Intersectionality Research
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Executive summary
IGLYO – The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Intersex Youth & Student Organisation has been embedding the concepts and practices of intersectionality within its work since 2013.

Intersectionality is an analytical tool for studying, understanding and responding to the ways in which gender intersects with other identities – socioeconomic statuses, ethnicities, ages, (dis)abilities, and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences.

As part of this on-going work, IGLYO commissioned this research to highlight best practice in intersectional approaches across our network of over 95 LGBTQI youth and student organisations. This report provides an analysis and evaluation of the current and prospective approaches for the inclusion of youth with intersectional identities developed by European LGBTQI youth organisations. The aim of the report is to highlight major trends about intersectional practices alongside in-depth concrete examples of policies, experiences, and activities from selected organisations. In particular:

- To investigate examples of how lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) youth organisations, their staff, volunteers, and service users, practice inclusion and participation of people with intersectional identities;
- To identify the shortcomings of such activities and possible ways to improve their efficiency and expand their range of action;
- To provide IGLYO’s members organisations with guidance and tools to promote the inclusion of youth with intersectional identities within their organisational structure as well as their activities.

Methods of analysis include trend analysis through a baseline survey and an in-depth investigation by means of interviews with case-selected participants and direct observation. Participants to the baseline survey include staff and members from a broad range of European LGBTQI youth organisations whilst cases for the qualitative investigation have been purposefully selected:

- LGBT Youth Scotland
- Arcigay Il Cassero & MigraBO
- Sabaah
- Trans-Fuzja

Other methods include the analysis of printed and online material produced by participant organisations. Results of data analysed show that:

- Inclusive organisations have distinct and enforceable policies regarding the involvement of LGBTQI youth with intersectional identities at all levels of organisation
- Inclusive organisations have been actively reaching out to and empowering people with intersectional identities
- Inclusive organisations have invested resources in re-designing their environment in order to make it accessible;
- Clients and staff with intersectional identities have had to be proactive in addressing access and inclusion issues within their organisations
- Clients and staff with intersectional identities are well represented in all organisational structures.

The report finds that major areas of weakness require further investigation and affirmative actions from the part of organisation’s leadership, staff, workers and volunteers, in partnership with sister organisations, professionals from social services, and public authorities and institutions.

Recommendations discussed include the importance of a people-centered and grassroots approach that attempts to implement an intersectional framework acknowledging individual identities, expressions, and needs. Working with intersections should start from the understanding that there is no “one size fits all”, but rather specific needs that have to be addressed through staff and professional training, education, and cooperation with other organisations, inside and outside the LGBTQI community, public authorities, and social services.

LGBTQI youth organizations working at mainstream levels or targeting specific intersections should be aware of their own limitations as well as of potential for improvement by building critical and honest awareness among leadership, members and staff. Youth with intersectional identities may come from a wide range of vulnerable and challenging situations and it is therefore crucial to establish privacy policies that guarantee beneficiaries of respect for their own confidentiality and anonymity.

The report also investigates the fact that the analysis conducted has limitations. Some of the limitations include: the geographical scope, dictated by time and budget constraints, as well as the purposive selection of cases.
What is intersectionality?
Intersectionality is an analytical tool for studying, understanding and responding to the ways in which gender intersects with other identities – socioeconomic statuses, ethnicities, ages, (dis)abilities, and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences.

The concept of intersectionality stems from feminist theory, a methodology for research and for a social justice action agenda. It starts from the premise that all people live multiple, layered identities along with the assumption that people are members of more than one community at the same time, and can simultaneously experience discrimination in different ways. Intersectional analysis aims to reveal multiple identities, exposing the different types of discrimination and disadvantages that occur as a consequence of the combination of identities.

The aim of intersectional practices is not to demonstrate that one group of LGBTQI young people is more victimised or privileged than another, but to show meaningful distinctions and similarities in order to celebrate diversity, overcome discriminations, and put in place the conditions for all people to be fully included within the LGBTQI community, organisation’s activities, structures, and decision-making processes. Through affirmative action we should then promote any program or policy that attempts to remove past and present inequalities by devoting resources towards ensuring that people are not discriminated against on the basis of their identities.

An intersectional approach allows us to take into consideration the merging of different types of identities – as points of intersection where discrimination might occur. Moreover, it encourages us to think and assess how policies, programs, services can be improved in order to guarantee full access of youth with multiple identities alongside a process of empowerment.

The intersectional analysis of feminist scholars has left a specific meaning of intersectionality largely unclear, proposing an open-ended concept that can often sound like a theoretical “buzzword”. In practice, intersectionality focuses on the inclusion of the experience of persons and groups marginalised and discriminated at multiple levels. The LGBTQI community has shown increased interest in discussing intersectionality explicitly, using it as a tool for advocacy, program planning, and research. Indeed, it is an intellectually demanding approach. Nonetheless, intersectionality is also a base for analytical sensibility and more efforts are needed to foster the dialogue between theoretical and methodological conceptualisations of intersectionality and the concrete ways it can be put into practice. Although many LGBTQI youth organisations has succeed in bringing to light the invisibility of some of their members, more work needs to be done to ensure their representation within the community. The present research is therefore meant to assess examples of the intersectional practices carried out by different LGBTQI youth organisations across Europe.

We need tools such as intersectionality to acknowledge the complexity and dynamic processes that define our access to rights, inclusion, and opportunities rather than thinking about intersections as separated areas of work and defined categories. In order to celebrate and enjoy diversity, we must recognise that how we think about intersectionality determines what we do and how we do it. This report suggests that employing intersectionality as a bottom-up approach requires that the lived experiences of LGBTQI individuals are put at the forefront of organisation’s analysis, research, and planning.

To summarise, an intersectional approach requires that the following steps should guide the planning of the organisation’s activities and projects:

- To analyse what forms of identity are critical organising principles for this community/region (along with gender, consider ethnicity, religion, citizenship, age, (dis)ability)
- To identify who are the most marginalised LGBTQI youth in the community and why
- To assess which social and educational programs are available to different groups of LGBTQI youth in the community
- To pinpoint who is subject to access restrictions along with limited opportunities within the organisational structures and practices
- To understand which youth are affected by lower visibility and by low levels of public representation
- To implement and improve practices that address the needs of youth with intersectional identities

About IGLYO
IGLYO is a pan-European network of over 95 member organisations. IGLYO is primarily a capacity building and youth empowerment organisation, building the skills, knowledge and experience of its members and other LGBTQI activists.

As a youth and student organisation, IGLYO also aims to provide a range of leadership and participation opportunities. IGLYO's main activities include organising conferences, study sessions, capacity building seminars and workshops. IGLYO's vision is a world where young people in all their diversity are able to express and define their own sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, sex characteristics and bodily diversity without discrimination, violence or hatred. It works for a world where they can participate without limitation in their lives and communities, so they can rise to their potential, enjoying respect, celebration and positive recognition.

IGLYO and Intersectionality
Intersectionality was introduced as a key thematic area for IGLYO at the 2013 General Assembly in Copenhagen, Denmark. The addition of intersectionality in the work of the organisation built upon a long tradition of recognising that LGBTQI young people are not only defined by their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics or age, but that they have many different aspects of identity that are experienced at the same time, and in conjunction with the main foci of IGLYO.

To develop this key thematic area, IGLYO has run several different events that focused specifically on intersectionality. Although IGLYO did not necessarily use the word ‘intersectionality,’ the work on this topic can be traced back throughout its work. Prior to 2014, IGLYO worked on the key thematic area of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, which also incorporated aspects of intersectionality. Below, IGLYO's activities and actions that have contributed to its approach to intersectionality are listed. The list is not exhaustive, but summarises recent key events that have helped developed IGLYO's position on intersectionality.

