



**TRAINING NEEDS OF PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH LGBT+ FAMILIES
AND ACADEMIC CURRICULA ASSESSMENT**

INTRODUCTION: ASSESSING NEEDS AND ACADEMIC CURRICULA

Most of the 28 European Union (EU) member states have legislation guaranteeing equal rights to LGBT+ people and their families. However, heteronormativity remains the cultural standard, fostering inequitable environments. Consequently, professional practices as well as academic training risk reproducing dominant societal norms and perspectives, thereby marginalising or limiting non-heterosexual families' access to services. In so doing, discrimination does not merely represent an individual action based on personal intention, but rather is embedded in the systemic functioning of institutions such as schools and health care.

The aim of intellectual output #2 consists of identifying training needs regarding LGBT+ families for professionals in the fields of education, health care and social and legal work, and comparing them with presently available academic training in the three countries that participate in the project: Italy, Poland and Spain.

In order to deepen our knowledge regarding the subject, we aimed to:

- Identify the presence of contents and competencies regarding work with LGBT+ families in academic curricula in the above fields;
- Investigate the experiences of professionals engaging with LGBT+ families in their daily practice;
- Explore the perspectives of LGBT+ parents regarding their personal experiences with experts in the fields of health care, education and legal and social care.

Such objectives are consistent with the European recommendation to implement access to equal treatment irrespective of sexual orientation and gender identity [Com (2008)0426], placing particular emphasis on LGBT+ families as a vulnerable group requiring inclusion (European Parliament briefing May 2015) as well as the training of professionals in the fields of social protection, health, reproduction technologies and education in order to prevent discrimination (FRA, 2016). At the same time, this output represents an intermediate step in the project, required for the subsequent development of an interdisciplinary training programme.

The three countries involved in curricula and professionals' training needs analysis (Italy, Poland and Spain) neither share a common legal frame regarding LGBT+ family issues nor any standardised training model. Furthermore, each country expresses

different degrees of relevance and access to civil rights for sexual minorities. In Spain, equal marriage has been legally established since 2005, and thus the state recognises same-sex parenthood, whereas parenting by LGBT+ people remains a controversial issue in Italy and Poland, if not openly opposed both at the social and political level.

METHODS

In spite of the importance of local peculiarities and their profound impacts, the first stage of this output was to outline a common frame in order to:

- Gather results from different national contexts;
- Render analysis possible in order to provide transnational directions and tools that are applicable to the target of European advanced students and early career professionals.

All partners agreed on certain points in order to analyse academic curricula and detect training needs, thus building a common framework while acknowledging that in each country the process of gathering information would be sensitive to context.

Training needs

The strategy used to identify professionals' knowledge and skills gaps regarding inclusive practices for LGBT+ families was approached as part of a dual perspective. On the one hand, we focused on the professionals' experiences, and on the other we investigated the experiences of LGBT+ parents pertaining to their relationships with school, health care and social and legal professionals. Achieving a multi-faceted perspective seemed important given the "embedded" nature of the phenomenon of discrimination previously mentioned. Placing both standpoints side-by-side represented a methodological choice to ascertain the multi-layered connotations of these encounters and corresponding required skills. Therefore, data were gathered by examining scientific literature, reports, publications and previous research projects where available. These data were analysed based on the following questions:

- Why and when do families feel that professionals are not fair and welcoming in their interactions with LGBT+ families?
- What are the professionals' attitudes (both positive and negative) towards LGBT+ parenting?

- In what situations do professionals feel that they lack sufficient training/ information/tools to interact with LGBT+ families?
- Which training/information/tools do they identify as lacking?
- Can we identify any discriminatory or inappropriate practices?

Information from literature and documents was reinforced by interviews and/or focus group with key informants and stakeholders. This process was particularly context-specific. Indeed, asking key informants in countries where civil rights are totally or partially achieved for LGBT+ people can be far easier than in countries such as Poland where this topic is intertwined with ethical and safeguarding issues, which are largely tackled within the national sections of the study.

Academic curricula

In each country, three to six universities were selected to assess the academic training they offer. Given that the objective of this intellectual output was not a scientific comparison of the training offered in the three countries, but rather to gather data regarding local opportunities to accessing effective training on LGBT+ issues, the

partners in each country defined specific criteria for selection, which are expressed in the national sections.

In all countries, the target courses identified for scrutiny comprised those taught at both grade and post-grade levels in the following fields: education, social work, nursing, general medicine, psychology and law. The main method of analysis consisted of desk research with the aim of detecting the presence of any kind of content that mentions:

- Family diversity, LGBT+ families or same-sex parenting;
- Homosexuality or homophobia;
- Gender identity or transgenderism.

When considered appropriate, the desk research was sustained by interviews with key informants. Further details regarding the methods are provided in the national sections.

ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS



GENERAL OVERVIEW

The work developed in Italy, Poland and Spain highlighted some common transnational elements regarding the training needs of professionals with respect to LGBT+ families. Some represented common needs, shared amongst professionals from the three countries. Others arose as points of differentiation, thus requiring the development of context-specific training contents, methodologies and strategies.

The following intertwined themes emerge as common needs in all three countries. For supplementary detailed information, the reader can refer to the national sections.

- Basic information regarding LGBT+ issues and families
According both to the professionals' insights and the families' own experiences, practitioners rarely receive any formal training on LGBT+ issues and tend to lack reliable information. The legal frame ruling the situation of LGBT+ families emerges as a particularly pertinent topic, as well as "the words to say". Indeed, coming into contact with LGBT+ parents and their children often challenges the vocabulary they use to describe

familial bonds and other people's experiences. Furthermore, the lack of basic knowledge concerning LGBT+ issues and LGBT+ families fosters a poor awareness of diversity, rendering LGBT+ subjectivity invisible. If these remarks are valid for same-sex parents, they especially affect trans parents and their children, who are often totally unthinkable within the institutions and erased in their specificity. In such situations, information regarding trans parenting becomes particularly urgent. Basic knowledge on sexual diversity, gender and gender-related issues (such as gender expression and gender choice) are all identified as important needs in all three countries.

- Fighting stereotypes
Gender stereotypes and prejudices regarding LGBT+ families often underpin professionals' daily routines, working practices and tools. Most of the time, such processes are invisible, and specialists require tools and mental frames in order to overcome stereotypical notions and to more competently negotiate with diversity. Experts consequently asked for multiple training methods, which could not be limited to goal-oriented or frontal environments. They recognized the

importance of established flexible spaces to share emotions and undertake peer-to-peer confrontation and processes of reflexivity.

- Theoretical tools and evidence-based knowledge

Most of the specialists perceive a gap, if not a contradiction, between the training received during their academic careers and the issues posed by LGBT parents. More specifically, they require an updated theoretical foundation in the fields of psychology and pedagogy. Some of the most relevant issues pertain to children's development and parents' gender roles, assisted reproduction techniques, psychological attachment and sexual and gender identity development.

Being able to locate their professional choices in an established and robust scientific frame would also provide professionals with assertive skills, which are in some cases required as a means of sustaining professional actions in front of uninformed or hostile networks of colleagues, parents, other institutions and even wider circles.

- Intersectionality

An important direction emerges regarding the need to consider how LGBT+ is not a comprehensive category and does not fully cover people's complex needs and identities. Sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnic belonging, social class and level of physical/cognitive ability can all constitute categories, highlighting how the subject must be considered holistically.

- National specificities and strategies to bring about change

Each country displays particular constraints. Consequently, it can be helpful to identify common aims and needs, as well as specificities. No generally effective strategies exist to achieving training goals. First, the role of unfriendly or hostile subjects towards LGBT+ families varies widely among the countries, offering different spaces of action. In Poland and Italy, where these families enjoy no juridical safeguard, it can be helpful to empower sensitive professionals so that they can sustain scientific argumentations to defend themselves and their professional choices from attacks. Another important aspect for personal empowerment consists of providing them with precise information regarding the legal situation. Even under the most restrictive conditions, experts can find in their daily

work spaces for introducing practices of inclusion and the non-discrimination of LGBT+ families. Moreover, where a professional's job is characterised by a "resistant" aspect within a hostile environment, the sense of personal helplessness may constitute the main threat. For this reason, developing networks of specialists and not leaving individuals alone with their struggles can play a crucial role.

Networking and updating regarding legal issues are also crucial strategic actions in Spain, but for different reasons. The legal recognition of LGBT+ rights and families has helped contribute to the greater acceptance of family diversity. However, it has neither erased cultural inertias nor changed heteronormative frames in professional and institutional practices. Countries like Spain show us that obtaining civil rights is necessary, but may not in itself be sufficient to produce a cultural change. The fieldwork suggests that targeting training to those experts who are not openly LGBT-phobic can be highly worthwhile.

ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS: ITALY NATIONAL REPORT

1. Introduction

2018 ILGA Europe ranks Italy 23rd out of 28 EU countries with respect to human rights and equality towards LGBT+ people (<https://rainbow-europe.org/country-ranking#eu>). Moreover, when focusing more specifically on equality and non-discrimination or hate speech and hate crime, Italy comes bottom of the league. This is in spite of the fact that in 2016 the law recognised same-sex civil unions (L. 76/2016, also known as Cirinnà, according to the proponent's name). Approval of the law was hindered by conservative and religious fundamentalist forces, and was only passed once the area of rights permitted was reduced. One of the outcomes of this struggle was the removal from the act of the recognition of parental rights, including the possibility of adopting the child of one's partner (adoption per se was never considered in the law). Therefore, in Italy, children with same-sex parents have just one legal parent. Trans parents do not officially suffer discrimination in normative terms, as the transition does not automatically imply any loss of parental rights. Nonetheless, we must

remark that transition often creates marital crises, and the parent facing the transition becomes (in front of the court) an extremely vulnerable subject. In recent years, the Italian Parliament also reviewed the law on assisted reproduction, this being one of the most restrictive in the Western world, but LGBT+ people (as well as single persons) remain excluded.

If the approval of the law on civil unions for same-sex couples represented a clear turning point both legally and socially, it also instigated significant attacks on LGBT+ people in social and political debate. One of the most common topics included in these attacks has concerned the perceived inadequacy of LGBT+ parents' attitudes, and the potential harm to children connected to a same-sex psychosocial environment. Although scientific data contradict such statements, social pressures require families to constantly demonstrate their adequacy. Continuous attempts at delegitimising LGBT+ people parenting has also affected those who deal with them, and their willingness to include these families in the wider society. This is true of educational contexts (especially primary and preschool), where daily attacks are directed at teachers' efforts at proposing perspectives and activities that include LGBT+ families under the label of normality. Experts in the fields of social and legal work (as well as in the courts) can experience similar reactions every time a family

attempts to be legally recognised. Just like the parental situation, even though these professionals are technically acting in accordance with their institutional and professional roles and rules, they often find themselves having to justify their behaviours and choices, and may suffer negative consequences for their actions. As a result, the relationship between services' personnel and families can be burdened by feelings of unfamiliarity, anxiety and worry that can turn (according to the circumstances and subjects involved) into blind enthusiasm for novelty. For better or for worse, by just "doing their job" specialists are often pushed – even against their own volition – into a moral position of pro and cons, shifting from the level of professional action into political and moral judgement, which renders their work increasingly challenging.

Regardless, the Italian system is highly diversified and is characterised by considerable diversity in terms of the situations across the country. Indeed, not only from region to region, but also from town to town and even from institution to institution the degree of freedom can change dramatically, shaping a patchwork scenario that is difficult to approach systematically.

2. Methods

The work was coordinated between the two Italian partners (University of Verona and the Agenzia Sanitaria e Sociale – Regione Emilia Romagna), who shared the aims and methodology of this action. A common approach was outlined for data gathering and analysis, and subsequently different tasks were assigned according to the partners' skills and specificities. Finally, the data collected were merged and analysed jointly.

In the first stage, these data were gathered by examining different types of literature regarding the topic, although relatively little could be found concerning the Italian context.

Our sources comprised:

- Scientific articles and books;
- Research reports;
- Educational materials;
- Published interviews with stakeholders or key informants;
- Data and literature produced by LGBT+ associations, including those pertaining to families.

This enabled us to identify some core issues for professionals' training. The two teams agreed to seek greater depth by organising focus groups with key informants. Thus, three focus groups were

conducted, two by the Agenzia Sanitaria e Sociale – Regione Emilia Romagna and one by the University of Verona:

- Focus Group 1 involved professionals in the fields of health and social care at managerial level;
- Focus Group 2 involved professionals in the fields of health and social care at operational level;
- Focus Group 3 involved professionals in the field of education at operational level, some of whom were also in charge of coordination.

Each focus group lasted two hours and was conducted by two members of the partner team, with roles of moderator and observer.

All of the focus groups were audio-recorded where partners gave consent. The partners jointly analysed the content to highlight categories of needs.

3. Findings

Inclusive and non-discriminatory practices and communication, updating scientific knowledge, knowledge of assisted reproduction techniques (ART) and family diversity, and modifying bureaucratic processes all constituted general needs shared among the various

fields of competence. They had to be declined according to the specific context of application.

Generally speaking, training in respectful language, information regarding research on children's well-being in LGBT+ families, and actions to modify forms and bureaucratic procedures comprised the main requests of the professionals.

3.1. Families' perspectives

3.1.1. EDUCATION

- o Inclusive and non-discriminatory practices and communication:
 - Language: this represents a major and perhaps the salient tool to change the relationship from discriminatory to inclusive. A teacher or educator who is sensitive to naming people and roles according to the family's habit or asking the child how s/he calls them constitutes a basic pillar to building mutual respect and trust.
 - Strategies to represent diversity: celebrations (e.g. Mother's Day), games and activities are often shaped by the "mother/father" pattern, and the experience of others is not represented.

- Providing materials: introducing books and stories where children in non-heteronormative families can feel represented and training teachers to use them with the whole group of children.
- Dealing with diversity of families and values: providing educators with tools to detect actions, attitudes and words that can produce marginalisation, as well as to manage homophobic behaviours.
- o Updating scientific knowledge:
 - Children's well-being and development: with respect to parenting skills, professionals often state that the academic training they receive supports the position according to which the non-biological mother, two fathers or a person transitioning cannot be as effective as the biological (not transitioning) parent.
 - o Knowledge on ART and family diversity:
 - Children born through assisted reproductive technologies can create doubts and curiosity among teachers and children, and if they lack different sources, this may result in intrusive and inappropriate questions being posed to their parents, as well as the children themselves.
- o Modifying the bureaucratic process:

The bureaucratic procedure usually constitutes the very first opportunity for presentation between the educational service and the family. Presenting forms that are sensitive to the diversity of family configurations is required to ensure that all families feel respected.

3.1.2. HEALTH CARE

- o Inclusive and non-discriminatory practices and communication:
 - Language: this is a major and perhaps the main tool to change the relationship from discriminatory to inclusive. Paediatricians, obstetrics, gynaecologists and others must refer to family members with sensitive language in order to help develop and maintain mutual respect and trust.
 - Procedures: admitting the second mother during delivery and involving the second parent in decisions regarding the health of the child represent good inclusive practices.
- o Updating scientific knowledge:
 - Professionals often claim that the academic training they receive supports the position according to which a non-biological mother, two fathers or a person transitioning cannot be deemed as appropriate as the biological (non-transitioning) mother with respect to parenting skills.

- Knowledge on ARTs and family diversity:
 - Children born through assisted reproductive technologies can create doubts and curiosity in professionals, generating inappropriate questions.
 - Intersectionality:
 - Professionals and institutions need to develop a comprehensive approach towards children with multiple characteristics that cause them to be considered “diverse”, such as disabilities or migration history.
- ### 3.2. Professionals’ perspectives
- #### 3.2.1. EDUCATION
- Inclusive and non-discriminatory practices and communication:
 - Language: as highlighted by the families, professionals also perceive themselves as lacking “the words to say it”. They are aware of the sensitivity of the issue and how naming the family according to their own habits can become a basic pillar to building mutual respect and trust. Proper language is considered a key competence in order to adopt non-judgemental attitudes and ask non-intrusive questions.
 - Updating scientific knowledge:

- Children’s well-being and development: the academic training received supports the position according to which the relationship between the biological mother and child is deemed fundamental, fostering normative perspectives towards adequate parenting styles and roles. For example, many professionals working with infants have professional observational skills that seem inadequate in front of LGBT parents.
 - Grounding educational methodologies and decision-making in a solid scientific background in order to empower their own professional role and their capacity to deal with colleagues, parents and institutions.
 - General knowledge about LGBT+ issues: same-sex couples are “unknown” and trigger curiosity. It is difficult for professionals to respectfully address them and even imagine their daily lives and social and familial networks.
 - Dealing with the diversity of families and values: providing educators with tools to manage “uncomfortable questions” about LGBT+ families. The terms and concepts must be appropriate to the developmental phase of the children.
- Intersectionality:

Professionals and institutions need to develop a comprehensive approach towards children with multiple characteristics that cause them to be considered “diverse”. At school, multiple social groups coexist (such as religious and national groups), and managing even greater forms of diversity can be difficult.

- Modifying the bureaucratic process:

Reconstructed families are more likely to be considered invisible than are planned families. Services are not equipped to identify this kind of situation, starting with the institutional forms. Not only can the parents’ diversity be expressed through the vocabulary, but also the number of parents (where the maternal/parental role can be played by more than one person) and the nature of their bonds.

3.2.2. SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE

- Making visible the invisible:

Same-sex couples and LGBT+ families are often “unknown” and unexpected for social and health care professionals. It is difficult for many to understand LGBT+ families and to imagine their daily lives, social and familial networks and specific needs. This situation often renders LGBT+ families invisible, with professionals believing that it is easier to ignore than to

negotiate their distinctiveness. Reconstructed families are more likely to be made invisible than are planned families. Services are poorly equipped to identify this kind of situation, starting with the forms.

- Updating scientific knowledge and increasing legal knowledge:

Professionals report the need for (basic) knowledge regarding LGBT+ family issues, which are or were never mentioned during the academic training. A lack of scientific data and legal knowledge fosters the possibility that they will behave according to widespread prejudices. Needs pertain both to information (family models, parental roles as functions and child-caregiver attachment) and approaches and legal procedures (for example, during their academic training midwives learn to focus only on the importance of the role of the mother). Furthermore, in the fields of social and health care, professionals feel that established data on LGBT+ families’ issues would help them develop assertive skills that are required to sustain professional actions in the context of teamwork. The feeling of inadequacy in dealing with complex tasks such as parental skills evaluations can instigate some to reject the assignment.

- Inclusive and non-discriminatory practices and communication:

- Language: professionals in social and health care are aware of the lack of inclusive words that exist when interacting with and describing LGBT+ families. Proper language is thus considered a key competence in one's work.
- Operational tools: professionals consider many operational tools (such as registration forms, information leaflets and medical records) that they use on a daily basis as exclusive, being rooted in a heterosexual family model.

ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS:

POLAND NATIONAL REPORT

1. Introduction

Poland is the largest country in the EU that does not recognise LGBT+ families in any capacity. LGBT+ couples cannot register their relationship in any way and co-parents do not have any parental rights. Moreover, the law does not recognise LGBT-phobic hate crimes based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and so LGBT+ citizens are not protected against hate crimes. The current social situation for LGBT+ people is thus very precarious, as they experience discrimination, exclusion and injustice on a daily basis. Furthermore, individual or organised actions and projects designed to tackle LGBT-phobic attitudes and behaviours are often met with hostility.

LGBT+ couples/families cannot:

- Refuse to give evidence against their partners;
- Pay taxes together (even though this is true of married couples);
- Adopt children jointly or adopt children born by their partners;

- Be legal guardians of their co-parented children and therefore they cannot make decisions on their behalf or represent them in front of the law or in health and education institutions. They also lack legally secured bonds with them;

- Use their health insurance to cover medical care for their partners and co-parented children;
- Take leave of absence from work in order to care for a sick partner or co-parented children, or decide upon the burial of their partners or co-parented children;
- Inherit from their partners or co-parented children without paying a high tax, even though tax relief is given to heterosexual families and close relatives.

This lack of legal recognition has a profound impact on the place of LGBT+ families in Poland and the professionals who work with them. It paralyses and constrains any social change towards a more inclusive society within which LGBT+ people might be treated as equal citizens. In this context, several civil societal attempts at cooperation have been made in recent years with professionals with the aim of introducing LGBT+ friendly policies and policy instruments. These should not be seen as systemic, but rather as partial and piecemeal solutions.

2. Methods

The assessment of needs was based on two different sources.

First, it was based on the results of the mixed- and multi-method research project, “Families of Choice in Poland” (FOCIP; 2013-2016; PI: Prof. Joanna Mizielińska), in which LGBT+ families acted as the primary informants regarding their daily lives in contemporary Poland. The assessment was based on their personal stories, collected during different stages of the project (53 biographical interviews and 22 focus group interviews with LGBT+ parents as well as children of LGBT+ parents in three age groups) and including 30-day observations of 21 LGBT+ families during the ethnographic stage of the project. At this point of the project we collected 146 interviews (21 biographical narrative interviews with couples, 21 interviews regarding significant pictures and/or objects, 41 interviews around the “family map”, 21 interviews regarding important places, and 42 final individual interviews), 630 online journal entries describing 30 days of participatory observation with 21 families, visual materials (comprising more than 100 photographs, 41 family maps and 21 maps marking the places of importance to families), and 21 ethnographic reports through fieldwork. In our analysis of these extensive data we focused on fragments in which our informants mentioned interactions

with institutions and different kinds of professionals.

The second source comprised information obtained from the key informants: therapists, teachers, psychologists, court-appointed guardians and medics. Most of the experts cooperated with Polish LGBT non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or participated in workshops on diversity management, and so they were not typical specialists. Given their awareness of LGBT+ issues, they were able to share their observations and reflections regarding professionals’ needs. Only the teachers constituted an average group, and they were interviewed about their attitudes and experiences towards LGBT people and LGBT+ families. The results were obtained from research about anti-discrimination in schools conducted at Gdansk University.

Additional information was derived from studies of future psychologists’ attitudes towards lesbians raising children together in the situation of child-focused intervention. This part of the project was conducted in 2014 using a sample of psychology students (N = 97) at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Wycisk, 2014).

Consequently, on the one hand the assessment of needs was based on information from the LGBT+ families themselves, and on the other from professionals working in Poland who meet or might meet LGBT+ families in their work.

3. Findings

Based on the analysis of the needs of families and professionals in four areas of professional help (education, law, health care and social work), we noted that most needs cannot be addressed without changing national legislation, which currently discriminates against LGBT+ families. Without the support of the law, professionals are either not motivated to facilitate more inclusive treatment of LGBT families in their work, or they are too afraid to do so. For instance, many teachers are afraid of losing their job were they to mention LGBT+ families in their teaching. In a similar vein, doctors who fail to obey the law by allowing the co-parent to decide about their child's treatment might also lose their job. What we consider as being best practices may thus put professionals in danger, because best practices can contradict some of the rules or institutional regulations in place.

In general, information regarding LGBT+ families living in Poland remains very poor. The majority of professionals did not receive any LGBT+ sensitive training during their education (see our report on curricula), and so they lack necessary knowledge about LGBT+ families. To make matters worse, they often lack interest in learning about their living situations and are not motivated (or are even discouraged) by the authorities and the present government. Furthermore, they are regularly unaware that even in their daily

practices they are meeting and serving LGBT+ families, as most refuse to disclose information about their familial situation with institutions (Mizielnińska, Abramowicz, & Stasińska, 2015). Of course, some professionals are open and care about obtaining up-to-date knowledge, which they usually find beyond the official training system by participating in workshops organised by LGBT+ organisations, or through self-education. Such individuals might be considered allies and potential partners or participants for LGBT+ training in the future.

Professionals require greater knowledge about the realities of the lives of LGBT+ families (family life, parenting practices, gender roles and challenges pertaining to a lack of legal and social recognition), further tools of how to work with LGBT+ families (sensitive language, awareness of one's own prejudices and heteronormative/monomaterial assumptions, knowledge about local and foreign best practices, and recognition of possible allies) and more contextual knowledge regarding the legal situation of these families, human sexual diversity and EU anti-discriminatory law. This information would enable them to fully understand the complexity of the social situation of LGBT+ families and to more adequately respond to their needs.

Furthermore, professionals require situated training whereby their knowledge could be combined with daily professional practices

serving LGBT+ families in different ways. This necessitates full acknowledgement that many of the needs of LGBT+ families cannot be addressed without changing existing legislation (especially regarding marriage equality and full parental rights) and institutional rules. Nevertheless, some good practices are feasible, which may help provide a response to LGBT+ families' needs to some extent, even if these are not presently recognised by the law. We believe that situated training is preferable to external training because:

- It treats professionals as active subjects rather than as a passive audience;
- It is focused on professionals who have already expressed interests and are open, and can thus become the catalyst in bringing about change in the future;
- It may be more attuned to their actual needs and the challenges they face;
- It may be less visible to the current right-wing government and Catholic activists who would most likely actively oppose it. At the same time it could be financed by EU or private institutions;
- It may be more attuned to professionals' working hours;
- It would not only provide them with required information and general knowledge, but also tools and more sensitive

language. For instance, they could learn how to speak in a more inclusive and sensitive way, and know where to seek allies;

- They could learn from one another and/or from local best practices, which will be identified at a further stage in the project.

In summary, although there is little hope that the legal and institutional situation of LGBT+ families will improve any time soon, we believe that some changes in the ways in which LGBT+ families are treated by professionals could be realised. This might include at the level of micro-practices and through adequate training that would provide them with up-to-date research and understandings of LGBT+ families' needs and experiences.

3.1. LAW

Legal providers are obligated to respect the law that discriminates against such families, as described above. Given that the juridical system in Poland has recently been taken over by the current conservative Law and Justice government, it is very difficult to imagine how legal providers who understand the difficult situation of LGBT+ families and who would be willing to help could be reached. Indeed, the legal tools are presently absent, and so legal loopholes might be

sought.

3.2. HEALTH CARE

It might be argued that health care providers operate in a similarly difficult situation. They must also respect the law, which states that:

- o Same-sex parents are forbidden from using fertility clinics as a couple. ART is only available to heterosexual couples. In order to use ART, LGBT+ families must travel abroad.
- o Co-partners/co-parents are not recognised as constituting a family. In practice, this means that:
 - They are often denied the right of being present during the birth of their children, or to see them after birth;
 - The co-parent cannot take care of any health-related issues regarding their children, such as vaccinations or visits to doctors, even where they have a letter of authority from the legal parent of the child;
 - In hospitals, partners, children and parents often face problems in visiting their dear ones where they are not legal kin, even if they have a letter of authority from the sick person or his or her legal representative (notarial

authority would help, but this implies extra costs and sometimes extra time). They may also be denied information regarding health-related matters concerning their partners/parents/children, and they cannot decide on these issues either.

3.3. SOCIAL WORK

Accordingly, the needs of LGBT+ families are not addressed within the social support system (social work). Given the lack of legal recognition, LGBT+ families tend to hide their non-normative character when applying for adoption or foster care. Indeed, they are forced to hide their sexuality and present themselves as single when applying for social benefits; alternatively, they do not apply for social benefits or foster rights out of fear. At the same time, social workers do not recognise same-sex families' experiences and their specific problems, instead presuming that they are heterosexual when consulting and mediating. However, and akin to legal professionals, they might be able to find loopholes in the system, such as by using the notion of "the closest person"¹ to include same-sex partners.

¹This notion is defined in Polish law. In addition to biological kinship and legal bonds (e.g. marriage), it also recognises "actual relations" (relacje faktyczne), which give access to certain rights.

² Regarding this aspect, we must highlight a methodological limitation. Access to the

3.4. EDUCATION

Given the lack of recognition of their parental rights, co-parents are excluded as parents by schools. According to the law, only legal caretakers are allowed to be recognised by educational institutions, which means that teachers and school personnel should not give co-parents any information about a child; moreover, they cannot take part in parental activities. This issue might be solved by a common agreement between both parents, but acceptance is contingent on the goodwill of the school's staff. We know that some schools (and especially private schools) are not very strict about this issue in their internal policies, whereas others do not accept co-parents at parent-teacher meetings and in other situations.

Other identified issues include:

- o Within curricula and textbooks:
 - No information about LGBT+ families exists in school textbooks and curricula prepared by the right-wing, xenophobic and LGBT-phobic government;
 - Often no alternatives to Catholic religion classes and their LGBT-phobic content are provided;
 - Exercises about families do not include family diversity.
- Rather, their content is highly heteronormative;

- Content in some classes is very LGBT-phobic, such as in religion classes and introduction to family life where programmes are based on the teachings of the Catholic Church;
 - No programmes that prevent bullying based on LGBT-phobia exist.
 - o In family-school relations:
 - Applications to schools and preschools do not recognise same-sex parents, nor families with more than two parents nor transgender parents;
 - No promotion materials that welcome LGBT+ families exist. Relatedly, many LGBT+ families choose private schools (where they can afford them) because they expect attitudes to be more tolerant there;
 - LGBT+ families largely hide their familial situation; indeed, only 14% of teachers of children raised by LGBT+ parents know about their familial situation (Mizielnińska et al., 2015);
 - LGBT+ co-parents are not recognised by school or preschool employees as constituting actual guardians of children at parent-teacher meetings and during day-to-day communication.
- In summary, most of the needs of LGBT+ families cannot be

addressed due to the risk posed to professionals, as they would be required to break the law or at the very least tread a fine line. Nevertheless, in the four aforementioned spheres, a small part of the needs of LGBT+ families could be addressed by changing the mentality of professionals, including the sensitivity of their language, which in turn might help re-shape local rules of treating clients in legal, health care, social care and educational institutions. However, it is important to note that changing these rules would require the political will of local stakeholders, impossible without a change in legislation and the currently hostile tone of public discourse. Therefore, changing rules could be applied only at the local, micro-level of practice in certain institutions, or in the work of particular professionals.

This may be achieved via the following means:

- Knowledge and training regarding LGBT+ families might motivate legal providers, and especially those who advocate and represent LGBT+ families, to better understand their legal situation and challenges (i.e. LGBT+ parents fear they will lose custody over their children following divorce and do not fight for alimony or shared custody);
- Knowledge and training about sexual diversity may reduce the mistreatment of LGBT+ clients, whose sexuality is

widely perceived as a disease by health care providers. It could also help them explore and fight their own hidden prejudices;

- Knowledge and training about the diversity of families might facilitate recognition of the particular problems faced by LGBT+ families when meeting social care workers or psychologists/psychotherapists. It could help them use more sensitive language and overcome heteronormative assumptions;
- A guidebook focusing on social workers' and teachers' needs (including information concerning where and from whom potential clients might receive help, basic information about LGBT+ issues, LGBT+ organisations and their activities, and definitions of all important terms) could help them in their daily practice;
- Knowledge and training regarding LGBT+ families may open the possibility of prospective foster/adoptive LGBT+ parents being judged using similar criteria of parental competences, or to apply for social benefits;
- Knowledge and training about LGBT+ families (such as parenting and gender roles) could help schools become better prepared in protecting children raised in LGBT+

families from bullying and LGBT-phobia, and inspire them to promote openness towards all kinds of social diversity and anti-discriminatory practices. This might help create an atmosphere in which children will not be fearful of expressing their family situation, promote a school environment that encourages LGBT+ parents (and their children) to be "out", and facilitate the discussion of family diversity and LGBT+ issues in the classroom.

- Furthermore, financial support for projects focusing on these issues by legal NGOs such as the Polish Society of Anti-Discrimination Law (PSAL), or other human rights-focused organisations working with LGBT+ clients/families, is required.

However, at a larger scale, these changes are only possible if professionals were to stand against governmental recommendations that oppose liberal programmes, family diversity and anti-discriminatory politics and training. As previously illustrated, changes can only happen at the micro-level of individual practices of particular legal, health care, social care and educational providers, who may also be at risk when applying them in their daily work. The creation of alternative non-governmental/private health care, social care and educational services, which are more open and inclusive, is required.

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ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS: SPAIN NATIONAL REPORT

1. Introduction

The Spanish legal frame recognises same-sex marriages and families, the rights of trans* people to change their inscription in the civil registry according to their chosen gender and name, as well as lesbian and single women's access to assisted reproduction technologies, including reception of oocytes from partner (ROPA). From 2006, Act 14/2006 (Ley 14/2006, de 26 de mayo, sobre técnicas de reproducción humana) introduced the possibility of fertility preservation, i.e. cryopreserving gametes that could be used in future fertility treatments. This option may be used by women delaying childbearing until late adulthood or undergoing oncological treatments that might compromise their fertility, as well as trans people who can 'freeze' their sperm or eggs before going through hormonal treatments or surgery, so that they might have biological children in the future. Assisted reproduction options for gay couples are more limited, as Spanish law does not allow surrogacy agreements. Nevertheless, an increasing number of gay men (as well

as heterosexual couples) travel abroad to have offspring through surrogacy in other countries, especially in the USA and Canada.

In general terms, the level of acceptance of LGBT+ people and families is among the highest in Europe. Indeed, according to the Eurobarometer 2015, 87% of Spaniards believe that homosexual relationships are not wrong, and 84% support the argument that same-sex marriages should be allowed throughout Europe. Eight-one per cent declared that they would be comfortable with a work colleague being gay, lesbian or bisexual, and 78% with a transgender or transsexual colleague. However, prejudices and misconceptions about homosexuality and transgender people have fuelled intolerant attitudes and behaviours towards this community. Although the influence of the Catholic Church weakened after General Francisco Franco's dictatorship, some bishops have at times made homophobic and transphobic statements in public, while some fundamentalist groups continue to undertake polemical public campaigns against gender diversity. For instance, in 2017 the Christian organisation Hazte Oír (Make Yourself Heard) emblazoned a bright orange and white bus with anti-transgender messages on a nationwide tour (Bertrand, 2017; Devereux Taylor, 2017). Indeed, the slogans on the bus read "Boys have penises, girls have vulvas. Do not be fooled" and "If you are born a man, you are a man. If you are a woman, you will

continue to be one". The bus campaign drew widespread criticism and was ceased after activists, trade unions and Madrid City Council united against it. Such messages aim to shape public debate and ultimately reverse LGBT+ rights.

Legal, social, institutional and professional practices do not immediately change following reforms to the law. The lack of protocols to effectively include family diversity in public and private services renders it dependent on the will and personal tools and skills of professionals.

2. Methods

In order to identify needs in professional training regarding LGBT+ families, several sources were used. First, scientific literature and data attained through the team's previous research projects were reviewed, including interviews and focus groups with same-sex families.

Accordingly, a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were conducted with professionals from different areas, including the law (lawyers and civil registry staff), social work, education (teachers at primary and secondary schools), health care (nursing, psychiatry and general medicine practitioners) and psychology. Finally, the information was extended (particularly in relation to families with

trans parents) using telephone interviews with LGBT+ activists and LGBT+ parents.

3. Findings

Although the Spanish legal frame is one of the most inclusive in Europe regarding LGBT+ families, heteronormativity continues to pervade professional and institutional practices. Professionals report a lack of training on LGBT+ issues in their formal education. Some claim to feel unprepared when first encountering LGBT+ families, and seek information or specific training in LGBT+ issues, especially in the area of psychology.

Moreover, LGBT+ parents state that even though the legal frame today recognises their families, a long path remains to them feeling fully included in professional and institutional practices. The assumption of heteronormativity and the lack of specific training and clear regulations on how to implement the rights endorsed by law, as well as the pervasiveness of myths and prejudices, often results in discrimination and/or their invisibility.

The identified needs of training for professionals can be grouped in four areas:

- Basic knowledge about LGBT+ people and LGBT+ families;

- Greater in-depth knowledge according to the professional field in order to adequately attend to the specificities of LGBT+ families;
- Tools to adapt services and practices in an inclusive way;
- Skills to address diversity in multiple dimensions.

3.1. Basic knowledge regarding LGBT+ people and LGBT+ families

In many professional services there is a presumption of family heteronormativity, which causes LGBT+ families to feel excluded or marginalised. Same-sex parents report their discomfort when constantly asked the names of the mother and father in situations such as enrolling their children in a school (or any other activity), as well as first appointments with health services. It is generally assumed that the mother is the one who gave birth, and that parents and children are necessarily genetically related, even though this is not always the case.

Basic knowledge concerning LGBT+ families and the diversity of procedures that exist to having children (such as adoption, assisted reproduction and surrogacy) is required in order to acknowledge their existence and fight stereotypes and prejudices. It is also important to provide basic information regarding gender identity, gender expression, gender role and sexual orientation, as well as transgender

people, for whom prejudices and lack of information remain particularly acute issues.

3.2. Knowledge according to the professional field

Myths and prejudices about LGBT+ people and LGBT+ families result in different forms of discrimination or pathologisation, such as regarding educators, health professionals and psychologists who often attribute any behaviour perceived as being inappropriate as due to a lack of mother/father or to having a trans parent. In a similar vein, prejudicial ideas about the perceived inability of LGBT+ parents to raise children sometimes occasionally instigates social workers to consider LGBT+ people as being unsuitable to adopting children or to becoming foster parents.

Evidence-based knowledge regarding children raised in LGBT+ families would help put an end to such unsubstantiated claims. Both psychology and health professionals report a need for specific training about LGBT+ people (especially trans people), as well as information regarding the resources that are available for their information.

On the other hand, although the Spanish legal frame recognises the right of transgender people to change their documentation according to their chosen gender and LGBT+ marriages and families, professionals working in the legal field, as well

as those working in the civil registry, are not always aware of the norms and protocols to be applied, and some offer erroneous information regarding how certain rights are exercised. For instance, some lesbian couples report receiving misleading information from lawyers, or are even denied the inscription of the non-gestational mother being the legal mother in the civil registry. Specific training on the rules and procedures to guarantee rights that are recognised by legislation is required to avoid such situations.

3.3. Inclusive tools

Parents and professionals alike highlight a lack of available tools to working with LGBT+ families and to ensuring that everyone feels welcome regardless of either their own or their parents' sexual orientation and gender identity. Many forms in professional services for families and schools are designed for heteronormative families, as they assume that both a father and mother will be present. Moreover, schools generally lack instructional materials that reflect family diversity.

Furthermore, the heteronormative family model is so prevalent that many families feel excluded by school practices such as celebrating "Mother's Day" or "Father's Day", or asking children to undertake school assignments such as family trees with templates

that only reflect the traditional family. In the same way, teachers express difficulties in answering students' questions about LGBT+ families and the ways in which LGBT+ people become parents. On the other hand, professionals must incorporate inclusive vocabulary that does not assume heteronormativity. For example, in the health field, same-sex parents report considerable discomfort with the use of gender-marked terms such as "wife" and "husband" in instances such as prenatal classes.

3.4. Skills to address diversity

There remains the need to develop skills in different professional fields in order to avoid distrust and develop respect. Assertive language and an empathetic and respectful attitude are necessary to dealing with diversity pertaining to issues such as family composition, reproductive choices, sexual orientation and gender identity. Understanding the ways in which different dimensions of inequality (including gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, class, ethnicity and nationality) intersect would permit the development of necessary competencies in order to make every family and child feel included and welcome.

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ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC CURRICULA



ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC CURRICULA

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The work developed within Italy, Poland and Spain highlights certain shared experiences across the three countries, while other points can be considered points of differentiation that require the development of context-specific training content, methodologies and strategies. The main themes are summarised below. For detailed supplementary information, the reader can refer to the national sections.

- In all three countries is a general formal acceptance of the main EU statements and directions that support diversity and non-discrimination. Nevertheless, such formal declarations of intent often remain unimplemented at the local level, and do not offer any tools for their application in operational terms.
- In all three countries, we registered a general lack of LGBT+ issues in the available documentation.² In most cases, LGBT+

topics are introduced as optional subjects and they are often placed within pathological rather than diversity frames.

- In general terms, Italy, Poland and Spain differ in their academic interest in feminist, gender, LGBT and queer studies. Distinctive national histories and political conditions have shaped different traditions of these kinds of studies in academia and their connections with the activist environment, affecting their current diffusion and circulation in each country.

- Although in Poland and Italy the absence of LGBT+ issues in syllabi may constitute a strategy designed to protect individuals from homophobic environments, in Spain a significant degree of invisibility in the curricula appears to be connected with the effect of normalisation following the achievement of legal recognition of non-heterosexual families.

- There seems to be a gap between what is officially declared, and social practice. Some lecturers (many of whom are likely committed to LGBT+ rights and/or diversity research) address LGBT+ issues in their classrooms, but such content remains invisible in official syllabi. Thus, sensitive researchers play a crucial role in introducing and developing such issues in academic contexts. However, without establishing further

² Regarding this aspect, we must highlight a methodological limitation. Access to the documents (ranging from governmental acts to syllabi) was attained via the Internet, and in all of the countries we registered considerable variability in the materials made available online among universities as well as across courses at the same university.

institutional bonds, personal initiatives are insufficient for massive training, as such topics remain treated as niche knowledge.

- In all three countries, a lack of formal training is being counteracted by NGOs and especially the families' associations themselves, as they help educate professionals.

ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC CURRICULA: ITALY NATIONAL REPORT

1. Introduction

In the context of Southern Europe, Italy represents a peculiar situation regarding the legal recognition of non-heterosexual relational claims and in terms of counteractions to homophobia and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

In spite of regular warnings from the European Union and pressure imposed by numerous groups and LGBT rights advocates, same-sex unions were only recognised in May 2016 following over a decade of parliamentary debate. Moreover, a law that recognises homophobia as an aggravating circumstance in hate crimes remains absent.

Beyond the legal framework, public and political discourse continues to be occupied by a notion of the natural family fostered by Catholic ideology and defended by political parties across the spectrum. The centrality of the traditional family and traditional gender roles constitute profoundly conservative cultural constructs that came to represent an internationally renowned trait of Italian culture, and reduced the possibility of carving out space for different

forms of relationships, families and parenting. This does not mean that any change has occurred: activists and NGOs have worked hard to challenge stereotypes and prejudices, and gay, lesbian and trans people and families have achieved an unprecedented degree of visibility in public discourse. However, such bottom-up change has rarely reached the institutional level and challenged institutional practices and knowledge.

This relative lack of change at the institutional level also affects universities. Even if society and family practices are rapidly changing, academic research and university degrees struggle to incorporate this new knowledge. While in some countries (especially Nordic or Anglo-Saxon countries) LGBT studies represents an established field of research and teaching, the Italian academic situation (in which gender studies is also poorly institutionalised) lags far behind. Moreover, the last five years have seen growing attacks by right-wing parties and conservative Catholic associations and groups on what has been termed *ideologia del gender* (gender ideology) and *teoria del gender* (the theory of gender), loosely referring to any educational attempt to include explicit references to the social construction of gender, homosexuality, homophobia and family diversity in educational programmes. Although these attacks primarily concern compulsory education (from pre-school to high school), the

general social climate has also affected the academic environment and has stimulated public debate regarding whether certain research and teaching subjects can be considered legitimate within the university.

In the policy documents and guidelines of the Ministry of Education and Research regarding the above degrees, the only reference made to sexual orientation and discrimination can be found in the Ministry Decree for the training of prospective teachers, which mentions the analysis and management of bullying and homophobia as key educational aims.³ In addition to this Decree, the National Strategy to prevent discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, which was implemented between 2013 and 2015, merits attention. Adopted by Ministerial Decree, the LGBT National Strategy⁴ was defined by the National Office against Racial Discrimination (UNAR) (which in 2010 extended its mission to include the removal of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity) in collaboration with the Council of Europe. The strategy addressed four areas of intervention – media communication, education, law enforcement agencies and work – and

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<http://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/611956/allegato+al+D.M.+del+10.8.2017+n.616.pdf/29e23102-1022-4710-a0e4-d971d95a73dc?version=1.0>

⁴ <http://www.unar.it/cosa-facciamo/strategie-nazionali/strategia-nazionale-lgbt>

envisaged training to the management of the relevant Ministries of Education and Research, Interior, Defence and Work and Welfare. However, it has been only partially implemented and has not been renewed in the last three years. Moreover, the area of education has proved to be the least developed of the four due to political debate regarding of these topics in the realm of training, teaching and research.

2. Methods

Curriculum assessment was undertaken in five of a total of 68 public universities. Of course, this is not a representative sample, but the institutions scrutinised were selected through three theoretical criteria in order to include paradigmatic examples of the diversity of the Italian academic landscape. More precisely:

1. Size: comprising small, medium-sized and large universities;
2. Geographical location: both northern and southern as well as metropolitan and provincial universities;
3. Age of foundation: both historic and new.

According to these criteria, the sample consisted of:

- University of Milano Bicocca, a northern, medium-sized university in a metropolitan area, and founded in the 1990s;

- University of Bologna, a large northern university in a medium-sized city with a longstanding tradition;
 - University of Parma, a small northern university in a medium-sized city with a longstanding tradition;
 - University of Roma La Sapienza, a large university in the capital city with a longstanding tradition;
 - University of Napoli Federico II, a large southern university in a metropolitan area with a longstanding tradition;
- Within these five universities, curricula and syllabi in the areas of Education, Social Work, Nursing, General Medicine, Psychology and Law were analysed. Both undergraduate (laurea triennale) and graduate (laurea magistrale) degrees were considered, alongside Higher Education training courses (corsi di perfezionamento, master) where applicable.

Analysis was largely conducted through desk research, by analysing the educational plans (piani di offerta formativa) and syllabi of each course of each degree via the universities' websites. A set of key words was used to assess the documents: homosexuality, gender identity, homophobia, discrimination, same sex families and family diversity. Even if the specific focus of the assessment was on LGBT-headed families and family diversity, we added other words connected to sexual orientation and discrimination in order to widen

the research and to grasp any other related topics that could be useful for developing an understanding of the extent to which prospective professionals in the selected fields engaged with LGBT+ issues. Where required, key informants (namely colleagues working in the selected universities) were contacted to consult the data gathered and to ask for additional clarification in cases where the information available on the Internet was insufficient to conducting the analysis. We identified two criteria for assessment: explicit reference to LGBT-related issues and same-sex families in the syllabus (such as in terms of aims of knowledge and competencies to be developed); and the presence of mandatory readings on LGBT-related issues and/or LGBT-headed families.

3. Findings

In the universities sampled, discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity are partially taken into account at the organisational level thanks to the work of the university committees of guarantee (CUGs) regarding equal opportunities, workers' well-being and preventing discrimination in the workplace. For instance, alias identities according to one's chosen gender are available for

trans students in four of the universities analysed⁵ (all but Roma La Sapienza) and most of the CUGs monitor discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as fund awareness-raising campaigns on these issues. However, while LGBT+ issues are slowly becoming relevant at the organisational level, little reference is made to LGBT+ studies and family diversity issues in the curricula of all the universities analysed.

Given the absence of a national framework developed by the Ministry of Education and Research, the situation on curricula varies greatly among universities and among departments within the same university. Generally speaking, the training offered on this topic remains very poor in all disciplines and throughout the universities, ranging from a maximum of one course dealing with LGBT-related issues to none at all. References to trans-parenting and trans-headed families are lacking in all of the universities and degrees analysed.

Two key elements are worth mentioning as overall comments: the presence or absence of LGBT+ related issues, family diversity and LGBT+ headed families is highly contingent on individual scholars' commitment to the topic in their own research. Consequently, in departments where the presence of a committed professors is more significant, a larger number of courses are devoted to these issues or

to general courses (like “Sociology of the Family” or “Pedagogy of the Family”) that refer to LGBT+ headed families among other forms of family. Conversely, in those universities where no professor deals with these topics, no reference is made. This means that future professionals in the fields of education, social work or nursing will develop very different levels of competency in terms of the inclusion of LGBT+ headed families, ranging from having never dealt with the issue during their careers to having studied ad hoc theories and tools for inclusion. Although the training offered within the curriculum is underdeveloped, almost all universities do organise extra-curriculum activities that tackle LGBT+ headed families and related issues. However, conferences and seminars are organised for academics and the general public, rather than for students. As for the curriculum, events are mostly organised in places with committed professors.

Education, social work and psychology represent the degrees in which curricula are more inclusive of LGBT-related issues and family diversity, whereas nursing, general medicine and law can be considered less inclusive. In the following sections, a description of the findings for each area of study is presented.

3.1. EDUCATION

The field of education includes BA degrees for educators in Early Childhood Education, MA degrees for teachers in primary education

⁵ <https://universitrans.it>

and MA degrees in Pedagogical Studies, but no significant differences are worth mentioning among the degrees. References to LGBT+ related issues, LGBT+ headed families and family diversity can only be found in courses such as “Pedagogy of the Family” and “Pedagogy of Differences”. In some cases (University of Milano Bicocca and University of Roma La Sapienza), family diversity and the social construction of family constitutes part of the syllabus, and the skills required to negotiating such diversity are mentioned among the competencies to be developed, yet none of the readings explicitly address same-sex families. In the case of the University of Bologna, the topic is addressed in the syllabus and is included in mandatory readings.⁶ The course of “Pedagogy of Difference” at the University of Parma does not refer to same-sex families, but addresses homosexuality and homophobia as relevant topics of the syllabus, while mandatory readings on the topic are also included.⁷

3.2. SOCIAL WORK

In both of the BA and MA courses on social work, references to LGBT+ related issues and same-sex families can be found, especially in the

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<http://www.psicologiaformazione.unibo.it/it/corsi/insegnamenti/insegnamento/2017/386496>

⁷ <https://www.unipr.it/ugov/degrecourse/166011>

courses of “Sociology of the Family” and “Psychology of the Family”. The course of “Sociology of the Family” at the University of Milano Bicocca mentions the transformation of the family in contemporary society and family diversity, but its main focus is placed on the transformation of gender and parental roles, rather than same-sex families. The course on “Psychodynamics of the Family” at the University of Parma mentions family diversity and includes an optional reading on the topic. The course of “Sociology of the Family” at the University of Bologna explicitly mentions LGBT-headed families in the syllabus and includes optional readings on the topic. Moreover, the permanent workshop on “Minor and Justice” addressed to BA students explicitly engages with same-sex families and the procedure of stepchild adoption through readings, meetings with key informants and case study working groups. In the degrees in social work at the University of Roma La Sapienza and Napoli Federico II, no reference to LGBT-related issues and same-sex families can be seen.

3.3. PSYCHOLOGY

In the realm of Psychology, references to LGBT-related issues and same-sex families can be found in an array of courses. Within the curriculum of “Psychology of Typical and Atypical Development” of

the University of Roma La Sapienza, the course “Psychology of Parenting and Family Relations” makes explicit reference to same-sex parenting, including mandatory readings on the topic, while within the curriculum of “Dynamic Psychopathology of Development” the course on “Techniques of Clinical Observation and Assessment of Families” refers to “new families”, albeit within a section on dysfunction in the family. The other five degrees in Psychology offered by the University of Roma La Sapienza do not make any reference to family diversity, same-sex families, sexual orientation or gender identity. The postgraduate school on “Clinical Psychology” includes a course on “Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity” that explicitly addresses same-sex parenting in both the syllabus and the mandatory readings. The University of Milano Bicocca offers six degrees in the realm of psychology, two at undergraduate and four at postgraduate level. Within the postgraduate degree on “Psychology of Development and Educational Context”, the course on “Psychodynamics and Parenting Assessment” makes a general reference to family diversity in the syllabus, but no readings on same-sex parenting are included. Similarly, within the postgraduate degree on “Social and Economic Psychology”, the course “Psychology of Differences and Inequalities” mentions sexual orientation in the syllabus, but the readings largely deal with gender differences and

inequalities. At the University Federico II of Napoli, within the Master’s degree in Clinical Psychology, workshops in community and clinical psychology involve a section on “new families” such as same-sex-headed families, but no specific readings are included. Accordingly, within the undergraduate degree in Psychology, the course of “Pedagogy of Family Relationships” explicitly mentions family diversity and same-sex families in the syllabus, and includes one optional reading on the topic. At the University of Parma, within the undergraduate degree of “Psychology of Clinical and Social Intervention”, the course on “Psychology of Family Relations” explicitly addresses same-sex parenting in the syllabus and includes mandatory readings on the topic. Among the BA and MA degrees in Psychology offered at the University of Bologna, no reference to LGBT-related issues and same-sex families was found.

3.4. NURSING

In the Nursing and Obstetrics degrees at the University of Bologna, Parma, La Sapienza of Rome and Federico II of Napoli, no reference is made to LGBT-related issues and same-sex families. At the University of Milano Bicocca, within the graduate degree in “Obstetrics”, the “Human Sciences” course provides a sub-course of “Foundations of

Social Psychology” that makes reference to stereotypes, prejudices and gender differences.

3.5. GENERAL MEDICINE

In the Medicine degrees at all of the universities sampled, no reference is made to LGBT-related issues or to LGBT-headed families.

3.6. LAW

The degrees in Law offered by the Universities of Parma, Bologna and La Sapienza of Rome make no reference to LGBT-related issues and same-sex families or to discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. At the University of Milano Bicocca, a postgraduate course on “Human Rights” mentions sexual orientation in the syllabus, but no readings on the topic are included.

Within the postgraduate degree in Law at the University of Bologna, the elective course “Gender and the Law” is offered. The course deals with the neutrality of the law pertaining to differences in gender and sexual orientation, and addresses queer and LGBT studies in the curriculum and in the readings.

ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC CURRICULA: POLAND NATIONAL REPORT

1. Introduction

Although universities in Poland have offered gender, LGBT and queer classes since the 1990s, most have been based in Humanities and Social Science departments. LGBT topics have tended to be brought into curricula by individual researchers and academics interested in these issues rather than by systemic and planned changes in higher education. Disciplines such as General Medicine, Nursing and Law remain reluctant to introduce these topics into teaching practice. While some disciplines introduce general LGBT studies addressing basic topics such as coming out, homophobia and discrimination, specific attention to LGBT+ families represents a recent and largely absent phenomenon. Needless to say, many of the aforementioned 'pioneers' in LGBT research and didactics have experienced rather hostile attitudes in their own institutions.

Such attitudes are commonplace even today, within a conservative political climate that can influence the atmosphere at universities. The so-called "war on gender" does not only undermine

the goals, foundations and results of gender and queer studies in public debates, but also translates itself into physical attacks and protests during events or lectures. Moreover, some universities continue to permit the organisation of meetings and lectures with people who explicitly promote homophobic attitudes and support discriminatory solutions and actions such as conversion therapy. Indeed, the anti-LGBT approach is supported by the current Minister of Higher Education in Poland, who shortly after acceding to the office in 2015 stated that he was going to remove "any gay and lesbian journals" from the index of ranked scientific journals.⁸ Similar standpoints have been expressed by other politicians of the ruling party. Gender, queer and LGBT researchers and teachers, who may be deemed "at risk", occasionally lack adequate support from their own departments. Moreover, a conservative NGO recently issued a letter asking universities to provide a list of researchers teaching so-called "gender ideology", with the aim of publicly condemning such practices. Gender equality plans, diversity programmes and anti-discriminatory actions are very rare at Polish universities. Furthermore, young researchers, who are often more amenable to introducing LGBT issues in their curricula, often experience a

⁸ <http://wyborcza.pl/1,75398,19198390,minister-gowin-reforma-nauki-i-szkolnictwa-wyszczego-zaboli.html> Accessed: 27.08.2018.

precarious employment situation in academia, further hampering the development of LGBT-inclusive curricula.

It is worth mentioning that the situation of gender and LGBT studies differs significantly among universities in Poland. This is reflected in the following findings from our study. While some universities, especially those located in the largest cities, have developed rather rich (yet somewhat ephemeral) study programmes and have organized highly regarded scientific events including conferences and workshops in the area of LGBT issues, smaller institutions rarely provide students with any classes on such topics, resulting in graduates, future teachers, nurses, doctors and lawyers who lack any dedicated space to educate themselves about LGBT persons in general, let alone LGBT+ families more specifically. Given this context, some higher education and research centres undertake advanced and scientifically regarded research projects on LGBT issues, whereas in others there is no research in this field at all. Regarding research on LGBT+ families, a degree of attention has been paid in recent years, such as the complex project “Families of Choice in Poland” on LGB families and earlier research on lesbian motherhood (e.g. Mizelińska, 2009).

No legal regulations exist with respect to the presence of LGBT or LGBT+ families’ issues in curricula, and there is also an absence of

anti-discriminatory laws that explicitly tackle discrimination based on sexual orientation in higher education. Nevertheless, four main legal documents should be taken into consideration when discussing equality and equal rights in higher education in Poland:

1. The Constitution of the Republic of Poland (1997), which in Article 32 guarantees equal treatment by public authorities to everybody: “All persons shall be equal before the law. All persons shall have the right to equal treatment by public authorities”. Moreover, as Article 70, paragraph 4 states: “Public authorities shall ensure universal and equal access to education for citizens. To this end, they shall establish and support systems for individual financial and organizational assistance to pupils and students. The conditions for providing of such assistance shall be specified by statute”.
2. The Labour Code (2003), which guarantees anti-discriminatory protection in employment, and by that implements the Employment Directive 2000/78/EC.
3. The Act of 3 December 2010 on the implementation of certain European Union regulations on equal treatment (Equal Treatment Law, 2011), which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment. Discrimination

on other grounds such as race, ethnicity and nationality in higher education is also prohibited.

4. The Act on Higher Education (2005) and The Act on Higher Education and Science (entering into force on 1 October 2018) both state that students should be educated with respect to human rights. They are also guaranteed the freedom of scientific research.

The current political situation calls into question the possibility of introducing specific anti-discriminatory policies and measures in the near-future

2. Methods

The sample consisted of three public universities' curricula: Warsaw University (UW) with Warsaw Medical Academia, Jagiellonian University (JU) with JU Medical College and Białystok University (UWB) with Białystok Medical College. They were selected on the basis of geographical location and size. Warsaw University is the central, capital city university, the Jagiellonian University is the oldest university located in Kraków in southern Poland, and Białystok University is located in eastern Poland in a city notorious for its powerful far-right movement.

The analysis of official documents and publicly available data was conducted. Information regarding actual curricula was accessed online through the departmental web pages or USOS (the system for student enrolment). The analysis was enriched by the researchers' own expert knowledge in the field as well as through consulting with scientists at certain universities. The curricula for the academic year 2017/2018 were investigated. The search was focused on the following key words: LGBT, queer, homosexuality, orientation, gender, trans, family diversity and family.

Although publicly available data were limited – indeed, many of the websites did not contain detailed curricula or lists of bibliographical references – we decided against contacting the universities to ask them about the topic owing to the ethical concern of the vulnerability of teachers and researchers tackling LGBT issues. Indeed, in recent years Central and Eastern European Countries (CEE) such as Hungary's gender studies departments have experienced considered criticism or have been closed down. Moreover, in Poland a letter sent by a conservative NGO requesting a list of scientists referring to gender studies was recently issued.

3. Findings

The academic curricula generally do address family issues but without officially embracing LGBT+ families. Nevertheless, pertaining to broader LGBT issues, we can observe trends of (1) medicalisation (official education regarding LGBT-related issues exists under the scope of sexology rather than cultural studies) and (2) pathologisation (e.g. the Law department at Białystok offers the course “Sexual Deviations”, the only official course tackling LGBT issues for Law students). Given the incompleteness of the information – the universities’ online resources often lack detailed descriptions of teachers, syllabi, literature and other materials – it was not always possible to assess whether homosexuality was mentioned as a deviation or as an expression of diversity. Moreover, the syllabi avoided the straightforward naming of LGBT issues by using umbrella terms such as “alternative family forms”, and so it is difficult to ascertain whether they tackle such phenomena.

The very organisation of the courses plays an important role, as most of those that tackle LGBT issues are not obligatory and do not constitute part of the annual programme of studies, instead appearing only on occasion. Where LGBT issues are tackled, they tend to be mentioned as part of a larger course; indeed, only a few separate advanced courses exist. As a result, only those students who

are engaged and personally search for such courses will encounter LGBT topics during their education. It is therefore difficult to attain in-depth, expert knowledge in the field through official education. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that the academic community around LGBT issues undertakes constant efforts to educate and create knowledge, such as by organising conferences like Queer Kinship and Relationships (IP PAN), Non-normative Family Practices (UW), Queer Strategies (UW) and Human Sexuality (UJ). The initiative to provide the courses often comes from inter-faculty studies programmes (e.g. “Gay literature”, “Dilemmas of LGBT Politics and Identity” and “Diversity Studies”) or student associations that organise non-compulsory activities (e.g. the meetings on transgender issues by the UJ Social Work Student Research Group at Queer UW, and the LGBT patient courses by the Medical Student Association IMFSA). Empirical research is conducted both by universities (e.g. the Center for Research on Prejudice) and NGOs (e.g. the Campaign Against Homophobia and Women’s Room Foundation), including an extensive study of LGB families that has been conducted at the Institute of Psychology within the Polish Academy of Sciences (Families of Choice in Poland). Although it is worth mentioning that academic journals exist in Polish and English, they are not recognised by the Polish parametric system for scientific publication (such as the

Journal of GLBT Family Studies), thus hindering publication. These activities demonstrate that learning about LGBT issues usually occurs outside of mainstream of higher education. