

LGBT EDUCATION

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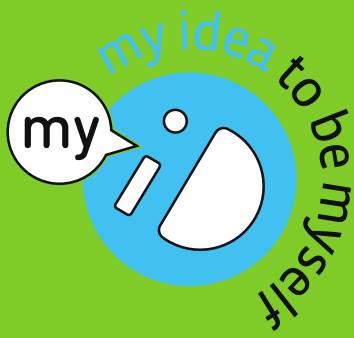
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In this issue a lot of attention for two project that will end in May. The UNIQUE project focuses on integrating LGBTIQ+ issues in vocational education. One article encourages you to fill in a feedback survey on their policy recommendations (if you have time, do this before May 5!) The RAINBO project developed an online course on how to counsel LGBTIQ+ online and in the face of the effects of COVID-19. Furthermore, you will find information on a new UNESCO publication to monitor the right to education and on the need to take emotional intelligence into account in LGBTIQ+ work in schools.



European UNIQUE project approaches final events

27 April, 2023 - The European UNIQUE project approaches its final date. Several closing events are taking place, like a conference in Brussels (and online), round tables to discuss policy recommendations and closing events in the participating countries Greece, Cyprus, Croatia, Poland and Bulgaria. Members of GALE can now also give feedback to the UNIQUE policy recommendations!



The UNIQUE project

The UNIQUE project is a large scale European project to promote social inclusion of LGBTIQ+ students in vocational education and training (VET). The main product is a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) for VET teachers on how to handle inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity and sexual characteristics. The general strategy of the project is to recruit VET teachers as *ambassadors* for LGBTIQ+ inclusion and to train and coach them to become active in and beyond their vocational institute. The project was prepared by a needs assessment research in 2021, and by developing a range of products to support future ambassadors. At the moment the ambassadors are taking the course and are trying out interventions in their schools. The project will end in June and there will be several presentations and discussions in May.

Final conference

On 12 May 2023, the European Erasmus+ project UNIQUE will have its final conference. The conference will take place from 10-12:45 in the offices of EVBB, Boulevard Charlemagne 28 in Brussels, and it will also be livestreamed. [You can register here](#). The conference will discuss the piloted strategies to further such visibility and will discuss potential new options.

Emotional intelligence

The project takes a slightly different approach than 'traditional' anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia projects. 'Traditional' LGBTIQ+ projects focusing on schools often focus on stimulating awareness of discrimination and on offering concrete suggestions to improve visibility. Such suggestions range from raising rainbow flags, posting safe space stickers and labelling toilets as gender neutral to more vague suggestions to

formulate school policy and to establish school safety.

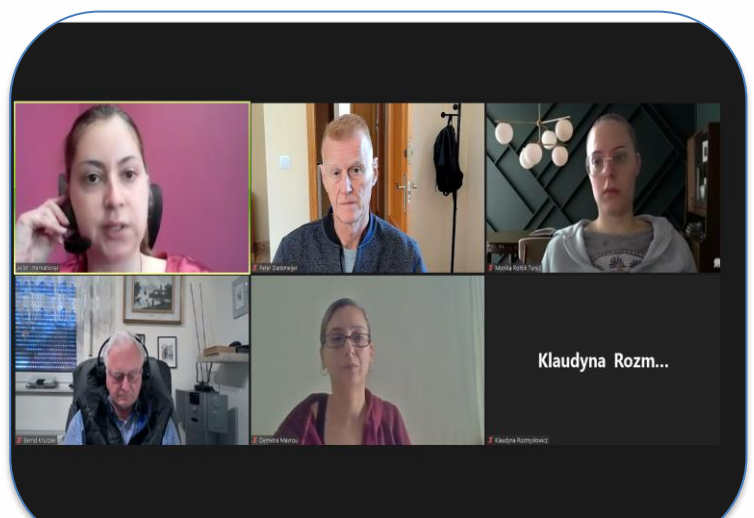
The UNIQUE project works in countries where explicit visibility of LGBTIQ+ issues may create a backlash rather than to stimulate teachers and administrators to take a stand for inclusion. Furthermore, the pilot countries need more concrete ways on how to formulate school policy and how to organize this desired school safety. The UNIQUE solutions are centered around paying more attention to the need for *emotional intelligence* in education. Rather than starting with rainbow flags, the UNIQUE project starts by exploring how negative attitudes and prejudice in specific classroom and institutions can be overcome by better handling the underlying emotions and needs felt by students and teachers. This approach is not yet common. This is the innovative aspect of the UNIQUE approach.

Dutch meeting

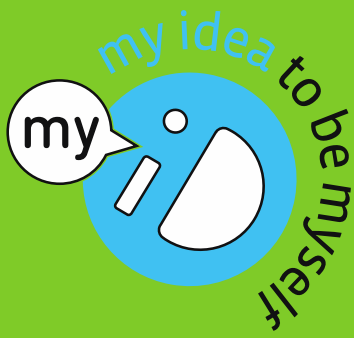
A short Dutch final discussion meeting will take place [online on 30 May \(16-17:00\)](#).