Roundtable Series on Intersectionality
During 2014, IGLYO convened four thematic roundtables on intersectionality on socio-economic statuses, genders, (dis)abilities, and ethnicities. Each roundtable brought together stakeholders within each thematic area who work at the European, national, and local levels on each topic, as well as LGBTQI activists. The aim was to begin a conversation about how specific aspects of diversity are accounted for (or not) within the various movements. Each roundtable had rapporteurs who spent time analysing the discussion and producing a statement on each topic. The statements can be found on the IGLYO website: www.iglyo.com/what-we-do/intersectionality/

Socio-economic statuses
www.iglyo.com/iglyo-holds-roundtable-on-socioeconomic-status

Genders
www.iglyo.com/iglyo-holds-roundtable-on-gender

(Dis)abilities
www.iglyo.com/iglyo-holds-roundtable-on-disability

Racial & ethnic diversity
www.iglyo.com/iglyo-holds-roundtable-on-racial-and-ethnic-diversity

Continued over
A final roundtable was convened in September 2014 that brought together the rapporteurs from each thematic roundtable. They then shared the key points from each thematic discussion and worked on several outputs, including a position paper and a toolkit.

Intersectionality Position Paper

Intersectionality Toolkit

Conference: Crossing Paths: Exploring Intersections within the Diversity of LGBTQI Communities Conference
In partnership with Arcigay Il Cassero from Italy, supported by the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe, Arcigay Il Cassero and the European Commission (DG Justice), IGLYO gathered over forty activists and organisations in Bologna, Italy with the objectives of:

- Exploring the specific themes of socio-economic statuses, genders, (dis)abilities, and ethnic identities;
- Critically reflecting upon the structures and values of their respective organisations and looking into ways of making their work more inclusive;
- Gaining a better understanding of intersectionality as a methodological tool in life/activism;
- Developing work plans tailored to the need of their organisations/context/peers.

European Youth Event
IGLYO contributed to a session on multiple discrimination and young people, at an event organised by the European Youth Forum that brought a total of 5,000 young people from across Europe to Strasbourg ahead of the 2014 European Parliamentary elections. IGLYO highlighted the importance of focusing on intersectionality and celebrating young people's diverse identities as opposed to focusing solely on discrimination.

Conference: Keep the Faith: Promoting Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue in the LGBTQI Youth Sector
The conference brought together over forty LGBTQI youth activists from around Europe to Brussels, Belgium to share their experiences in promoting intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and to learn about ways to strengthen their efforts. Through Keep the Faith, IGLYO empowered young LGBTQI advocates to enable the creation of networks between cultural and religious groups, organisations, individuals and experts to better promote intercultural and inter-religious dialogue through IGLYO’s work. The conference built upon IGLYO’s 2011-2013 key thematic area to promote dialogue with religious/fait-based institutions and establish alliances to fight religion-based homophobia. The conference was hosted by IGLYO member organisation Wel Jong Niet Hetero.
Objectives and rationale of the research
The aim of this research project is to contribute to the on-going discussion on intersectional identities among LGBTQI youth and student organisations across Europe.

By further exploring the relationship between genders, sexualities and other social hierarchies – such as ages, socioeconomic statuses, ethnicities, and (dis)abilities – the research attempts to empirically survey the efforts put in place by different LGBTQI youth organisations in order to foster the inclusion, support, and empowerment of LGBTQI youth with intersectional identities. Therefore, the research question underlying the project can be summarised as follows:

What are some significant examples of how LGBTQI youth organisations in Europe achieve inclusion of people with intersectional identities, both in terms of internal organisation, as well as in the services they provide to their clients?

By intersectional identities we refer to LGBTQI youth who are identified and affected by their socioeconomic status, (dis)ability, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, and gender identity and/or expression. In light of this, the main objectives of the project are:

- To investigate examples of how lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) youth organisations, their staff, volunteers, and service users, practice inclusion and participation of people with intersectional identities;
- To identify the shortcomings of such activities and possible ways to improve their efficiency and expand their range of action;
- To provide IGLYO’s member organisations with learning tips and tools about how to promote the inclusion of youth with intersectional identities within their organisational structure as well as their activities.

The working hypotheses employed to guide the research are listed as follows:

- Inclusive organisations have distinct and enforceable policies regarding the involvement of LGBTQI youth with intersectional identities at all levels of organisation
- Inclusive organisations have been actively reaching out to and empowering people with intersectional identities
- Inclusive organisations have invested resources in re-designing their environment in order to make it accessible
- Clients and staff with intersectional identities have had to be proactive in addressing access and inclusion issues within their organisations
- Clients and staff with intersectional identities are well represented in all organisational structures

As is now well known, inclusion is based on multiple factors and occurs along multiple axes. This means the inclusion of LGBTQI youth with intersectional identities should be given priority and the integration process should be supported by actions taken in numerous policy areas. This starts with allowing LGBTQI youth for active participation in public and organisational life, and building up social and cultural ties to achieve a feeling of belonging to the community.
Methodology
The first method employed in the project includes a baseline survey targeted at all IGLYO’s member organisations.

**Baseline survey**

The first method employed in the project includes a baseline survey targeted at all IGLYO’s member organisations. The survey was implemented in order to collect basic information about how IGLYO’s member organisations view and implement an intersectional approach and to identify trends and possible candidates for the in-depth stage of the study.

The survey’s questions required respondents to reflect on the intersectional practices within their organisations, such as: the familiarity and understanding of the concept of intersectionality, the creation of ad-hoc groups for inclusion and support of youth with intersectional identities, the delivery of services and activities targeting specific intersections, the cooperation with other partner organisations or institutions in one or more of the intersectional areas considered for the project.

There were 16 questions in total, both closed and open, allowing for more comprehensive responses. The survey was promoted online through e-mail to IGLYO’s member organisations, and through IGYLO’s social networking sites. Given that the survey was only available in English and through the internet, it might have resulted in access restrictions for some participants. There were 42 responses to the survey in total. The age of participants ranged from a minimum of 20 years old to a maximum of 42, with a majority of the respondents being between 20 to 30 years old. The gender of participants ranged from female, male, transgender, non-binary, and queer. The geographical scope of the survey was covering several European countries: Armenia, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Georgia, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK.

Based on the participants’ responses, four organisations were selected for the next phase of the project, i.e. qualitative in-depth face-to-face interviewing and observations. The selection was guided by the following criteria: the geographic location of the organisation, the type of intersectional practices implemented based on one or more specific areas of action, the willingness and availability of the organisation’s staff and users to participate, budget and time constraints.

**Qualitative investigation**

The second phase of the project focused on the collection of qualitative data about the organisations’ intersectional practices, involving face-to-face interviews with staff, volunteers and users, and direct observations from four of IGLYO’s member organisations. The interviews were based on a guide with semi-structured questions divided in two parts: one targeting staff members and leadership, and a second one directed towards users and beneficiaries. Questions were designed in order to give voice to participants’ opinions and experiences.

Questions were asked to gather information concerning:

- The current activities, projects, and initiatives involving youth with intersectional identities
- The development of the organisation’s intersectional approach during time and across different areas of work
- The successes and challenges of working intersectionally
- Prospects for future work, including practices, services, and strategies for improving the inclusion of LGBTQI youth with intersectional identities

In total, four in-depth face-to-face interviews involving ten participants were conducted with two of the candidate organisations, and five in-depth interviews were conducted through Skype, due to the difficulty to reach out physically to every organisation in their respective countries.

