VI. **Visibility and participation:** Visibility and participation means recognizing the existence of all including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people in society. Within a school, participation is achieved through ensuring that people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities are included and represented in all school structures.

VII. **School democracy:** Schools should encourage learners to take initiatives and be involved in the development of their policies. Learners should be empowered to be involved in all decision-making, policy matters and activities that concern them.

Making schools more inclusive of diversity around gender and sexuality, and free from discrimination and prejudice requires a multilevel approach, which includes changes in the school's curricula, the overall school's policies and climate, teacher education and administrator training.

In the sections below we propose specific guidelines and practical tips on how to create and introduce LGBTIQ issues into VET curricula. These guidelines incorporate recommendations from international LGBTIQ organisations and NGOs with experience in the sector of education (IGLYO, OBESSU, 2014; Quinn, 2019; Stonewall, 2017), and aim to offer practical help to VET school administration, teachers and trainers, as well as everyone involved in the production of educational materials, in the creation of an LGBTIQ-inclusive and stereotype-free environment in VET.

Introducing LGBTIQ inclusive VET schools' policies

One of the most core steps VET schools can take to promote LGBTIQ inclusion and create a safe and supportive environment for learners is by introducing and implementing a diversity policy which specifically covers issues around gender and sexuality. School policies can play a significant role in promoting a safe environment for all students when, after acknowledging the needs of vulnerable groups, they are systematically reinforced. Explicit mentioning of aspects of vulnerability, such as gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics, in the school policy is recommended to increase awareness among the school's personnel and to ensure the accurate and targeted information.

LGBTIQ-inclusive policies:

VET schools should have inclusion and diversity policies that specifically include sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. An effective policy should involve and relate to all individuals within the school: teachers and trainers, administrative personnel, other school staff, learners.

An integral part of these policies should be a concrete and clear procedure for reporting incidents of anti-LGBTIQ discrimination. The procedure should address:

- ✓ How are incidents of discrimination reported: Is there a designated staff member that receives reports of discrimination? What kind of information is collected? Who has access to it?
- ✓ Investigation and follow up: How are such incidents handled? Are there penalties in place for perpetrators (whether they are learners, or school staff)? What interventions can be done at school level? Who is responsible?
- ✓ Supporting victims of discrimination: How are learners supported? Are there counselling services available within the school? Can students be safely referred to other services?

Furthermore, an inclusion and diversity policy should support the addition of LGBTIQ-inclusive material in the curriculum, as well as the evaluation and redesign of existing material. This is very important as teachers can be hesitant to introduce LGBTIQ topics without the schools' support.

Schools' internal policies, especially those aimed to combat discrimination need to be in line with the national anti-discrimination laws and policies. In countries where LGBTIQ people are not protected from discrimination (in general or in the sector of education and/or VET) it may be difficult for schools to introduce policies that cover them explicitly. In this case schools can make adjustments in the proposed guidelines in order to include LGBTIQ issues e.g., within a broader framework of combatting gender-based discrimination.

Inclusion of trans and intersex learners:

Regarding **documentation of learners and record-keeping**, explore ways – in accordance with the national legal framework- to record and use trans learners' chosen names in the school's records. Although legal requirements for record-keeping may create certain obstacles in listing trans students under their chosen name and gender, school should strive to find alternatives and minimise the (public) use of the students' legal name and gender, in order to ensure their safety and privacy. The suggestions mentioned below are some examples of ways that school could do this. The degree to which each school will be able to enforce such actions depends on the country's legal requirements for record-keeping and the schools' procedures.

- ✓ Use the student's name and gender in the student information system, but switch it to the student's legal name and gender just before uploading the information to the national department of education's database.

- ✓ Use the student's chosen name and gender in publicly available documents (e.g. attendance lists, library cards, online classes, etc.) and their legal name on other databases that are not available to learners and/or all staff. Using the name and pronouns for a transgender learner makes them feel seen, respected and safe, while it also sets an example for other learners. Especially for students that may not be publicly transitioning, using their legal name could "out" them, exposing them to potential harassment.

Ensure that trans and intersex learners have **access to bathrooms and other gender-segregated facilities** based on their gender identity. The use of the appropriate facilities is important, not only for the validation of the learner's identity, but also to ensure their safety. Forcing trans and intersex learners to use facilities designated for their assigned gender increases the chances of them facing bullying and harassment. In case there are concerns regarding the safety of learner when using gender-segregated facilities other options could be explored, such as using a single-stall bathroom or the teachers' bathroom (if available), or using the facilities in times when there are fewer learners (during classes). However, such options should be considered only in cases where a learner's safety is threatened and they should not be imposed to learners instead of granting them access to the facilities that correspond with their gender.

All learners should have **the right to dress in a way that better expresses them** and feel safe in the school. For transgender and intersex learners expressing their gender through their clothes, accessories and hairstyle can be a very affirming act, and they should be able to dress according to their gender identity, regardless of the gender listed on their official documents.

Support of Learners' Groups & Initiatives:

Schools should encourage the creation of leaners-led groups, including groups with such as Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs). These groups can give learners the chance to be involved in activities and discussions that focus on LGBTIQ issues, without having to be LGBTIQ or out themselves. Through their participation in GSAs, learners can also actively contribute to the creation of safe and inclusive environment by organising activities that promote gender and sexuality diversity, such as organizing days of awareness (e.g., for the annual International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT inviting guest speakers from LGBTIQ organizations, etc.

Education of teachers and staff: To better equip VET teachers and other staff to actively contribute to the creation of a safe and supportive environment for LGBTIQ learners, schools should strive to:

- ✓ Provide training for teachers and other staff on identifying and dealing with anti-LGBTIQ discriminatory behaviours.
- ✓ Encourage staff in-service training that will equip the teachers and other school staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to become role models of appropriate and non-discriminatory behavior.
- ✓ Provide teachers and other staff with informational material and further resources on gender, sexuality and LGBTIQ identities.

Staff leadership: VET educators and other school staff could take an active role to aid in the effort to create an LGBTIQ-inclusive environment by:

- ✓ forming a staff working group/team to work on the development and implementation of becoming a safe school.
- ✓ create a specific role/position for a staff member to support diversity

Inclusion of LGBTIQ VET teachers and staff: School policies should also create a safe environment for coming out and non-discrimination of LGBTIQ VET teachers and staff. Creating a safe environment for LGBTIQ people in VET means that all LGBTIQ people should feel safe and accepted, whether they are learners, teachers or other school staff. Furthermore, openly LGBTIQ VET teachers and staff can act as role models within the school and actively contribute in the school's efforts to promote diversity and inclusion.

In the classroom: What VET teachers can do

School policies are one of the first and most important steps in the effort to create a more inclusive environment for LGBTIQ people. However, teachers and trainers also have an important role to play as well. Especially in schools where such policies may not exist, individual teachers' approach to LGBTIQ issues and their personal efforts to bring up and hold discussions on diversity in the classroom can have an important effect in the creation of a safer environment for LGBTIQ learners.

As a VET teacher in your classroom, you can:

- ✓ Model respectful behavior towards everyone at school.
- ✓ Look for opportunities to raise awareness about stereotypes, utilising both educational materials, as well as questions and comments from learners.
- ✓ When materials, textbooks or other sources used contain stereotypes or bias, utilise the existing bias as a learning opportunity. Ask students to identify bias and prejudices and facilitate an open discussion on the prevalence of stereotypes and how they affect our perception of other people.
- ✓ Set an example by using language that does not perpetuate stereotypes.
- ✓ Respect students' names, pronouns, and self-identification.
- ✓ If a student comes out to you, thank them for their trust and ensure their privacy. Ask them if they want to share this information and with whom (e.g., "Are you out to other people?" or "How would you like me to call you in front of others?").
- ✓ Use gender neutral terms when referring to VET Learners (e.g., "students" instead of "boys and girls").
- ✓ Challenge stereotypes and negative attitudes towards LGBTIQ people expressed by learners.
- ✓ Talking openly and without shame about issues related to sexual orientation gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.
- ✓ Take time to reflect on your own beliefs and attitudes towards LGBTIQ people.
- ✓ Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school.
- ✓ Publicly acknowledge and endorse respectful behavior by providing positive attention.
- ✓ Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the classroom – this includes both abusive and discriminatory language on the grounds of gender identity, sexual orientation, sex characteristics as well as other characteristics such as race, nationality, health status and/or disabilities.
- ✓ Give constructive feedback to learners when respectful behavior and respectful language are absent.
- ✓ Actively promote the right of every member of the school to be safe and secure.

Creating inclusive educational material

Textbooks and other materials used in the teaching of a course are the aim sources of information and constitute the most visible component of a curriculum. As in many countries'

educational settings textbooks tend to be used as the sole resource, with students often being requested to memorise them, it is important that they do not contain implicit or explicit bias.