More information on the UNIQUE project:

- [Like our Facebook page](#)
- [Like our LinkedIn page](#)
- [UNIQUE website](#)



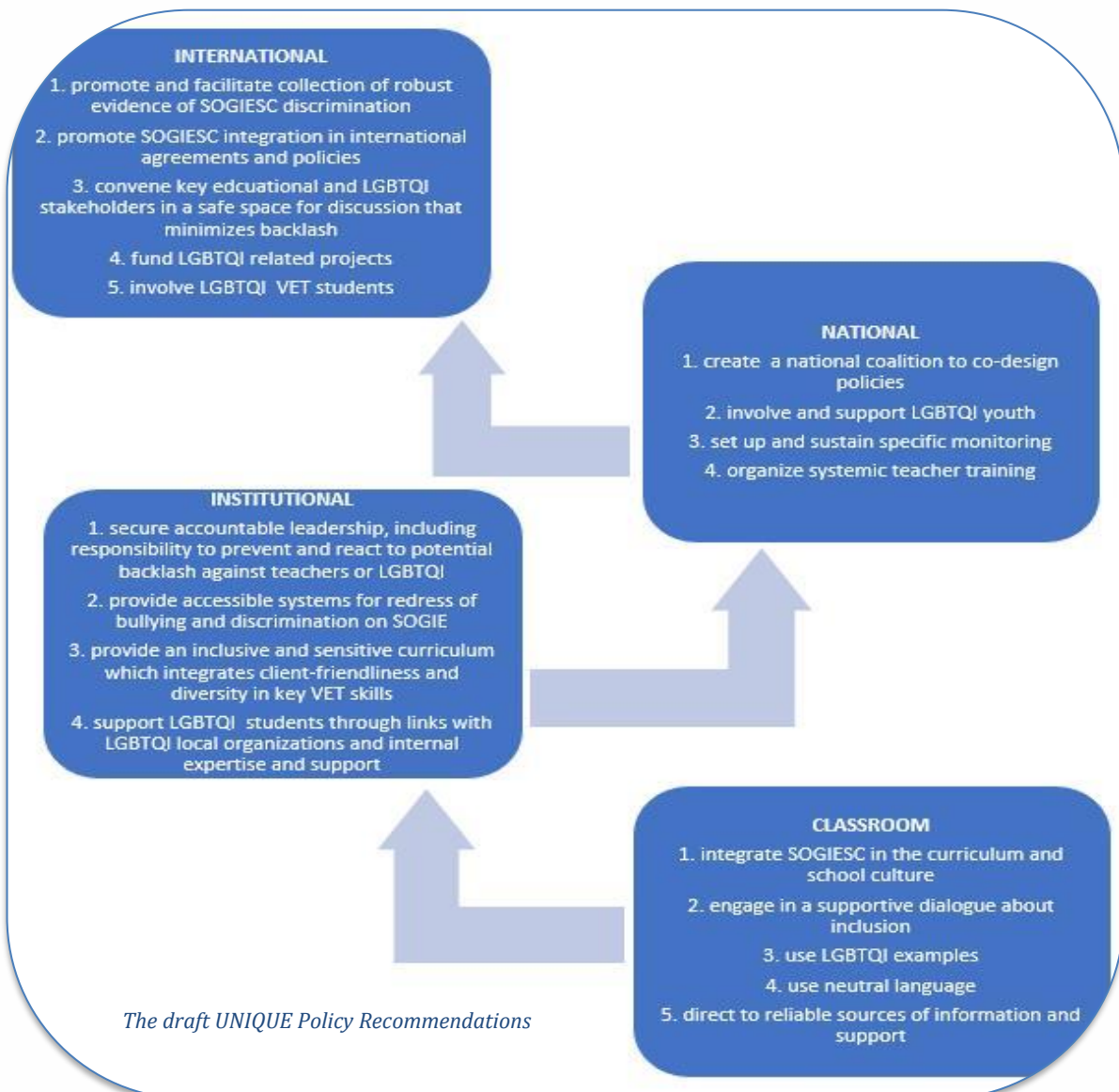
One of the UNIQUE project meetings

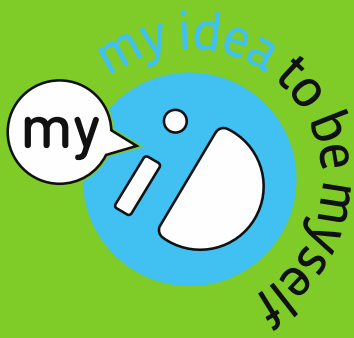


UNIQUE draft Policy Recommendations

The project has revisited 'traditional' LGBTIQ+ policy recommendations. We made a revised set of recommendations based on the project approach to focus on emotional intelligence of students and teachers.

The draft recommendations also recognize that change in vocational institutions will only happen when this basic attention for transversal emotional competences is also taken into account. The 18 recommendations are divided over four levels: the classroom, institutional, local and national and European policy. We call this a bottom-up cascade approach of policymaking. We invite students, teachers, VET administrators, authorities and politicians to take part in our survey to check to what extent they support our draft recommendations. [Please take a short survey here.](#)





Online platform about LGBTIQ+ and COVID-19 opens

4 April, 2023 - On May 2, GALE is hosting a short online information and discussion session on the RAINBO project. The project aimed to reduce the risks of LGBTIQ+ in times of COVID-19 by offering online training to health professionals. The project resulted in a (free) online training platform. The session will take place via Zoom from 16:00-17:00 and will be in Dutch. Similar meetings will be held in Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and the UK.