Concerning the analysis of data, interviews have been transcribed selectively in a computer file, reducing the content to represent the central ideas discussed. The analysis proceeded with the manual coding of interviews excerpts and participants’ stories – initial coding for the first cycle and theoretical coding for the second cycle. Memo writing was used to consider the links between different interviews, ending with the emergence of thematic descriptions and the development of overarching themes. Data have been finally reorganized around the themes as presented in the finding section. The analysis and interpretation of data have been theoretically informed by literature on intersectionality.
LGBT Youth Scotland (LGBTYS)
www.lgbtyouth.org.uk

LGBT Youth Scotland is the largest youth and community-based organisation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Scotland. The charity’s mission is to: “empower lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people and the wider LGBT community so that they are embraced as full members of the Scottish family at home, school and in every community.” The organisation has over 26 years of activity and has worked consistently in the last decade to effectively implement an intersectional approach to their policies. Today, the organisation works consciously and explicitly towards the inclusion of LGBTQI youth with intersectional identities. In particular, they developed policies and programs to work with schools, and explored the topics of domestic abuse, (dis)abilities, ethnicity awareness and physical, mental, and sexual health, in youth groups and other formats. They also established partnerships with other organisations working in the fields of housing and homelessness, and refugees and asylum seekers, in order to increase their knowledge and skills on LGBTQI youth, in particular to provide a better access to services.

Sabaah
www.sabaah.dk

Sabaah is an organisation for LGBT young people with ethnic backgrounds other than Danish. The founding reason of Sabaah lays in the attempt to create a sense of community and solidarity, along with a social network for LGBT people being part of ethnic minorities. In particular, the organisation supports and guides young people through the problems that LGBT with different ethnic backgrounds often face in the Danish society: identity, coming-out, religion, loneliness, conflict with parents and family members, discrimination, and isolation from the mainstream LGBTQI community. Sabaah is committed to achieve this by informing, counseling, and creating a social network where its target group can meet safely with other people with whom they can identify. In addition, Sabaah promotes the involvement and inclusion of its members in its organisational work with the aim to strengthen their ability to organize, plan, coordinate, and share responsibility.

Transfuzja
www.transfuzja.org

Trans-Fuzja Foundation is a Polish organisation established in 2008 with the aim to support trans people in Poland. Within a few years the foundation has moved from a support-only approach to a politically engaged organisation with specific goals concerning the legal, socioeconomic and human rights situation of transgender people. In 2013, having gained experience with other communities, Trans-Fuzja changed its statutes to include in its mandate intersex and gender-variant persons, and to work on gender identity, gender expression, intersex and other gender/sex statuses. The organisation’s Board also decided to include asexuality in its mandate, recognizing that transgender, intersex and gender-variant people represent a vast scope of sexual orientations and identities. The working areas of the organisation include advocacy activities, support activities, legal aid, and educational activities consisting of mostly workshops on transgender, intersex and gender-variant issues aimed at educating professionals as well as advising students. The Foundation is dedicated to cooperate with other human rights actors, whether state or non-governmental, and is currently involved in many NGOs coalitions.

Arcigay Il Cassero
www.cassero.it

Arcigay Il Cassero is a non-profit organisation based in Bologna, founded in 1982 and committed to improving the quality of life of gays and lesbians. It is one of the biggest mainstream LGBTQI organisations in Italy with about 18,000 members. For over 30 years it has been providing important cultural initiatives and policies targeting the homosexual community at both local and national levels. During the last years, Il Cassero has started to approach intersectionality more explicitly within its policies and activities, hosting IGLYO’s international conference on intersectionality, and supporting the creation of groups and activities targeting youth with intersectional identities, such as the “Jump” group for LGBTQI persons with (dis)abilities. It also cooperates closely with Italy’s largest association working with homeless people by mean of a specialised team supporting LGBTQI homeless persons, and collaborates with MigraBO for the assistance of LGBTQI migrants.

MigraBO
www.migrabo.wordpress.com

MigraBO is a voluntary group founded in 2012 and based in Bologna, Italy. The group closely cooperates with Arcigay Il Cassero in the areas of migration, refugee, and asylum seekers. As its name implies, the group aims at assisting LGBTQI immigrants coming to Italy from all over the world. The overarching mission of the group is helping young LGBTQI migrants and refugees in their integration process, not only in the society at large but within the LGBTQI community as well. Their tasks range from assisting LGBTQI migrants with basic needs, legal counseling for refugees and asylum seekers, helping with drafting and collecting the necessary documents for the request of asylum in Italy, particularly in cases where being LGBTQI constitutes a reason to demand and acquire asylum. The work of the group is supported through the cooperation of numerous organisations spread over the Italian territory and including social workers, lawyers, and doctors.
Findings
Baseline survey

In this section, we present the findings of the baseline survey, showing the broad picture of where the LGBTQI youth organisations stand in terms of their intersectional approach, and providing the following information:

- Familiarity of participants’ organisation with the concept of intersectionality
- Partnership and cooperation with other organisations targeting specific intersections
- Presence of current and past activities, services, and groups targeting specific intersections
- Aspirations for future work in one or more intersectional areas
- Feeling of discrimination based on one or more intersectional identities

Overall LGBTQI organisations’ leadership, staff, volunteers and participants, are for the clear majority familiar with the concept of intersectionality, showing that organisations have become increasingly accustomed to explicitly talking about and practicing intersectionality.

“We necessarily come into contact with intersectional issues that must be addressed within an overarching organisational policy of inclusion. This is becoming clearer as we begin to work more closely with refugee and migrant groups. Also, many of the members of our core team are young people, and their input necessarily focuses on the role young people may/should play in bringing about LGBTQI-positive social, cultural, and legislative transformations in society.”
Gender Liberation, Malta

Partnering with other organisations

Partnership and cooperation with other organisations and service providers is well established in the field of gender and sexual orientation, since most of the LGBTQI organisations’ activities and programs are realised within these policy and working areas. Nonetheless, collaborative approaches targeting LGBTQI youth have been increasingly implemented with regards to migrants and refugees (55%), people with (dis)abilities (57%), and youth with different ethnic backgrounds (55%). A reflection of the results, socioeconomic status, poverty and homelessness are the least tackled issues, with only 30% of the organisations currently working in, or having worked on these areas.

“We are part of an NGOs coalition for anti-discrimination. We have a hot-line where we accept the calls from citizens facing discrimination and then we work within the coalition according to each organisation’s expertise [...] As our community members happen to be homeless/from lower socioeconomic status, migrants, etc., we also cooperate with various state institutions to accommodate them in shelters, find financial supports, ...”
Identoba, Georgia

Are you familiar with the concept of intersectionality?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes (34)</td>
<td>80.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (1)</td>
<td>2.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure (7)</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does your organisation co-operate with other organisations working in one or more of the following areas?
Inclusivity: where we stand

The trends concerning inclusivity of LGBTQI youth with intersectional identities – through the organisation of activities of socialisation and support – reflect the results observed with respect to cooperation. Although the inclusion of LGBTQI youth with (dis)abilities has improved in comparison to other areas (38%), additional efforts have been put in place to foster the inclusion of youth concerned with migration issues or refugee statuses (31%), as well as different ethnic backgrounds (33%). The inclusion of homeless youth and youth with lower socioeconomic statuses continues to be more difficult to achieve with respect to other areas (28%).

Does your organisation organise activities to welcome and help youth who feel discriminated in one or more of the following areas?

In addition to the organisation of welcoming activities, we note quite intuitively that the presence of specific groups of support that target youth with intersectional identities exist for the most in relation to gender and sexual orientation. However, this finding does not provide with a more detailed picture of the gender and sexual identities targeted by the activities. Still, it is interesting to note that very few organisations hold specific groups for youth with different ethnic backgrounds (14%) in comparison to other areas.

Does your have specific sections/groups/sub-groups that work with youth with intersectional identities?