In the creation of curricular material, such as textbooks and other resources, the following guidelines can provide a basis for ensuring the inclusion of LGBTIQ people and issues and avoiding the (re)production of stereotypes.

To increase the **visibility of LGBTIQ identities and people in the content of educational material,** both official textbooks, as well as other educational material, we should strive to:

- ✓ Present the diversity of sexual orientation and gender as a normal manifestation of the human experience, objectively and without judgement.
- ✓ Include in the curriculum LGBTIQ perspectives and experiences, both as part of the generic materials and as specific issues/chapters if possible.
- ✓ Explore the contribution of LGBTIQ people in history, arts, and science. Mention the LGBTIQ identity of prominent figures and refer to people who played a crucial role in the progress of LGBTIQ rights.
- ✓ Include LGBTIQ people in examples and exercises in all subjects to normalise the LGBTIQ identities.
- ✓ Include LGBTIQ people in textbooks' illustrations (e.g., have pictures of same-gender couples, non-traditional families or people with an expression that doesn't conform to gender norms).
- ✓ In courses where VET Learners are prepared to offer services (e.g., health services) make sure to include specialised information covering the needs of LGBTIQ people and how to provide safe and inclusive services.
- ✓ Include diverse resources that highlight various experiences and identities around sexuality and gender.
- ✓ Provide information on the human rights of LGBTIQ people and how LGBTIQ equality has progressed throughout history.

Along with the inclusion of specific content regarding LGBTIQ identities, all textbooks and educational materials used as part of the curriculum should use **inclusive and bias-free language**. This may include:

- ✓ Alternating the use of gendered pronouns instead of using masculine pronouns as the default or, even better, use gender neutral pronouns.

- ✓ Avoiding stigmatising and outdated language to refer to LGBTIQ people.
- ✓ Avoiding using gendered terms when talking about families (e.g., "mother" and "father"). Instead use neutral terms such as "parents" or "guardians" to include students with LGBTIQ parents, as well as other non-traditional family structures (single-parent families, divorced parents, etc)
- ✓ Avoiding sexist language and words that portray feminine features/characteristics as weak, less important, or unwanted.

Who should be involved?

Creating a safe and inclusive environment for LGBTIQ learners in VET requires a multi-level approach that covers inclusion of LGBTIQ people at the level of school policies, the teachers' approach to LGBTIQ issues, as well as the curriculum and teaching materials used. All actors involved should be included: school administration, teachers, and learners, as well as external stakeholders such as LGBTIQ organisations and human-rights NGOs.

School administration: The school's administration should take the main initiative for the creation of policies that are inclusive of LGBTIQ people and ensure that the materials used as part of the curriculum incorporate LGBTIQ perspectives and promote inclusion and acceptance. Some of the main steps school administration can take to start the process of creating a more inclusive environment are:

- ✓ Setting up a team/committee to work on the creation of inclusive curricula and policies, overseeing the process and offering support to staff members involved.
- ✓ Ensuring existing or new policies are clearly communicated to all members of the school community.
- ✓ Providing training and capacity building for teachers and staff.

Teachers and other staff: Teachers and other school staff needs to have an active role in the process of creating inclusive curricula and relevant policies. In cases when the school's administration may not take the initiative needed to promote the inclusion of LGBTIQ people in the curriculum, individual teachers can bring this issue to the school's attention. Teachers and trainers, as well as staff in other positions should also participate in all the steps of creating inclusive curricula: from the initial evaluation of the existing situation and barriers,

the creation of material and policies, to the evaluation and assessment of their implementation and effectiveness.

Learners: Learners are an integral part of the school and should be actively included and encouraged by the school administration and the teachers to participate in the process of creating curricula that are LGBTIQ-inclusive. Learners can be involved by:

- ✓ Actively committing to the school's policies to ensure all learners feel safe and welcomed.
- ✓ Giving their feedback in the review process of educational material.
- ✓ Offering suggestions for changes on the curriculum.
- ✓ Taking initiatives such as creating learners'-led groups or organising events and activities outside the official curriculum.