The online RAINBO course for counselors

The session

The short meeting will start with a brief introduction about the impact of COVID-19 on LGBTIQ+ and how the RAINBO project has developed online modules to support professionals in helping LGBTIQ+. Then there will be room for questions and we will briefly discuss how we can further promote LGBTIQ+ affirmative counseling to cisgender heterosexual professionals - online or face to face.

The project

The project aimed to help professionals in Europe better assistance for LGBTIQ+ during and after the COVID-19 crisis. Therefore the project focused on both LGBTIQ+ affirmative counseling and on learning how professionals can use digital tools to work remotely. The project runs from June 2021 to May 2023 and was supported by the European Erasmus+ program. The project produced two main outcomes:

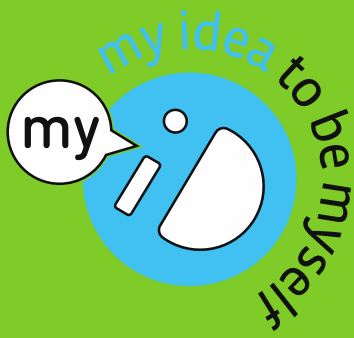
1. A needs assessment of the situation of LGBTQ as a result of COVID-19 and how social and healthcare professionals are responding. This was done both internationally (survey research) and specifically in the Netherlands (research with survey and interviews).
2. Development of online modules for social and care professionals on how to use digital media to better reach LHBTIQ and because the really support them.

The online modules

The developed online platform consists of 31 units or lessons, divided in 3 modules. The first module deals with the specific risks that LGBTQ (more than others) face during COVID-19 and during lockdowns. The second module addresses the challenges social professionals face, such as learning to work more online and affirmative LGBTIQ+ counseling. The third module looks at some good examples from the participating countries (Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and the UK).

Sources:

- [registration form for the Dutch meeting](#)
- [more about the project](#)
- [the RAINBO website with the online modules](#)



Review of the new UNESCO tool to fulfil the right to education

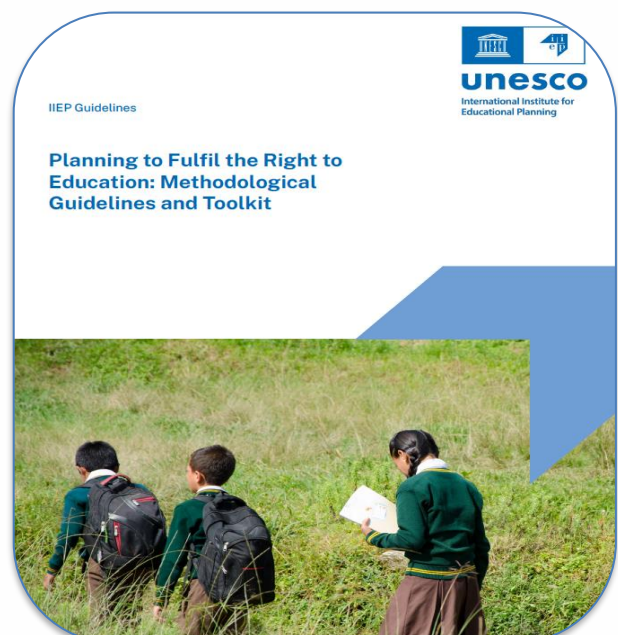
6 March 2023 - UNESCO has published a new set of tools to guide the implementation of the Right to Education. This review of the tools and their background shows how international perspectives gradually embrace a true inclusivity of the Right to Education. International experts include gender identity and sexual orientation in their views, although these views have not yet been legally endorsed by all States. Still, the new tools offer opportunities to include inclusion of SOGIESC in educational monitoring and policy planning of States.

The international R2E legal framework

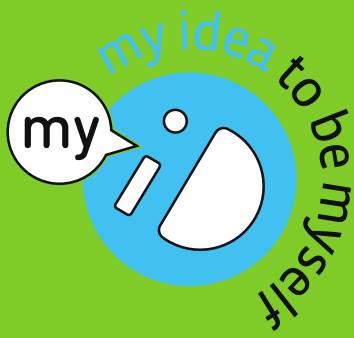
Education has internationally been recognized as a human right since 1948, the year when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) stated that 'Everyone has the right to education' (art. 26 [1]). Since the proclamation of the UDHR, the Right to Education has been asserted in a multitude of legally binding and non-binding international treaties and documents.

Such a wide variety of international documents and treaties spurred the necessity to create a new document aimed at compiling, analyzing, and unpacking existing human rights laws. In response to

this need, the Abidjan Principles were finalized in February 2019. Like the Yogyakarta Principles on SOGI issues, the Abidjan Principles do not create any new laws or obligations for States. However, they provide concrete guidance on the States' obligation to establish free, quality public education systems for all based on already agreed rights in existing international documents and treaties. The Abidjan Principles were published after a three-year participatory consultation and drafting process. The Principles were signed by eminent experts in education, international law, and human rights. Although the Principles are not legally binding, they have been recognized by several United Nations and regional human rights institutions and mandate holders working on the Right to Education, including the European Committee of Social Rights (2020); the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (2019 and 2020); the Human Rights Council – United Nations General Assembly (2019 and 2020); the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (2020); the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2019); and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education (2019), among others.