“We are a focal point for LGBT refugees and asylum seekers in Armenia, having a specific program designed for them, supported by UNHCR. We provide legal, social, psychological, and health services to LGBT Refugees and Asylum seekers in Armenia. We also provide spaces for refugees to meet once a week and organize a story-telling club”

We for Civil Equality, Armenia
Aspirations and future work

As shown by the previous and following results, the current work of the participant LGBTQI youth organisations is primarily directed towards the provision of services and activities in the areas of gender and sexual orientation. These are also the areas where most of the efforts are still needed, according to the survey. The majority of the participant organisations have therefore indicated as “Very important” the improvement of their services and cooperation in the following areas, by order of importance:

- Gender (88%)
- Sexual orientation (83%)
- Ethnicity (67%)
- Migration (66%)
- Socioeconomic status/homelessness (60%)
- (Dis)abilities (59%)

Nonetheless, when looking at aggregate results – namely the weighted average of each area – considering the degree of importance, we have a different picture. Socioeconomic status/homelessness, (dis)abilities, migration, and ethnicity are all acknowledged as areas for improvement by order of importance. This is consistent with the previous results that showed socioeconomic status and homelessness as the most neglected area.

“We are planning to organize different events on intersectionality (seminars, conferences, capacity building) on national level [...] It would be necessary to build a network of different NGOs to work on policies and intersectional approaches in the youth sector”
Legébitra, Slovenia

“We should develop and improve internal subgroups of young people with intersectional identities (gender, ethnicity, dis-abilities...) We are developing an internal council for the improvement of diversity in our policies [...] We are also building up projects with thematic organisations”
Le CHEFF, Belgium

Do you think that it would be important to implement cooperation and/or services in one or more of the following areas? (Please indicate the degree of importance for each area)
Discrimination

In this case, the first important data to observe is that up to 78% of respondents continue to feel discriminated based on their sexual orientation within the society at large, followed by their gender identity 58%. Moreover, consistently with the survey findings, we observe that 20% of the respondents felt discriminated against based on their socioeconomic status or as being homeless, stressing the importance and the urgency to improve strategies and practices in order to guarantee their inclusion within the organisation’s structures and activities, along with equal support and representation in the society.

The percentages remain high when considering discrimination within the organisation itself. In this respect, youth feel more discriminated against their gender identity, reaching up to 53% of cases, while data concerning sexual orientation decrease to 30%. The fact that respondents feel disproportionately discriminated against their gender within their own organisations (53%) is a significant finding that points to the necessity of working against discrimination within organisational structures in the first place. Discrimination is also perceived in the case of youth affected by lower socioeconomic status and different ethnic backgrounds (13%).

Have you ever felt discriminated against based on one or more of the following characteristics within your organisation? (Please cross the appropriate answers)
Conclusions

The baseline survey provides a broad picture of European LGBTQI youth organisations’ approach towards intersectionality and sheds light on the following key points:

- Intersectionality as an analytical concept is largely known among LGBTQI youth organisations, both at the leadership, staff, and member's levels. The majority of organisations have put in practice intersectionality in their everyday work as well as in their own structures. Although most of the organisations have become accustomed to the concept, many acknowledge the need to further increase their efforts with regard to intersectional practices.

- Partnership and cooperation with other organisations targeting specific intersections is key in order to work successfully towards the inclusion of youth with intersectional identities. As shown by the findings, cooperation in the field of gender and sexuality is well developed, whilst much more efforts should be directed in the areas of homelessness, poverty, and socioeconomic statuses in order to reach inclusivity for youth with socioeconomic difficulties.

- Looking at results highlighting the presence of current and past activities, services, and groups targeting youth with intersectional identities, a positive trend is noteworthy concerning the work targeting youth with (dis)abilities, migration and refugee statuses, and different ethnic background. Once again, though, activities and services for the inclusion of youth with lower socioeconomic statuses are less present than in other areas.

- Aspirations for future work include the improvement of practices in the areas discussed above – socioeconomic status/homelessness, migration and ethnicity. Nonetheless, this should not go at the expense of improvements in the work for youth with (dis)abilities and trans young people. This is particularly important since most of the respondents continue to feel discriminated based on their sexual orientation and gender identity, both outside and within the organisations’ structures.
Qualitative in-depth investigation: findings
The findings presented are meant to provide guidelines, learning tips, and food for thought concerning achievements and challenges in the implementation of an intersectional approach. It builds upon reflections from the organisations’ leadership, workers, and volunteers along with the organisations’ members, users, and beneficiaries. Moreover, it provides an overview of the actions and policies put in place to account for existing discrimination as well as to compensate for past discriminations. The chapter is divided in two parts: the first part is dedicated to the overview of the experiences and practices aimed at achieving more inclusivity for intersectional youth within the organisations; the second part looks at the intersectional work outside the organisations, namely at partnerships and cooperation with different actors in the public and private sectors.

1. Programs and activities for inclusion of LGBTQI youth with intersectional identities

This section of the report discusses the activities, programs, and practices promoted by the LGBTQI youth organisations in order to foster the inclusion of youth with intersectional identities. A range of best practices that strengthen LGBTQI young people’s understanding and awareness concerning different intersections has guided the programs and activities proposed by each organisation. As a result, the activities and programs promoted the inclusion and welcoming of LGBTQI youth with intersectional identities, contribute to their empowerment, give them equal access to services and spaces, and reduce their invisibility and isolation within the organisation’s structure and the society.

Practices for the inclusion of intersectional LGBTQI youth

The need for an intersectional approach starts from the assumption that not all LGBTQI youth organisations are automatically inclusive; rather, working on inclusivity should be a priority, starting from capacity building, staff and volunteer training and supervision, as well as partnership work with other organisations. At the beginning of an intersectional specific project, it is crucial to acknowledge that there is a high degree of individuality among youth, who are anything but a homogenous group:

“We started to work through an informal education methodology in order to meet young people where they are with a range of needs and experiences, individually or in groups. For a group to work well, it is fundamental to allow young people to be individual, to be themselves and express their identities, and for us to meet them half way.” LGBTYS CEO explains.

Today, LGBTYS reaches out to youth with different needs and intersections, such as youth with mental health problems; with learning and physical (dis)abilities; holding a status as migrant or refugee; or coming from a lower socioeconomic status. As stressed by the CEO, an intersectional approach has to be inclusive and centred on the individual and its personal needs. The environment around young LGBTQI people has changed dramatically throughout LGBTYS’ 26 years of work, and the role of the organisation has developed accordingly. During the past 10 years, the organisation has increased its efforts in trying to delineate young people experiences and needs, as a requirement to improve inclusivity of youth that occupy specific intersections. Nowadays, they engage with several policy initiatives that explicitly and consciously highlight intersectionality, particularly through the work with other partner organisations:

“If there is a consultation on young people in care there will be many organisations involved, our task is to add the LGBT perspective for young people in care.”

A discussion with youth workers and beneficiaries raised some important issues that need to be addressed intersectionally. Among the most important, there are policy priorities for LGBTQI youth that target specific intersections: homelessness, inclusivity in education for transgender youth, health (mental, physical, sexual), and the creation of guidelines for teachers in schools. Furthermore, volunteers stressed the need for a community based work that starts with raising awareness among young peers in the society, particularly through gathering evidence concerning barriers for young people, from different socioeconomic and population sections. According to young workers, this is a prerequisite in order to build a strong argument for intersectional inclusion.
Taking the example of large mainstream LGBTQI organisations, we realise that very often their work is not understood by their members and staff as being intersectional, at least in a conscious way:

“Intersectionality has worked as an approach to inform practice and policies. So, you have to put intersectionality alongside more concrete activities.”