LGBTIQ organisations and human-rights NGOs: Following a "Nothing about us without us" approach, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders specialising in LGBTIQ issues should also be a part of this process by providing input and assisting in the evaluation of the curriculum (GIZ, 2017). LGBTIQ organisations can assist in many steps of the creation of inclusive curricula, by:

- ✓ Offering insights on the needs of LGBTIQ people, the obstacles commonly faced by LGBTIQ learners and existing good practices for LGBTIQ-inclusion in education settings.
- ✓ Participating in the review process of existing educational material.
- ✓ Offering informational material and guidance on the creation of new educational material or policies.
- ✓ Assisting schools in the evaluation of new policies and/or material introduced.
- ✓ Providing connections with supportive services and community spaces for LGBTIQ learners.
- ✓ Participating in classes with invited experts that can create the space for discussions on LGBTIQ issues.
- ✓ Collaborating in organising extra-curricular activities that touch upon gender and sexuality, such as events, talks, movie screenings, etc.
- ✓ Offering training for trainers and school staff.

Assessment Grid for the Evaluation of VET Curricula

With the abovementioned guidelines and practical tips to create a more inclusive environment for LGBTIQ learners in VET serving as the basis, we have complied an assessment grid for the evaluation of VET curricula.

There are two main tables, one covering issues related to the content of courses (e.g., textbooks and educational material), and one covering school policies, learners' initiatives and teachers training and inclusion. Each table consists of three levels (1.2.3) and contains statements for each of the topics.

For the evaluation of LGBTIQ inclusion in your school's curricula check all statements that apply. Based on the total number of statements check in each level, see where your school's curricula land:

- ☐ **Mostly Level 3 - Minimally Inclusive:** Your school has some important gaps in providing an inclusive and supportive environment for LGBTIQ learners. Steps need to be taken to start assessing the situation and creating an action plan to fill-in these gaps.
- ☐ **Mostly Level 2 – Moderately Inclusive:** Your school is taking sturdy steps towards creating an LGBTIQ-inclusive environment, but there is still room for improvement. Assess the existing barriers and in the school's policies and actions to further improve LGBTIQ inclusion.
- ☐ **Mostly Level 1 – Highly Inclusive:** Your school does a lot to create a safe and inclusive for VET learners. Continue to work towards sustaining this effort and explore areas where there may be room for improvement.

Textbooks & Other Educational Material				
	Main Content	**Language**	**Examples & Exercises**	**Illustrations**
Level 3	☐ LGBTIQ identities are not mentioned in any part of the curriculum. ☐ LGBTIQ people are portrayed in a negative light.	☐ The language used is highly gendered.	☐ There are no examples or exercises that	☐ The illustrations and pictures used do not portray

	☐ The curriculum promotes negative stereotypes about LGBTIQ people. ☐ When the curriculum refers to historical figures who were LGBTIQ, their identity is not mentioned. ☐ Historical events that are relevant to or include LGBTIQ people are not mentioned. ☐ Texts and resources with LGBTIQ themes are not included in the curriculum. ☐ Diversity of sexual orientation and gender is presented as a deviation or pathology.	☐ Outdated or stigmatising terms are used to refer to LGBTIQ people.	include LGBTIQ people and/or relationships.	LGBTIQ people and/or relationships.
Level 2	☐ *LGBTQI identities are partially or briefly mentioned at one part of the curriculum.* ☐ *When the curriculum refers to historical figures who were LGBTIQ, their identity is briefly mentioned.* ☐ *Historical events that are relevant to or include LGBTIQ people are briefly mentioned.* ☐ *Some texts and resources with LGBTIQ themes are included in the curriculum.* ☐ *The curriculum includes LGBTIQ perspectives and experiences, only as specific chapters.*	☐ *Gender-neutral language is used at some parts of the curriculum.* ☐ *The curriculum uses mostly inclusive*	☐ *There are few examples or exercises that include LGBTIQ people and/or relationships.* ☐ *The examples and exercises used portray limited LGBTIQ*	☐ *Some of the illustrations and pictures used portray LGBTIQ people and/or relationships.* ☐ *The illustrations and pictures used portray limited LGBTIQ*

		terms to refer to LGBTQI identities.	*experiences (e.g., they are limited to cisgender same-gender couples).*	*experiences (e.g., they are limited to cisgender same-gender couples).*
Level 1	☐ LGBTIQ identities are explicitly included throughout the curriculum. ☐ LGBTIQ identities are portrayed in positive light. ☐ The curriculum includes sections specifically focusing on LGBTIQ issues (e.g., rights, contributions of LGBTIQ people in history, etc.). ☐ Historical events that are relevant to or include LGBTIQ people are examined in detail. ☐ Texts and resources with LGBTIQ themes are consistently included in the curriculum. ☐ Diversity of sexual orientation and gender is presented as a normal manifestation of the human experience. ☐ The curriculum includes LGBTIQ perspectives and experiences, both as part of the generic materials and as specific chapters.	☐ The curriculum consistently uses gender-neutral language ☐ The terms used to refer to LGBTIQ issues are inclusive and non-discriminatory	☐ There is a significant number of examples or exercises that include LGBTIQ people and/or relationships. ☐ The examples and exercises used portray a wide range of LGBTIQ identities and experiences.	☐ A significant percentage of the illustrations and pictures used portrays LGBTIQ people and/or relationships. ☐ The illustrations and pictures used portray a wide range of LGBTIQ identities and experiences.

School Policies & Actions				
	Inclusion & Diversity policies	**Extra-curricular activities & Learners' Groups**	**Documentation, Use of facilities & Dress-codes**	**Staff Training & Inclusion**
Level 3	☐ The school does not have an anti-discrimination policy in place. ☐ There is no reporting system for incidents of discrimination. ☐ The school does not offer	☐ The school does not allow learners to form groups. ☐ The school allows students to form groups but discourages learners from creating LGBTIQ-focused groups (e.g., GSAs).	☐ The school requires different dress codes based on gender. ☐ Use of facilities (e.g., bathrooms, locker rooms) is restricted according to learners' assigned gender. ☐ There are no gender-neutral facilities available.	☐ The school does not offer training for teachers and staff on LGBTIQ issues. ☐ The school does not provide teachers and staff with educational material and resources covering LGBTIQ issues. ☐ LGBTIQ teachers are actively discouraged from being open about their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics.

				☐ The are no out LGBTIQ teachers.
Level 2	☐ The school has an anti-discrimination in place covering gender-based discrimination, but not specifically anti-LGBTIQ discrimination. ☐ There is a reporting system for incidents of discrimination, but learners are not clearly informed about the procedure. ☐ The school offers psychosocial support for learners who experience discrimination, but not specifically covering LGBTIQ issues.	☐ The school allows learners to form groups (e.g., GSAs) without offering further support or guidance. ☐ The school allows learners to organise extra-curricular activities, without offering further support or guidance. ☐ The school organises extra-curricular activities on diversity that may touch on LGBTIQ themes, among others.	☐ The school does not require specific dress-codes based on gender, but learners are expected to follow informal rules. ☐ The school allows transgender or intersex learners to use the facilities of their choice on a case-by-case basis – no specific policies are in place. ☐ There are some gender-neutral facilities available	☐ The school offers training for teachers and staff which mentions LGBTIQ issues among other topics. ☐ The offers training but not consistently. ☐ The school provides teachers and staff with educational material and resources on diversity that mention LGBTIQ issues among other topics. ☐ LGBTIQ teachers are neither encouraged nor discouraged to be open about their sexual orientation, gender

			(e.g., bathrooms but not locker-rooms)	identity or sex characteristics.
Level 1	☐ The school has an anti-discrimination policy in place, which covers explicitly anti-LGBTIQ discrimination. ☐ The school has a reporting system for incidents of discrimination and the procedure is clearly communicated to learners. ☐ The anti-discrimination policy is reviewed and updated regularly. ☐ The school offers LGBTIQ-informed psychosocial support for learners who experience discrimination. ☐ The school's policy ensures confidentiality of information pertaining to students' sexual orientations and gender identities	☐ The school encourages learners to form LGBTIQ-focused groups (e.g., GSAs). ☐ The school encourages learners to organise extra-curricular activities with LGBTIQ themes. ☐ The school organises extra-curricular activities specifically covering LGBTIQ themes.	☐ Learners are able to choose facilities (e.g., bathrooms, locker rooms) according to their gender identity, regardless of the gender stated in their official documents. ☐ Gender-neutral facilities are available. ☐ The school does not require specific dress-codes based on gender and learners are encouraged to dress in a way that expresses them.	☐ The school offers training for teachers and staff specifically covering LGBTIQ issues ☐ The training is offered on a regular basis. ☐ The school provides teachers with educational material and resources on diversity that specifically cover LGBTIQ issues. ☐ LGBTIQ teachers are neither encouraged nor discouraged to be open about their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics.

				☐ There openly LGBTIQ teachers or other school staff.

As part of UNIQUE project's upcoming steps, the proposed methodology will be pilot-tested by UNIQUE's Ambassadors in the partners' countries. UNIQUE Ambassadors will be VET teachers and educators, who will train their co-workers and also use the methodology and knowledge to screen other VET Curricula for discrimination patterns based on gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics and identify all these black spots that keep reproducing anti-LGBTIQ discrimination in the VET sector, creating stereotypes and fostering homophobia, biphobia and transphobia against LGBTIQ learners.

Quality Assurance & Evaluation

To ensure the successful implementation of the changes introduced by the schools, either at a policy level or regarding the curriculum's content, schools need to have in place quality assurance and evaluation procedures. These procedures should be coordinated by the school's administration, with the active participation of all groups within the school (administration, teachers, staff, learners) as well as external stakeholders, such as LGBTIQ organisations or experts.

The evaluation needs to be done on a regular basis, especially when new policies and/or material are introduced, to assess whether they are successfully implemented and incorporated in school life, as well as whether they foster the expected results. An annual evaluation is suggested especially for newly introduced changes.

The assessment grid can be utilised for the periodic evaluation of VET curricula. Starting with this assessment, schools can evaluate where they are compared to the last evaluation conducted, recognise the measures successfully introduced as well as the gaps that still need to be addressed.

The assessment grid could be filled in by all groups mentioned above (school administration, a team of teachers/staff, a team of learners, LGBTIQ experts) and a compared analysis be done to see whether there are differences in the perceptions of the groups involved.

Qualitative data can also be collected (e.g., through discussion groups) for a more in-depth understanding of the effect of the measures and actions taken on the inclusion of LGBTIQ people.

Some questions to consider during the evaluation process:

- How would you rate the school's overall climate regarding LGBTIQ issues?
- How would you rate the inclusion of LGBTIQ issues, perspectives and experiences in the content of the curriculum?
- How would you rate the school's inclusion policy (if applicable)? Is it publicly available / openly communicated? Is the school's personnel committed to the policy implementation?
- How would you rate the school's stance on anti-LGBTIQ discrimination? Is there a procedure available for reporting such incidents? Are learners being aware of it?

- How would you rate the school's support for LGBTIQ learners who have experienced discrimination?
- What changes would you suggest to further include LGBTIQ issues in the school's curriculum?

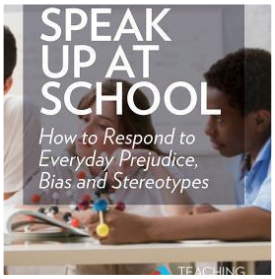
The questions above are an indicative list that can be utilised as part of the qualitative review with all parts involved. Additions can be made to look specifically at certain issues based on the gaps identified through the assessment grid.

The feedback gathered should be used to guide a process of updating the policies and content included in the curriculum, to ensure the inclusion of LGBTIQ people and the creation of a safe and accepting environment within the VET sector.

Resources for VET trainers

Prominent LGBTIQ historical figures Below you can find some prominent, internationally recognised LGBTIQ artists, scientists and activists that can be introduced as part of the curriculum to talk about the involvement of LGBTIQ people in all fields through out history. You can also try to learn more about and include well-known LGBTIQ figures from your own country.	
Alan Turing (1912-1954)	"Mathematician Alan Turing played a pivotal role in cracking intercepted coded messages that enabled the Allies to defeat the Nazis in many crucial moments and in doing so, he helped them win World War Two. In 1952, Turing was convicted for having a relationship with 19-year-old Arnold Murray. At the time it was illegal to engage in same-gender relationships and Turing was convicted to undergo chemical castration. He took his own life at the age of 41. Turing was eventually pardoned in 2013, which led to new legislation pardoning all gay men under historical gross indecency laws. He was named 'The Greatest Person of the 20th Century following a public vote on the BBC last year."
Audre Lorde (1934-1992)	Audrey Lorde has made long lasting contributions to feminist theory, queer theory, and critical race theory. She has captivated millions of people through her writing, some examples being her works "Coal" and "Zami: A New Spelling of My Name." She is self-described as a "Black, lesbian, feminist, mother, poet and warrior."
Beauford Delaney (1924 - 1987)	"A major figure in the Harlem Renaissance, Beauford Delaney was a prominent abstract expressionist. Whilst a major mover and shaker in the bohemian circles of the 1970s, he also suffered the societal pressures and persecutions of being both black and gay."
Frida Kahlo (1907-1954)	"Frida Kahlo was a gifted painter and openly bisexual. She used her medium to depict taboo topics, like female sexuality, pain, and feminine beauty standards, primarily through self-portraits. She also honoured indigenous Mexican culture through her art, which drew the attention of Mexican painter Diego Rivera".
Marsha P. Johnson	"Marsha P. Johnson was a black trans woman, a sex worker, and an activist who spent much of her life fighting for equality. She served as a

(1945-1992)	mother figure to the drag queens, trans women, and homeless youth of Christopher Street in New York City. She was alongside Sylvia Rivera at the beginning of the Stonewall riots, and together they founded S.T.A.R. Johnson. Along with Rivera, she was a central figure in the beginning of the gay liberation movement of the 1970s in the United States."
Sara Josephine Baker (1873-1945)	"Known for tracking down Typhoid Mary, was openly gay. She contributed greatly to public health in New York City and took particular interest in helping communities of immigrants. She fought to provide access to medical care for all areas of the city and helped train new healthcare professionals"
Sylvia Rivera (1951-2002)	"Sylvia Rivera was a queer, Latina, self-identified drag queen who fought tirelessly for transgender rights, as well as for the rights of gender-nonconforming people. After the Stonewall riots, where she was said to have thrown the first brick, Rivera started S.T.A.R. (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries), a group focused on providing shelter and support to queer, homeless youth, with Marsha P. Johnson. She also fought against the exclusion of transgender people in New York's Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act. She was an activist even on her deathbed, meeting with the Empire State Pride Agenda about trans inclusion"
Sources: National Geographic (2018); Gender and Sexuality Resource Center (n.d.); Attitude (2022), Orlando Science Center (2020).	



Speak Up at School

A Teaching Tolerance guide that gives educators the tools to help students and themselves turn from bystanders to upstanders and explains how to respond to biased remarks from peers, parents or even administrators

tolerance.org/speak-up-at-school

LGBTQ+ Educator Rights

A compilation of information by GLSEN on LGBTIQ educators' rights in school.

https://www.glsen.org/activity/lgbtq-educator-rights

Best practice, toolkits and resources

Stonewall offers a wide range of practical guides and resources for educators, on anti-bullying, curriculum building ideas, policies and best practices.

https://www.stonewall.org.uk/best-practice-toolkits-and-resources

Supporting Learners' GSAs

GLSEN offers an extensive guide on how to set up Gender and Sexuality Alliances at Schools, with practical tips for students.

https://www.glsen.org/support-student-gsas

Teaching LGBTIQ History

This site serves as a comprehensive reference hub for information regarding LGBTIQ History (US-based), offering History Framework Lesson Plans, General LGBTIQ Lesson Plans, and other resources to support teachers.

https://www.lgbtqhistory.org/

Informational material from local organisations

Local LGBTIQ organisations can also offer guidance and informational material that best reflects the reality, challenges and issues relevant to each country.

Good practice example:

"SENSE project: sexual diversity in vocational training"

The SENSE project (2019-2021) aimed to integrate sexual diversity sensitivity (a welcoming attitude to LGBTI clients) in VET studies in the social domain.

The SENSE project developed 4 products to secure optimal integration of sexual diversity sensitivity in social domain VET courses:

- Discussion triggers made by students. A Manual on how to facilitate such a student participation process was created along with the trigger videos students developed: in all participating countries. The Dutch students also developed a Question & Answer website for VET students
- A teacher training, which improves the pedagogic competences of VET teachers, including a training manual and a background reader.
- A curriculum consultancy manual, which provides guidance on how to structurally integrate sexual diversity sensitivity in a spiral course curriculum
- A competence framework, which describes the needed diversity competences of VET students and which will function both as an underlying model for the other products, and as tool for discussion with the aim to improve the formal competence frameworks in the participating countries and regions: Framework for student's competences and Framework for teacher's competences.

Partners: GALE, CESIE, Villa Montesca, EUROTrainers, DEFOIN, Regional VET Centre of Amsterdam (ROC van Amsterdam), EfVET (the European forum of technical and Vocational Education and Training)

More information: https://www.gale.info/en/projects/sense-project

Glossary

(Gender) Transition: The personal, medical, and legal changes a trans person may choose to make in order to better express their gender identity.

Aromantic spectrum: A spectrum of identities for people who experience little or no romantic attraction, or under certain circumstances (e.g., aromantic, grayromantic, demiromantic).

Asexual spectrum: A spectrum of identities for people who experience little or no sexual attraction, or under certain circumstances (e.g., asexual, graysexual, demisexual).

Biphobia: The fear, unreasonable anger, intolerance or/and hatred toward bisexuality and bisexual people. It can include a wide range of negative beliefs, stances, and behaviours, from stereotyping to extreme violence incidents. Bisexual people can also face homophobia due to their same-gender attraction, however biphobia is not the same as homophobia. It includes beliefs and stereotypes that are specifically targeted to bisexual people (e.g., that bisexual people are confused / greedy / unable to commit to a relationship, etc.)

Bisexual: A person that experiences romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of two or more genders. It is often used as an umbrella term to describe various forms of polysexuality.

Cisgender (or Cis): People whose gender identity is the same as the gender they were assigned at birth.

Cis-sexism: The pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people whose gender and/or gender expression fall outside of cis-normative constructs. This system is founded on the belief that there are, and should be, only two genders, and that a person's gender must coincide with their assigned sex.

Coming out: A lifelong process of self-acceptance and revealing one's queer identity to others. This may involve something as private as telling a single confidant, or something as public as posting to social media.

Deadnaming: Using the name a trans person is listed under in their legal documents to refer to them, instead of their chosen name.

Gay: Mostly used for men who are attracted exclusively to other men. However, some women who are attracted to women may also identify as gay.

Gender assigned at birth: The gender a person is categorised as when they are born, based on their sex characteristics.

Gender binary: The social systems that recognises only two genders and requires all people to be raised either as a man or a woman, based on the gender they were assigned at birth. This system erases the existence of other gender identities beyond those of man and woman.

Gender expression: The ways in which a person chooses to express themselves, such as haircuts, clothing, way of speaking, movements and other behaviours or interests. Gender expression does not always follow the social norms for a person's gender.

Gender Identity: A person's inner sense of their gender. It may or may not match with the gender the person was assigned at birth.

Gender non-conforming: A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category.

Heteronormativity: The cultural and social practices where men and women are led to believe that heterosexuality is the only conceivable sexuality. It implies that heterosexuality is the only way of being "normal". This belief results in the invisibility, stigmatisation and discrimination against people who are not or are perceived not to be heterosexual.

Heterosexual / Straight: A person who is attracted to people of a different gender. Often, heterosexuality is described as attraction towards the "opposite" gender, however this approach is based on the view of gender as a binary, erasing the existence of non-binary and intersex people.

Homophobia: The fear, unreasonable anger, intolerance or/and hatred directed towards homosexuality. It can include a wide range of negative beliefs, stances, and behaviours, from stereotyping to extreme violence incidents.

Interphobia: Negative stances, attitudes, and emotions towards people who (are thought to) have sex characteristics that do not fall within the binary of biological sex.

Intersex: people who are born with sex characteristics that do not fall strictly within the category of male or female.

Legal gender recognition: changing one's name and/or gender marker on legal documents.

Lesbian: A person that identifies as a woman and is attracted exclusively by other women.

Misgendering: Referring to a trans person with pronouns other than the ones they use

Monosexuality: An umbrella term for sexual orientations that describe attraction towards one gender only (e.g., gay, lesbian, heterosexual).

Non-binary: People who do not identify their gender within the male/female binary but somewhere outside or between. Often used as an umbrella term which included many different experiences of gender identity that fall outside the gender binary, such as genderfluid, agender and others.

Outing: Sharing a person's sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics without their consent.

Pansexual: People who are attracted to people of all genders or irrespectively of a person's gender.

Polysexuality: An umbrella term for sexual orientations that describe attraction towards more than one genders (e.g., bisexual, pansexual, etc.)

Queer: a complex term with multiple interpretations. In the past, it was used as derogatory term for gay people, but in the 80's it was reclaimed from activists and academics as a positive and confrontational self-description to challenge social norms around sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or other forms of normativity. It is often used by people that do not accept the traditional concepts of gender and sexuality and do not identify with any of the terms of the LGBTI+ acronym, but also as an umbrella term for all LGBTI+ people. As a term, it also identifies with certain parts of the Queer Theory.

Sex characteristics refer to the biological characteristics associated with sex. They include the primary sex characteristics (chromosomes, internal and external reproductive organs, sex hormones, gonads) and the secondary sex characteristics (e.g., breasts' development, muscle and fat distribution, hair growth, etc.).

Sexual orientation: The romantic/emotional and sexual attraction a person can feel towards other people.

Transgender (or Trans): people who have a gender identity which is different to the gender assigned at birth. It includes multiple gender identities, such as trans man, trans woman, non-binary, agender, genderqueer, gender fluid, etc.

Transphobia: A matrix of cultural and personal beliefs, opinions, attitudes and aggressive behaviours based on prejudice, disgust, fear and/or hatred directed against individuals or groups who do not conform to, or who transgress societal gender expectations and norms. It particularly affects individuals whose lived gender identity or gender expression differs from the gender role assigned to them at birth.

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