



# GENDER - FAMILY, EDUCATION, WORK AND WELLBEING

Perspectives and Realities from Young People | Berlin (DE) – 5 days , 9-13/3/2020

## Report

On 9-13 March, young participants from the partnership met in Berlin in the framework of the “Gender Project”. They **learned about the wide world of gender** and exchanged about their own **experiences, challenges, wishes, hopes, concerns and questions** on the topic.

For the project’s outcomes to **reflect youth’s own voice, they also drafted comic-strips on gender** based on their discussions, in order to inspire the project’s **upcoming comic-book**. This will help youth workers across Europe addressing this topic with young people: they will get the perfect “conversation-starter”, totally relevant to youth because made by young people, and accessible thanks to an easy-to-read format!

Two partners were prevented from joining the seminar due to official measures in Greece (IEKEP) and Sweden (Skelleftea Kommun) in the context of rising uncertainty across Europe in regard to the coronavirus. Despite these challenging times, the seminar was a success, with a nice and productive atmosphere in Berlin, parallel work in Athens and Skelleftea and some “online bridges” between these throughout the week (Facebook group, Skype)!



## Summary of the Training Days

### Activities: Exploring the „Gender Jungle“

Gender is a complex and vast topic: to navigate this “Gender Jungle”, young participants went through a progressive programme inviting them to focus on different areas of life every day.

*“I really liked the fact we went deeper in so many different subjects related to gender”*

On the first day, after some introductions, ice-breakers and name games, the week’s topic was introduced to build a common understanding of it. To do so, participants started with their own **perceptions of gender and gradually built upon these to get to a common definition**. In the end, they managed to “map” all crucial aspects, from the individual to the societal levels, power relations, identity and discrimination, inequalities etc.



On the second day, the group had a look at the week’s first topic: **“So Cliché!”**. They shared about gender roles and expectations, and the many stereotypes sustaining these. Conclusion: **all over Europe, these clichés can vary in intensity but overall remain the same!** In the afternoon, it was time to talk about some **“Toys’ Stories”**: starting from a personal viewpoint, their own toys as children, participants reflected on **how toys and games can play a role in teaching gender roles to kids ... or how they can, if handled properly, open equal horizons to everybody!**



The third day was dedicated to **“LGBTQI+ Rights & Discrimination – Where do we stand?”**. A visit of Berlin’s first queer youth centre was unfortunately cancelled due to rising uncertainty in regard to the coronavirus pandemic: participants were therefore free to Berlin visit at their own pace, and some could keep the planned focus by visiting the *Schwules Museum*, a museum exhibiting LGBT life in Berlin!

Later the group continued to explore this topic. First, thanks to young people from CMO STAMM (NL), participants could learn about the complexity of **gender as a spectrum**, beyond the binary women/men: they now understand better **how diverse gender identity and sexual orientations can be**, and why “LGBTQI” alone can’t cover it all ... hence the “+”! Finally the group went through an activity prepared by Skelleftea’s youth (SE) even if



they could not join themselves: thanks to them, participants debated what it means to **live in heteronormative societies, reflected on assumptions** in regard to gender and how you can't really know of somebody's identity or orientation with a simple look.



On the fourth day, the group went **"Back to School!"** to reflect on another area of life playing a crucial role in regard to gender. Participants discussed what, in their experience, was **"wrong" at school gender-wise: sexual education** (e.g. none or lacking, covering heterosexual sex only and leaving everybody else at risk), **discrimination and prejudices among peers, teachers behaving differently** with girls and boys ... Then they imagined ways to fix these issues, like unique uniforms where these are mandatory, to avoid compulsory skirts for girls for instance.



The last theme looked **further in a young person's life: the workplace**. Participants stepped into new shoes in a **roleplay game** inviting them to imagine, for instance, how difficult it is to be a woman in a traditionally "male job" (e.g. police, engineering and such) or a man in a traditionally "female job" (e.g. nanny, nurse etc). Debates covered many other aspects of gender on the workplace: **sexual harassment, the gender pay gap, the difficult balance between private and work lives** among many others.



On the final day, the "Creative Workshops" turning all these learning outcomes and personal impressions into comic-strips were finalised (details below!). Then it was time for some conclusions, evaluations ... and good-byes!

## Creative Workshop: "Please, Draw me a sheep gender!"

Beyond learning, sharing and debating on gender, its meanings and realities for participants, the seminar aimed at **letting these representatives of a diverse youth express themselves on gender** through creative means!

Daily Creative Workshops were organised and built upon the inspiration brought by the activities. The participants were guided and supported by youth workers to **turn their ideas (perspectives, opinions, ideas, feelings, impressions, hopes, questions, proposals ...)** into comic-strips.

Here are examples of their results: a mix of diverse, yet complementary ideas looking at different aspects of gender, which will later be **turned by the partnership into a comic-book!** This will give youth workers an adapted, accessible and attractive tool to dialogue with young people on gender, an essential aspect of their wellbeing.

*"I enjoyed the Creative Workshops, it was a very nice way to express my thoughts and feelings."*