However, it is possible to trace a time where the need to include more identities in their services and activities became more explicit:

“There was a moment in 2007 when we decided to label our work as “multicultural”. This came because we understood that there was a need to work towards multiple identities and coincided with the emergence of LGBTQI migrants, (dis)abled people and youth coming from different ethnic backgrounds. These people did not come to us in the first place, precisely because we are a mainstream organisation, but they were making connections with smaller and more specific groups targeting their needs”.

One of such groups is MigraBO, which actively cooperates with Il Cassero but remains detached from it in order to retain its political independence. In this case, some of the LGBTQI migrants directly come to mainstream organisations such as Il Cassero because they already identify themselves as LGBTQI and need support for integration in the community. In other cases, the needs are more specific and require to be taken care of in a separate and confidential environment. Nonetheless, people with such intersections started to approach mainstream organisations, especially youth ones, creating the opportunity for them to face a range of new issues along with more comprehensive diversity.

Some examples of affirmative actions towards more intersectional inclusivity are the following. The first is given by the creation of a group for LGBTQI people with (dis)abilities, called “Jump”, which provides safe and accessible spaces where to meet and socialize within Il Cassero’s structures. Moreover, staff training is organized around (dis)ability issues in order to educate workers in welcoming LGBTQI (dis)abled people. This happens in both theoretical and practical terms, such as in the case of staff training through simulations with a wheelchair. As another volunteer with (dis)abilities from Trans-Fuzja suggests, “when working with intersectional (dis)abled youth, the importance is to empower them by fitting them in the organisation, giving them responsibilities, a task or a job. Let them work in a team can be a good way to make them feel comfortable and empowered at the same time”. Frequently, the risk is to fall into the extreme of excessive aid and therefore passive dependency on assistance for young people with (dis)abilities or, on the contrary, disregarding them all together because of not knowing how to behave. Instead, establishing a dialogue while remaining open about possibilities and constraints on both sides is important to understand how full inclusivity can be achieved,

“believe in them, let them do the work, and they can really surprise you.”

“Jump” is a group born in Bologna of LGBT people with (dis)abilities.

“Gay people who also have a (dis)ability often suffer double discrimination”, explains the coordinator of the group.

“The difficulties commonly linked to homosexuality can multiply. Think, for example, about a young lesbian who has not come out in the family: she is not independent due to a physical disability, how can she live freely her love and sexuality? Should she ask her parents to accompany her in a gay bar?”.

The risk, then, is isolation. Jump is therefore a place for meeting and socialising for LGBT people with (dis)abilities:

“This is not intended to further segregate a minority within a minority, but to offer what is called, “peer support”, that is, an exchange of experiences between people living similar situations. We want to say to those who still lurk, who think they are the only (dis)abled homohetero/transsexual or queer, that they are not alone. We are fighting for our right to an independent life, even in relation to our sexuality.”

The first “jump” to do to get there is a cultural one. The intersection between sexual orientation and (dis)ability is in fact a little known reality, both among families and operators within the LGBT community. But in addition to cultural barriers, there are of course physical barriers as well.

“The offices of Il Cassero are housed in a very charming place, which unfortunately is still very difficult to access.”

Volunteers of Il Cassero have taken steps to reduce problem as much as possible, but construction works are a municipality’s liability.
“Suffice to say that some of us wheelchair users, to be able to reach the keep, have to wait for a passer-by to give them a boost up the slope. As well as humiliating, this is a situation that could be seen as discriminatory under Law 67/2006.”

“Jump” might sound like a paradox, or a joke:

“Maybe that is why we liked it as a name, because it reminds us of something impossible. And the impossible needs to be watched; for our grandparents going around the city in a wheelchair might have seemed impossible, as well as two gay men could not walk around holding hands. But today, being (dis)abled and homosexual, we ride through the streets taking part in the Pride. Beyond all barriers.”

Yet, granting that progress has been made by most of LGBTQI organisations in order to foster the inclusion of intersectional youth, it is equally important to be honest about existing shortcomings. Among trans youth in both socialisation and support groups, as well as organisational structures, many voices from the transgender community yet consider that not enough attention is given to trans and intersex people’s needs. The major concern put forward by our interviewees from Trans-Fuzja in Poland revolve around the grievance that

“We need to establish a dialogue between different organisations to recognise what is happening; most of organisations are LGG5 and too little attention is paid to trans and intersex people in mainstream organisations”

As one of the young trans beneficiaries from Trans-Fuzja stresses, there is the need for support groups for people who are represented by more than one letter in the LGBTQI acronym, since

“Trans or LGBTQI support groups are not inclusive of every identity. I am in between. What I need is not only a support group but a questioning group, where I can ask questions and receive answers about issues concerning more than one identity”.

The lack of education and awareness within the LGBTQI community concerning trans issues needs immediate attention, since transgender youth are too often excluded from events or groups. Many LGBTQI youth recognise the relevance of having education in schools with regards to gender and sexual orientation, and stress that

“It would be cool if I could call someone and ask them to give a presentation in my school to explain gender and sexual orientation, because these are difficult topics and I would feel under qualified to give a presentation myself”.

Training and education for organisations, staff, professionals and youth

Although some organisations have decided not to train volunteers and workers on intersectionality per se since “there would be no way to do justice”, they provide staff and volunteers with need-based training on specific intersections in the framework of an equality and human rights guidance program. In this sense, it would be difficult to pay equal attention to the entire range of intersections, therefore organisations do not train volunteers just on the concept of intersectionality and how to apply it but rather on specific intersections they come across to. Here again, the stress should be put on the fact that each case is unique and in order to develop person-centred practices that include the diverse needs of LGBTQI youth, staff and volunteers should be trained on multiple domains. The focus is therefore put not only on intersectionality as an approach, but also on discrete intersections. The effort is twofold: either the training is delivered because there is a need coming from the staff team, or because a young LGBTQI person comes to the organisation and needs specific help.

Access requirements, improvements, and limitations

Access requirements include a wide range of aspects, starting from structural and physical accessibility to locations, offices, and events, to the production and dissemination of information that is accessible to all the target groups, along with access requirements with regard to the services provided by the organisations and other services.

As for physical access, participants point out that the overlapping between (dis)abilities and LGBT is often surprisingly invisible, and in fact represents a double invisibility in itself. In order to facilitate access for people with (dis)abilities, it is fundamental to adapt the organisation’s spaces in order to accommodate youth with physical (dis)abilities. This amounts to very practical and concrete arrangements, such as the possibility to take an elevator, to enter the building’s spaces and to guarantee enough freedom of movement within the offices and premises. In this regard, it is important to publicly provide detailed information concerning the plan and structure of the organisation’s environment. Information should include access points to the premises, access to the toilet, whether there are restrictions concerning arrival and departure times, information about travel and public transportation, location of parking spots.

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5. LGG refers to LGBTQI organisations catering primarily to gay men and lesbians only
Participants also highlight the need to have ready access to information concerning the target group in the offices as well as in the websites and other spaces and locations associated with the target group. The information should be disseminated through easy-to-read resources in different formats and languages. Provided services should also be outlined in detail, by taking into consideration the wider range of LGBTQI youth needs, without forgetting that each letter of this acronym intersecting with other identities raises different needs and therefore requires different services. An example in this sense comes from a young transgender participant, who explains that for youth in transitioning stages, it would be crucial to have someone who is approachable, i.e. accessible, especially in terms of age. Again, it becomes clearer that trans youth are increasingly coming out at a younger stage, and being welcomed and approached by someone with whom they can relate to in terms of problems, needs, and range of age is of primary importance, “In the support group that I go to, we have a psychologist, which is good; for a questioning support group I would like to have someone who wouldn’t seem very far away when it comes to age, someone who is approachable and understand that youth under 25 have different problems concerning coming out or transitioning.”

Among the possible affirmative actions that can be taken by organisations, some of the trans youth highlighted the importance of having a virtual chat room in the organisation's platform, to get support and ask questions, especially for youth who are not in major cities with established organisations.

The importance of discretion and confidentiality for intersectional youth in vulnerable communities

The example of associations such as MigraBO and Sabaah, working with LGBTQI migrants and people with different ethnic backgrounds, brings about important considerations that need to be taken into account when working intersectionally with these communities. As the coordinator of MigraBO stresses, “migrants that can usually define themselves as LGBTQI come from higher socioeconomic classes in their respective countries, maybe they had previous contacts with our societies, and especially with the English language”, showing already the complexity of overlapping identities, on top of being migrant and LGBTQI.

These are issues that need attention when trying to assist LGBTQI migrants, namely knowledge of the cultural background of the person in aid, and the potential need for translators among staff members. In addition, basic knowledge of the legal practices with regards to homosexuality in the countries of origins can play a crucial role in order to help young LGBTQI migrants to access international protection and asylum:

“We created a database where we collect all the articles, legal documents, procedures related to the country of each case we follow [...] This allows us to help them reconstruct and write in Italian the story to present to the commission that grants asylum, as well as prepare a letter of recommendation that attests these persons came to us for help and we sort of guarantee for them and for the truthfulness of their stories”. Two fundamental concerns resulted from the interviews with staff and volunteers with both MigraBO and Sabaah organisations, due to the particular vulnerabilities affecting the migrant and ethnic minority communities: discretion and confidentiality. On one hand, it is crucial to provide both young migrants and youth coming from an ethnic minority background with safe and private spaces where they can express themselves without feeling threatened. This includes cases where young migrants fear negative consequences in the society if they come out as being LGBTQI and therefore need to be reassured and guaranteed with the necessary privacy; as a volunteer from MigraBO explains, “We meet them wherever they feel comfortable and we organize listening and support sessions with one or maximum two volunteers in order not to make them feel threatened in any way. After these informal sessions where we try to build some confidence, usually we distribute volunteers assigning one volunteer per case”.

Once again, physical and symbolic visibility can turn out to be problematic for many youth, either migrants or people having different ethnic backgrounds, leading them to avoid addressing their needs within mainstream organisations. As a worker from Sabaah sustains, “some people may say that segregating the LGBT environment is not good for social integration, but I disagree with that: maybe the segregation of some organisations is a necessity in order to facilitate social integration. Focusing on building self-awareness and recognition within the minority is a necessity to establish equality in the LGBT environment.”
Whilst this statement might sound controversial and thought provoking, it does not exclude cooperation between organisations, particularly mainstream and other identity-based organisations. The stress is put on the need to challenge mainstream narratives in the LGBT community, particularly towards taken for granted issues, such as coming out and visibility. In this sense, working together towards equality is crucial, as long as it does not jeopardise the needs of individual with different identities.

Sabaah's work is exemplar from an intersectional perspective, although as one of the coordinators admits, “intersectionality is not a commonly used concept, it is a challenge to make people think intersectionally without being too academic in how you educate them”.

However, the organisation has made impressive progress in order to create a work team focused on providing safe spaces and social activities for their target group, allowing the sharing of experiences and living of their sexual and gender identities in a protected environment. As in the case of MigraBO, the organisation was born from an activity facilitated by LGBT Denmark, a mainstream organisation that created subgroups for ethnic minorities. Still, members of the group did not feel safe within the community and were lacking discretion, particularly with regards to visibility. In addition, the organisation wants to promote activities that do not require a strong commitment, contrary to what often happens in mainstream organisations where you have to work with long meetings, in some cases, get a membership status, and engage in large advocacy programs. Instead, providing attractive activities for the target group, as well as starting lobbying at a smaller level turns out to be a more effective alternative. Favouring a grassroots approach, especially in the case of youth coming from vulnerable situations – such as asylum seekers, refugees, and youth with different ethnic backgrounds – can be a better option than the inclusion in larger mainstream organisations’ structures. Interestingly, Sabaah's coordinator goes on arguing that “there is a need to challenge mainstream narratives in the LGBT community, particularly in regard to the coming out: it is up to the individual to decide to come out, since this is not a necessity to live a good life as an LGBTQI person”.

This consideration goes further on underlying the predominantly white environment in the LGBT community, therefore the call for mainstream organisation to acknowledge ethnic minorities and provide a space where they can exercise and live their ethnic identity privately without having that seen as something that makes their sexual identity less solid.

The outreach work of these organisations proves to be particularly challenging at different levels. In order to reach out to young people, it is necessary to find a balance between giving them information about their activities and doing so in a way that still respects the discretion of the target group. Major challenges arise in relation to how to announce an event, in what form, whom to send invitations to, “even designing a simple flyer about our social events can be tricky, since we have to be very careful about which symbols, logos, and words to include in order not to put our users in a vulnerable or dangerous situation”, a volunteer explains. Moreover, it is particularly hard to get in touch with ethnic or religious minority communities, where the target group lives. Parents are often one of the main obstacles for youth that are not out in their community, but also the pressure and judgment coming from other youth who are not LGBTQI can be hard to face. Because of this, it is also difficult to find volunteers who feel comfortable enough to do representation in their communities, fearing negative reactions and discrimination. Pride parades are a good example of the challenge faced by young LGBTQI belonging to ethnic minorities as well as migrants. In fact, as Sabaah's coordinator advances, “for many of our members is the first time they perform their sexuality in a public space and to get a positive feedback from the world around them is very important. They can disguise or not but it nonetheless helps them build confidence”.

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“You need to work in partnership because your voice is stronger when you work with other organisations...”
2. Partnerships and services to meet the needs of LGBTQ youth with intersectional identities

Bridging and connecting with other organisations, audiences, and target communities is a predominant part in the intersectional work carried out by LGBTQI organisations. This assumption stems from the fact that, in order to work intersectionally, a wide range of services, resources and practices needs to be implemented. Hence, the importance of building partnerships with sister organisations in the equality and human rights field, as well as social services, public institutions and authorities. Economic partnerships are also crucial in order to gather the necessary resources. This section goes over the above-mentioned principles of cooperation and partnerships through the example of the participant organisations.

The first step towards partnership and cooperation is taken in the case of cross training between LGBTQI youth organisations and associations, institutions, public services outside the LGBTQI community. In this case, training on LGBTQI issues is delivered to professionals and social workers dealing with specific needs or intersections, such as migrants or homeless people, but also at a more general level, as in the case of training delivered to teachers and educators in schools. The same principle is valid for staff and volunteers of LGBTQI youth organisations who would require specific training in order to work with different types of identities. Being critical towards their own approach, staff members admit that visibility is still a point of weakness about which more work should be done, particularly in those communities where being LGBTQI continues to be problematic, causing invisibility and discrimination, such as ethnic minority and faith communities. A step forward towards achieving more visibility has been made thanks to the development of a program called “Charter of Rights” (see box), which targets other organisations in order to become more inclusive for LGBTQI people.

LGBT Youth Scotland developed a program to support and guide groups, organisations, schools, and social services on their journey to LGBT equality and inclusion. The LGBT Charter of Rights and its accompanying toolkit help organisations mainstream LGBT issues into their services, making their service more inclusive for LGBT young people and the wider LGBT community. In this framework, organisations are called to put in place different practices:

- staff must receive LGBT awareness training
- organisations are guided through the development of practices that should consider LGBT people and make explicit reference where necessary
- undertake activities that involve engaging with LGBT communities of which at least one with the transgender community
- ensure LGBT inclusive resources
- develop a framework which supports safe, confidential and appropriate monitoring of sexual orientation and gender identity for staff and service users

More information about the Charter of Rights project: http://goo.gl/QO47R6

Improvement in training has been identified as necessary also in terms of access to social and medical services. In the health sector, concerns were raised in relation to access aid to doctors and health services that are too often unaware of the situation of LGBT people, especially in the case of transgender and bisexual individuals:

“We do come across a few barriers when it comes to health services, because people often assume that there are only two genders but there are also non-binary persons and it is difficult to find medical professionals who can understand that and have empathy towards persons with intersectional identities without creating any discrimination.”