The UNESCO publication



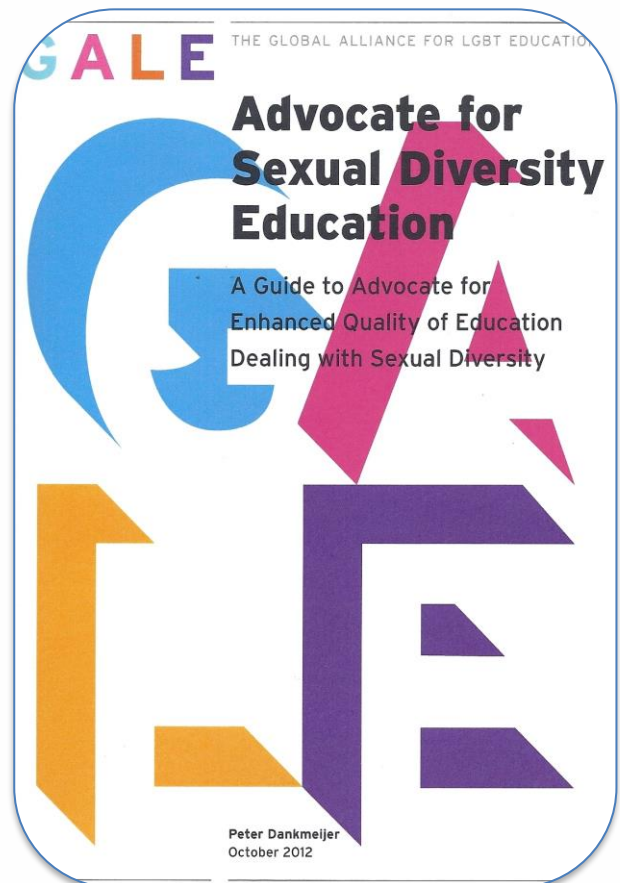
The new tool

The purpose of the new UNESCO tools is to help education stakeholders systematically collect and analyze the efforts put in place to ensure the Right to Education. The final goal is to mobilize all information to nurture a constructive dialogue among key national stakeholders and to strengthen the Right to Education at national and local levels. The tools were originally conceived to support States in the planning process, but they are flexible enough to be utilized by other relevant entities or partners at the national level (independent human rights institutions, ombudspersons, non-governmental organizations, etc.) and sub-national level, or organizations (United Nations agencies, development partners, civil society, etc.).

The Methodological Guidelines are organized into three parts, each corresponding to an operational tool:

- 1. Quick Tool.** The first part of the Methodological Guidelines offers a tool to prioritize key issues regarding the Right to Education and spur discussions about the most urgent needs.
- 2. The Grid.** The second part is a checklist in the shape of a grid to ensure the main Right to Education issues are being addressed. There is an additional grid that facilitates the systematic collection of information from the existing planning documents necessary for further analysis through the Analytical Framework. The Grid formulates generic topic to be addressed, but by using the GALE Right to Education Checklist (2012), LGBTIQ+ issues can be easily identified and made more explicit.
- 3. Analytical Framework.** The third part is meant to analyze existing planning or programming documents. The Analytical Framework assesses how an existing document is aligned with the Right to Education, using guiding questions and by providing corresponding guiding benchmarks. Stakeholders using the Analytical Framework are encouraged to include notes for discussion and thus facilitate the

thinking process and dialogue among educational planners, decision makers, and others on concerns and challenges; this will also help clarify certain issues. In this way, The idea is, therefore, to create a space of dialogue among the main stakeholders to ensure a better alignment between the existing planning or programming documents and the international standard-setting instruments protecting the Right to Education. In this sense, the Analytical Framework can also be used to highlight the lack of attention for SOGIESC-related discrimination.



GALE's criteria to monitor the LGBTIQ+ Right to Education

Retrogressive measures

LGBTIQ+ activists will have plenty of reasons to show how the Right to Education is often not respected

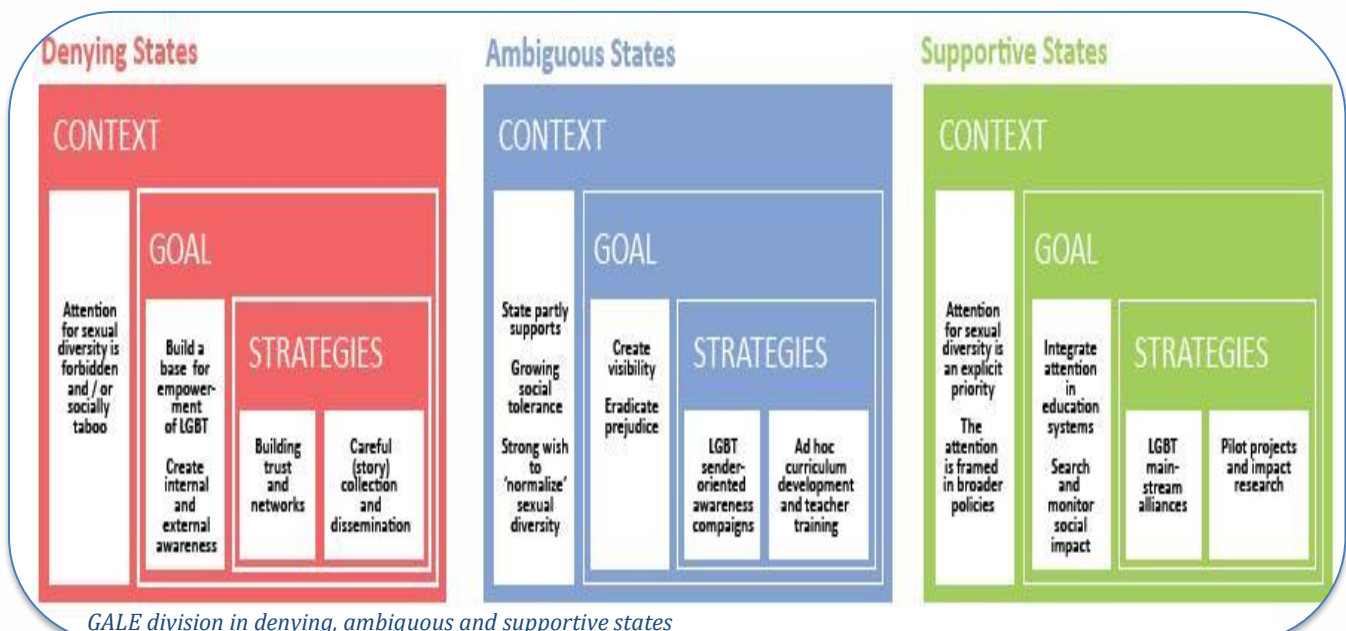


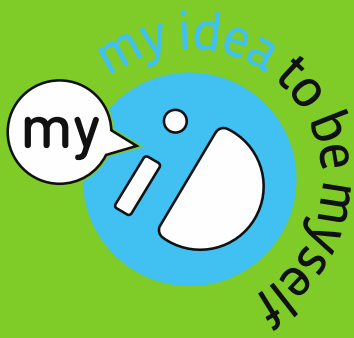
for LGBTIQ+ learners. Moreover, they probably have to face a stubborn unwillingness of State actors to address these shortcomings in national education policies. In some countries, the State will actually be initiating measures that negate the Right to Education for LGBTIQ+ learners. Such measures are called “retrogressive” measures. When dealing with such “denying” States (as GALE labels them), it is good to remind LGBTIQ+ advocates and their allies that the Guiding Principle 45 of the Abidjan Principles (2019) states: “There is a strong presumption that retrogressive measures are impermissible. If, in exceptional circumstances, retrogressive measures are taken, the State has the burden of proving that any such measure is in accordance with applicable human rights law and standards. Any such measure:

- a. should be temporary by nature and in effect, and limited to the duration of the crisis causing the situation of fiscal constraint;
- b. should be necessary and proportionate, in that the adoption of any other policy alternatives or the failure to act would be more detrimental to the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights,

with the possibility of taking any alternative measures comprehensively examined;

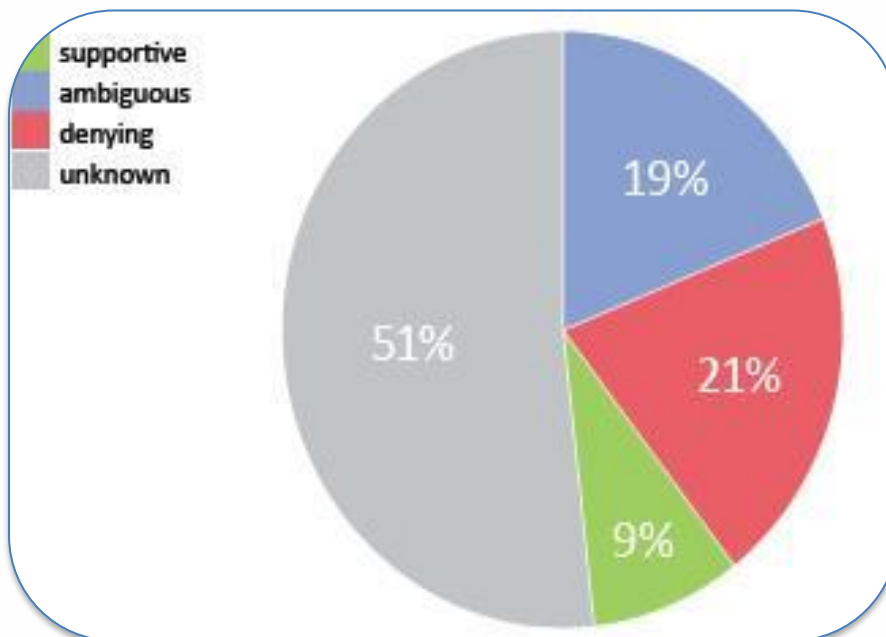
- c. should be reasonable;
- d. should not be directly or indirectly discriminatory;
- e. should accord particular attention to the rights of vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalized individuals and groups, including their right to free, quality, public education, and ensure that they are not disproportionately affected. Children must be the last affected by such measures;
- f. should identify the minimum core content of the right to public education and other affected economic, social and cultural rights, and ensure the protection of this core content at all times;
- g. should involve full and effective participation of affected groups, including children and other learners, in examining the proposed measures and alternatives;
- h. should be subject to meaningful review procedures at the national level.





Obligation to monitor adequately

One reason government officials may use to not act on SOGIESC-related discrimination is to invoke a lack of solid evidence. At the same time, they do not collect the needed evidence, which creates vicious circle of invisibility and non-action. This is why including SOGIESC in educational monitoring mechanisms (surveys and reporting procedures) is essential to stimulate an active policy improvement. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states that all planning and programming documents must include an adequate monitoring framework to ensure effective implementation of planned strategies and understand the extent of realization (or non-realization) of the Right to Education (CESCR, 1999). As specified by Guiding Principles 81–87 of the Abidjan Principles (2019), States should put an effective, impartial, and adequately resourced monitoring system in place (Guiding Principle 83) to



LGBTIQ+ education policy in UN member states, according to GALE

allow for regular monitoring of compliance with the Right to Education (Guiding Principle 81). Guiding Principle 85 states that monitoring systems should

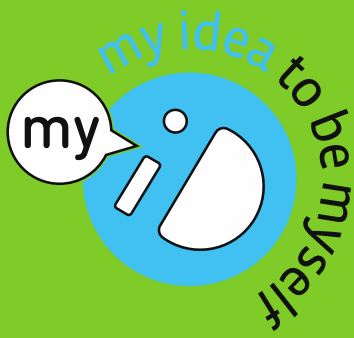
also gather data to assess the impact of private instructional educational institutions on the enjoyment of the Right to Education' (Abidjan Principles, 2019). Recently, several international guidelines have been published on how governments and international research institutions can adequately monitor SOGIESC issues in regular large scale surveys. There is no technical reason anymore not to do this.

Obligation to secure non-discrimination

Many States do have an educational planning, but their attention to discrimination in such plannings is often deplorable or absent. Therefore it is a very significant step that UNESCO has labelled discrimination as one of the three cross-cutting issues that should be highlighted across all checkpoints and benchmarks (next to monitoring and budget).

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states (CESCR 2009: para. 7) defines discrimination as 'any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference or other differential treatment that is directly or indirectly based on the prohibited grounds of discrimination and which has the intention or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of Covenant rights. Discrimination also includes incitement to discriminate and harassment'. States have an obligation to act immediately to eliminate any discrimination (de jure or de facto), irrespective of the available resources and whether

the State has caused it or not (Abidjan Principles 2019: GP 27). De jure refers to formal discrimination in legal and policy frameworks,



whereas de facto or substantive discrimination is 'experienced in practice' (UNESCO, 2021: 83).



Guiding Principle 24 of the Abidjan Principles (2019) states:

States must eliminate all forms of discrimination in the enjoyment of the Right to Education on grounds such as: age; birth; caste; color; descent; disability; documentation; ethnicity; civil, family or career status; gender identity; health status, or genetic or other predisposition toward illness; language; migration status; national or social origin; nationality; political or other opinion; parental status; pregnancy; property; race; religion; sex; sexual orientation; socio-economic disadvantage; statelessness; or other status. The obligation to prohibit all forms of discrimination includes direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and denial of reasonable accommodation, as well as multiple, intersectional, associative, and perceptive discrimination.

This formulation clearly highlights the inclusion of SOGIESC issues, even when this inclusive definition has not yet legally been endorsed by all States. Still, its inclusion in the methodological UNESCO tools

creates a space to address these issues more legitimately.

Sources:

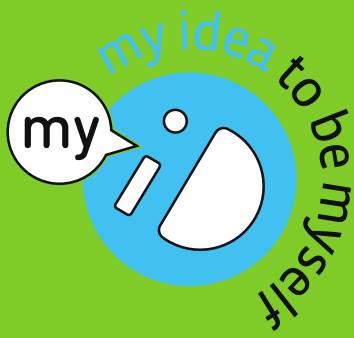
- [IIEP-UNESCO publishes Planning to Fulfil the Right to Education](#)
- [IIEP-UNESCO. 2022. Planning to Fulfil the Right to Education: Methodological Guidelines and Toolkit. Paris: IIEP-UNESCO](#)
- [GALE Right to Education Checklist \(2012\)](#)

Emotional intelligence needed for safer schools

15 March 2023 - A recent international research by the University of Córdoba and the European BOOST project showed that when schools focus on securing a safer school climate, this also increases the emotional intelligence of students. Although the study did not specifically go into nondiscrimination, it is likely that antidiscrimination programs focusing on LGBTIQ+ should also focus on developing emotional intelligence.

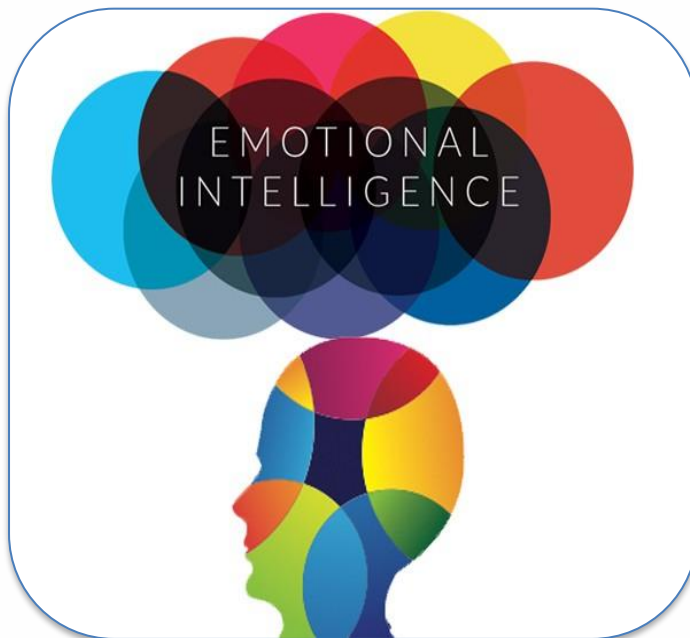
Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to manage emotions effectively. It is defined as a system of mental abilities to access, perceive, understand, regulate, and process emotions to promote problem-solving in areas related to an



individual's affect. It can be measured by asking students

- (1) if they have attention for emotions (I usually care a lot about what I'm feeling);
- (2) about the clarity of their feelings (I can always explain how I feel); and
- (3) if they are able to manage their emotions (this is called mood repair) (When I am angry I try to change my mood).



Emotional intelligence has a clear impact on the well-being of schoolchildren. A large number of studies has shown how emotional intelligence impacts on psychological and contextual variables, but less is known about how school contexts influence emotional development.

Safe school climate

School climate is defined as a "pattern of students', parents', and school personnel's experience of school life that reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, and learning practices, and organizational structures" (Cohen et al., 2009, p. 182). Cohen et al identified four

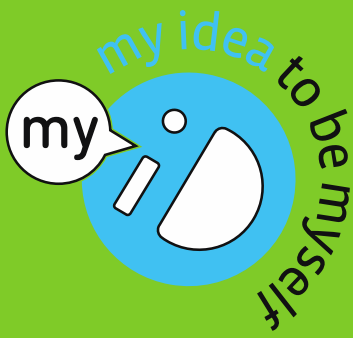
dimensions of school climate: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and institutional environment. The school climate can be measured by asking students for four factors: (1) Teacher-student relations (Teachers care about their students); (2) student-student relations (Students are friendly toward most other students); (3) liking of school (I like this school); and (4) fairness of school rules (Consequences of breaking school rules are fair). When students answer these questions consistently in a positive way, this gives a reliable view of a safe school climate. Strategies to foster a positive school climate can result in helping students learn to internalize the negative emotions they experience, analyze why they feel these negative emotions, and improve their social skills and emotional intelligence.

The study

The BOOST study looked at the level of emotional intelligence and school climate for schoolchildren in primary education in Spain, Poland and Norway. Girls showed higher levels of emotional repair compared to boys. Emotional repair and clarity of emotions were the most important factors of emotional intelligence.

Multivariate analysis showed higher levels of emotional intelligence in Spanish schoolchildren related to a corresponding higher level of school climate. The researchers suggest that creating a safer school climate can lead to the development of more emotional intelligence. However, earlier studies also showed a correlation in the other direction: students who are guided to develop higher levels of emotional intelligence contribute to a safer school climate.

Although this study was done among primary school children, it is likely that the same trends will be found in secondary schools and vocational schools.



Relevance for sexual and gender diversity

Educational programs which are designed to combat discrimination related to sexual and gender diversity are usually focused on giving information about LGBTIQ+ and on correcting prejudice. However, in practice the more effective way to combat intolerant towards sexual and gender diversity is to focus on emotions and how students can deal with the negative feelings they experience when confronted with somebody who is different than they are. For this reason, it would be important that updated programs should be developed to create more acceptance of LGBTIQ+ people by focusing more on emotional intelligence. Such programs could especially focus on how students can engage in mood repair.



Mexican poster to promote acceptance of gender diversity (2008)

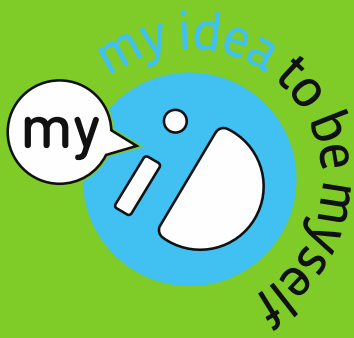
It is also important that the school has attention for the context of increasing emotional intelligence by providing an LGBTIQ+ inclusive safer school climate. In turn, such a systemic safer school climate will increase the emotional intelligence of students, including their ability to cope with negative feelings towards minorities.

In the European #UNIQUE-project, this approach is leading. This project is focused on vocational education and an online course has been developed for teachers of schools in Cyprus, Greece, Croatia and Poland. The project leaders have been trained in a more emotional approach of combating homophobia and transphobia and the online course is supporting this perspective.

Source: [Luque-González, R., Romera, E., Gómez-Ortiz, O., Wiza, A., Laudańska-Krzemińska, I., Antypas, K., & Muller, S. \(2022\). Emotional intelligence and school climate in primary school children in Spain, Norway, and Poland. *Psychology, Society & Education*, 14\(3\), 29-37.](#)

UNIQUE project warns against increasing discrimination through social media

21 April 2023 - The UNIQUE project warns against increasing discrimination against LGBTIQ+ through social media. The project, which focuses on integration of LGBTIQ+ topics in institutions for vocational education, is increasingly encountering challenges in their own publications about the project. But the project also notices a wider trend to forbid or restrict the



reach of messages about gender and sexual diversity in general.

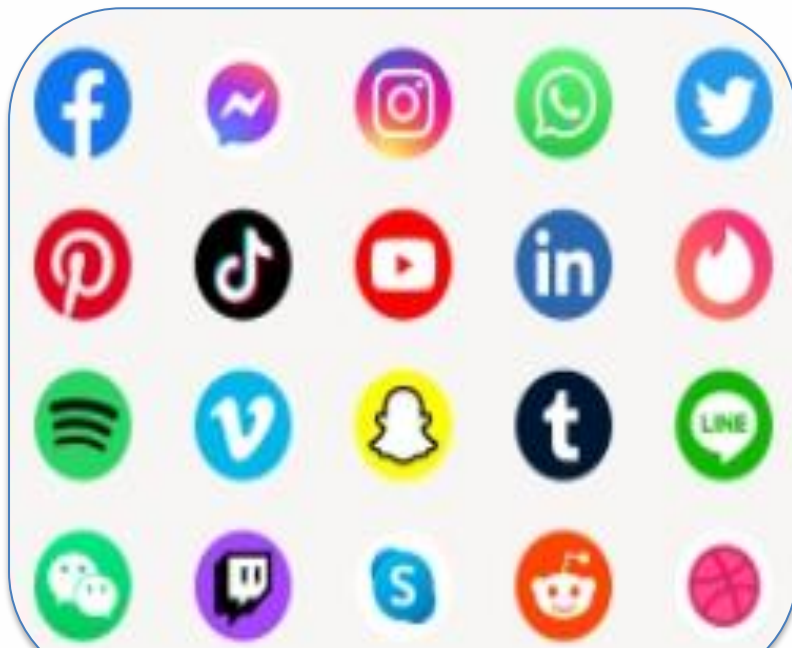


Image by rawpixel.com on Freepik

Twitter deteriorates

From the beginning of the project, Twitter has blocked the Twitter account of the UNIQUE project. Despite requests to reopen the account, no response or explanation has been given. Since Elon Musk has taken over Twitter, the freedom of liberty principle has been abused to destroy Twitter protections against offensive online messages. Recently, Twitter quietly removed the part of their safety rules which forbade to purposefully misgender people. This means that the offensive comments of extreme right wingers, who are intent on online bashing of transgenders, is now allowed.

Facebook: labels messages as 'sensitive'

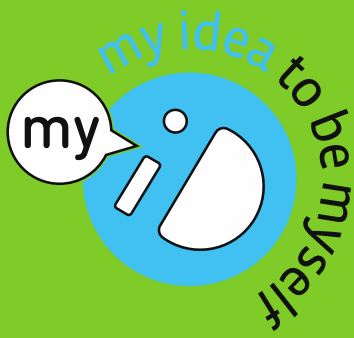
Several of GALE's project partners have noticed that their messages about the project are flagged by Facebook as "sensitive". The messages the project has posted are not at all sensitive. They are not explicit in sexual content and there are in no way offensive. They are just promoting the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ and in all cases in very diplomatic language. Facebook does not give specific reasons for labeling our messages sensitive and thereby limiting their outreach to people who are interested in your project. We are tempted to assume that Facebook judges that *any mention of gender or sexual diversity may be sensitive* to some people. If this is true, the partners of the UNIQUE project are strongly opposed to this cultural export of the American polarization on this issue. However, our project partners also noticed a range of messages in which LGBTIQ+ people were vilified, which were not removed nor flagged as sensitive by

Facebook. Often shared messages originate from extremely right-wing organizations that radically aim to eradicate LGBTIQ+ people. A US expert organization has labeled such campaigns as "genocidal".

Two years ago, Facebook already refused to allow advertisers to target gay, bisexual and lesbian people specifically, restricting the way LGBTIQ+ organizations can reach their target group. Among some of the advertisement categories removed include "Lung cancer awareness," "LGBT culture" and "Jewish holidays."

LGBTI people experience high levels of hate on social media

Last year, the US LGBT media organization GLAAD published a research which showed that LGBTQ people are distrustful of social media and think they



are not protected online by the American social media giants. This is because of the levels of hate and harassment they face while on social media platforms. GLAAD asked LGBTQ respondents to grade the quality of social platforms. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and TikTok all received failing grades, with each receiving a score under 50 out of a possible 100. TikTok scored the lowest at 43%. Instagram scored the highest at 48%.

Follow the UNIQUE project on [Facebook](#) or [LinkedIn](#)

Sources:

- [Image by rawpixel.com on Freepik](#)
- [Twitter now allows deadnaming again \(2023\)](#)
- [Facebook will no longer allow advertisers to target political beliefs, religion, sexual orientation \(2021\)](#)
- [Lemkin Institute Statement on the Genocidal Nature of the Gender Critical Movement's Ideology and Practice](#)
- [GLAAD gives social media giants poor grades over lack of protections for LGBTQ](#)



One of the submissions for the UNIQUE student contest to make LGBTIQ+ supportive art products

LGBT EDUCATION

is the external newsletter for non-GALE members.

https://www.gale.info/doc/lgbt_education/LGBT_Education_29.pdf

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Colophon

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