Bisexual youth frequently encounter discrimination when accessing medical aid, since their gender identity is not recognised, as a young volunteer experienced: “When I was pregnant, my doctor assumed that I was straight, and I tried to correct her by saying that I was bisexual. The answer I got was “Not anymore.” At that moment, I felt deeply discriminated.”

Cooperation and training with other organisations can also happen on an event-basis. As a coordinator from Sabaah explains, among the organisation’s current activities there are events such as lectures and conferences specifically targeting professionals. Working in partnership also means working towards more visibility for LGBTQI youth. As the CEO of LGBT Youth Scotland puts forward,
“you need to work in partnership because your voice is stronger when you work with other organisations, when you have a common goal; even if that goal doesn’t look common to start with, sometimes you can find commonalities and try to raise awareness”.

In order to work effectively with partners, an additional effort is required to remain “open to be challenged and also give some constructive challenge to your partner; it is not an easy work, it is hard but it is necessary to raise awareness about intersectionality to the public”.

The possibility to encounter resistance and reluctance from other organisations or public institutions to work in partnership can be disarming at times. Indeed, LGBTQI issues might seem too risky to discuss for some organisations or institutions, often in the case of education authorities, where sexual and gender education are seen as very sensitive topics. However, LGBT Youth Scotland workers suggest to “keep it broad when advertising your activities to the public: trying to put the accent on youth rather than just LGBTQI, will open more doors for partnerships with other organisations and institutions”.

Many times, especially in more conservative environments, institutions, authorities and service providers may be happy to partner with LGBTQI groups in order to improve their approaches, with the condition that this partnership is not public or visible, which could mean that LGBTQI groups and organisations might be faced with a rather difficult decision at this stage.

Another effective step to take, in order to build new partnerships, would be to carry out research on selected topics, bringing evidence to the table, and demonstrate the need to work collectively together. This is particularly important in the case of potential cooperation with institutions and governments, as a volunteer highlights “we do research, speak to institutions and then work together […] A lot of campaigns turn around key policy issues at the moment. So, for instance, if the government includes health as a key policy in its mandate at the moment, it is fundamental that we gather and bring evidence concerning LGBTQI health issues to raise awareness: what are the barriers for LGBTQI youth?”

Equally important in such circumstances is the potential for negotiation. Many LGBTQI organisations fall into the trap of the “all or nothing” and therefore run the risk of bringing the cooperation to a stalemate or precluding it all together. Once again, LGBT Youth Scotland underlines its efforts in negotiating with institutions: “In the framework of our work for LGBTQI victims of domestic abuse, instead of rejecting the gender analysis carried on by the government, namely that women are the only victims of domestic abuse, we worked on that and added LGBT people. It was important to embrace that definition in the beginning, but at the same time challenge some of the methods around it; there was a real intersection between LGBT work with gender equality and the work of the Women’s Centre in Scotland”.

Connecting and bridging do not only happen at the organisational or institutional level. Particularly in the case of LGBTQI migrants and youth from ethnic minorities, young peers of the same community can potentially play a major role. Although we have already seen that representation within some of the considered communities can put LGBTQI youth in a position of vulnerability, “we hope that in the future reaching out to target communities can be facilitated through young migrants of second or third generation, who can potentially build a bridge between our work and the community itself”, says a volunteer from MigraBO.

One successful story is related to the work of Il Cassero with LGBTQI homeless people, in collaboration with “Piazza Grande”, the Italian largest organisation for homeless people. This collaboration was born from the need of some of Il Cassero’s users, who were already identifying as LGBTQI and after some time, thanks to a welcoming and safe environment, gained necessary confidence to reveal their status as homeless to the staff. Having little instruments to face the situation, Il Cassero and Piazza Grande created a voluntary group to share knowledge and expertise in assisting LGBTQI homeless youth. Currently, the organisations are working together to open specialized desks for LGBTQI people within homeless dormitories and canteens. In addition, Il Cassero promoted a social event within its own doors, called “Generi di conforto”, where a free lunch is offered to homeless people.
Conclusions
Based on the underlying research question of this report – to illustrate how peer LGBTQI youth organisations in Europe are practicing intersectionality in their work – we draw the following conclusions highlighting the key points raised by participants’ reflections and experiences.

- Progress has been made towards the inclusion of intersectional youth in groups of socialisation and support as well as organisational structures. Yet, more efforts should be carried out in order to guarantee comprehensive inclusion and diversity, starting from a people-oriented approach accounting for individual needs and building on the understanding of multiple overlapping identities.

- Challenging of mainstream narratives among LGBTQI organisations remains a critical aspect in order to effectively work in an intersectional way. Mainstream organisations must be ready to be honest in analysing their own approach and acknowledge shortcomings in providing services and spaces where all members of the LGBTQI community can feel safe, understood, and equally represented at all levels of the organisation. This is particularly important for youth with intersectional identities, who not only have different and specific needs to be addressed, but can also suffer from multiple discrimination, even within their own community and group of peers.

- Improvements and limitations concerning access, in both very concrete and more general terms, constitute the essential condition to achieve full inclusivity in the first place. Improvements must focus on physical requirements, with regards to venues and locations, transportation – that not only has to be easy to access but also safe. Improvements are also needed to provide youth with different intersections with easy to access information, disseminated through different platforms and formats, and languages – particularly for organisations dealing with minority language communities and asylum seekers or refugees. Organisations need to be prepared to address the specific needs of people with physical, intellectual, psychosocial or sensory impairments, as well as people with learning (dis)abilities.

This also includes dissemination of printed information in a wide range of places reached by the target group. Information should be easy to understand and, whenever is the case, respectful of confidentiality and privacy. In this sense, particular attention should be paid towards the use of logos and symbols attached to the LGBT visual identity, since this might jeopardise people’s security and discretion – as in the case of youth with different ethnic identities, as well as refugees and asylum seekers.

- Need-based training and education for organisations’ members, social services’ professionals, as well as fellow youth in schools and peer groups is critical in order to follow anti-discrimination policies and provide youth with different intersections with the services they need.

- The importance of discretion and confidentiality for youth with intersectional identities that are particularly vulnerable – especially people with different ethnic background and migrants – must be taken into account at every step of the inclusion processes and policies.

- Connecting with other LGBTQI youth organisations working on intersectionality or specific intersections and bridging the gaps through partnerships outside the LGBTQI community have been highlighted as the most effective way towards the implementation of an intersectional approach.

- Raising awareness and visibility to the public and targeted audiences through the gathering of empirical evidence concerning the situation of youth with intersectional identities in the society at large is a preliminary step in order to have research informed programs and build partnerships.

- Negotiating with institutions for the inclusion of LGBTQI youth with intersectional identities should be a strategic choice for reaching agreement towards more inclusive policies.

- A sharing flow of knowledge and good practices about intersectionality at the international, European level need to be developed and expanded through the creation of new platforms and networks.
1. Working intersectionality

Provide clear explanations to staff and members about the use of intersectionality as an inclusive approach and examples of how it can be translated into practice. Given the abstract nature of the concept, discuss with your staff, members and service users about different ways to turn it into practical to-do’s. State the importance of promoting the inclusion of youth with intersectional identities and explain how this approach can benefit your organisation and service users.

Inclusivity and people-oriented approach

Guarantee comprehensive inclusion and diversity, starting from a people-oriented approach accounting for individual needs and building on the understanding of multiple overlapping identities. Youth with intersectional identities are anything but a homogeneous group. Acknowledging the high degree of individuality constitutes the very first step towards inclusivity. This can be achieved by allowing each individual to express their own identity within the organisation’s groups and activities, without being compelled to act out a specific identity over another, but instead providing spaces and activities where youth with multiple and different identities can meet and get along.

Equal representation

Mainstream organisations must be ready to be honest in analysing their own approach and acknowledge shortcomings in providing services and spaces where all members of the LGBTQI community can feel safe, understood, and equally represented at all levels of the organisation’s structure, activities, and visual identity. In particular, this refers to gender diverse youth, such as young trans, non-binary, and intersex people, as well as black and minority ethnic people and any other type of identity. In the same way, groups focusing exclusively on specific intersections should engage in a dialogue in order to integrate the target group in LGBTQI mainstream organisations, under the conditions highlighted, i.e. respect for privacy and confidentiality.

Grassroots approach

Favour a grassroots approach, especially in the case of youth coming from vulnerable situations – such as asylum seekers, refugees, and youth with different ethnic backgrounds – providing attractive activities for the target group, as well as starting lobbying at a smaller level with institutions and public authorities relevant to the specific intersectional work, instead of imposing “one size fits all” policies and programs.

Connecting and bridging

When possible, reach out to young migrants of second or third generation, who should not be necessarily LGBTQI but can facilitate cooperation between your work and the target community. Reaching out to LGBTQI youth within migrant or faith-based communities can be particularly challenging. Involving peer youth of second or third generation could help you build connections with target communities.

Access requirements

Access, in both very concrete and more general terms constitute the essential condition to achieve full inclusivity in the first place.

- Although physical requirements came up in the study as the most urgent to address, it is be important to have a holistic approach to access requirements, including the broader range of accessibility needs – sensory, psychosocial, intellectual impairments, learning (dis)abilities and other types of impairments.

- In addition to re-designing the physical and online spaces to make them accessible, a very important element to consider in this process is safety. Provide clear and transparent information concerning access to your facilities on your website and other materials that direct users to your space, including maps, parking spots for people with (dis)abilities, the presence of elevators, access to toilets, public transportation stops, etc. Access should also be arranged inside the premises by guaranteeing adequate freedom of movement for people with physical (dis)abilities, particularly if using wheelchairs. Attention should be given not only to making inside spaces easy to access, but also inclusive. This means weighing all possibilities of human interaction and human usability of amenities having in mind the possible limitations that these amenities and your spaces can raise to people’s access or the safety risks that anyone can be exposed to when using your spaces and services.

- Equal access should also be guaranteed for youth with lower educational or socioeconomic background. Ensure that the format of your activities and events is understandable and viable for everyone.

Continued over
Recommendations continued

Information
Provide youth with different intersections with easy to access information, disseminated through different platforms and formats, and languages – particularly for organisations dealing with minority language communities and asylum seekers or refugees. Disseminate printed information in a wide range of places reached by the target group. Information should be easy to understand and, whenever is the case, respectful of confidentiality and privacy.

Discretion
Access equally affects youth with intersectional identities who are particularly sensitive to their privacy and confidentiality. Ensure that your organisation can provide diverse meeting locations and spaces where youth can feel safe from not being seen or recognised as taking part to a specific LGBTQI service or event.

Confidentiality
Pay particular attention to the use of logos and symbols attached to the LGBT visual identity, since this might jeopardise people safety and discretion. The importance of discretion and confidentiality for youth with intersectional identities that are particularly vulnerable must be taken into account at every step of the inclusion processes and policies. Provide clear explanations concerning your privacy policies to all users.

Training and education
Need-based training and education for organisations’ members, social services’ professionals, as well as youth in schools and peer groups is critical in order to follow anti-discrimination policies and provide youth with different intersections with services they need. Training should make explicit references to intersectionality as a tool to describe multiple identities and an approach to tackle a wide range of discriminations. Staff and volunteers should be trained in dealing with youth with specific needs both inside the organisation’s structures and groups, as well as while working with professionals, public authorities, institutions, and sister organisations.

Support
As shown by results, gender still remains an overlooked identity when it comes to intersectionality. Mainstream LGBTQI organisations should assume that gender is equally important to any other intersectional identity. In this sense, adequate space and support should be given to young non-binary, gender diverse, and trans people, who often lack psychological support as well as a space where they can communicate with other trans youth. Young trans are increasingly coming out at a younger age, it is therefore important to provide them with staff and members with whom they can relate to in terms of age, along with being able to answer questions concerning issues they face in their everyday life and transitioning phase. Support should be given in cases of difficulties with parents, peers and educational authorities.

2. Partnership and cooperation
Partnership and cooperation with other organisations targeting specific intersections is essential in order to work successfully towards the inclusion of youth with intersectional identities. Connect with other LGBTQI youth organisations working on intersectionality or specific intersections as well as through partnerships outside the LGBTQI community, such as other equality organisations working on specific identities. Be open to give your support to groups and organizations that are not LGBTQI but could benefit from your knowledge sharing and resources. In many cases beneficial partnerships can also result from co-operation with organisations with which there is no obvious common ground.

Framework
Keep a broad framework when advertising your activities to the public; for example, by putting the accent on youth rather than just LGBTQI people, you would improve opportunities for partnerships with other organisations and institutions working with young people – public authorities, education system, social services.
Research
Raise awareness through the gathering of empirical evidence concerning the situation of youth with intersectional identities in society at large. This is meant as a preliminary step in order to have programs informed by research and build partnerships with public authorities and sister organisations. Providing evidence about specific gaps and needs LGBTQI youth face is vital in order to be able to demonstrate the need for action through cooperation and fund raising. Be open to proposing innovative, creative, and cost effective solutions.

Visibility
Multiply your presence by representing your organisation at a wide range of events connected to other equality organisations outside the LGBTQI community. This would ensure that all equality groups working on different types of discrimination are given consideration and taken seriously by your organisation, along with showing your commitment towards inclusivity. Prepare and bring with you printed and verbal material explaining your intersectional specific work.

Cooperation
Cooperation between organisations, particularly LGBTQI mainstream and other identity-based organisations – ethnic minorities, migrants, people with (dis)abilities – should pay particular attention towards issues which are sometimes taken for granted, such as coming out and visibility, as they might change for different youth and be dependent on very different needs. In this sense, working together towards equality is crucial, as long as it does not jeopardise the needs of individual with different identities.

Negotiation
Negotiate with potential partner institutions and public authorities in order to find a common ground and common goals. Be open and flexible about other organisations’ understanding of intersectionality. Negotiating with institutions for the inclusion of LGBTQI youth with intersectional identities should be a strategic choice for reaching agreement towards more inclusive policies.

Knowledge sharing
Share your knowledge and good practices on intersectionality at local, national and international levels through the creation of new platforms and networks. Create databases and guidelines about your intersectional specific work and make it accessible through your websites and platforms. This should happen not only among LGBTQI youth organisations, but also organisations and groups dealing with specific identities – be open to invite professionals, staff, and social workers to training sessions and meetings.

3. Future work
Future work should focus on the on-going improvement plan in relation to intersectionality and diversity, targeting all intersections and with a particular attention to those intersectional identities that have been neglected. As shown in the study, this includes the improvement of practices in the areas of socioeconomic status/homelessness, migration and ethnicity. Nonetheless, this should not happen at the risk of the neglect or exclusion of improvements in the work for youth with different intersectional identities, particularly youth with (dis)abilities and trans* young people. This is particularly important since many youth continue to feel discriminated based on their sexual orientation and gender identity, both outside and within the organisations’ structures. LGBTQI youth organizations from different sides of Europe are encouraged to build networks and share their experiences through open and accessible information, initiatives, and programs.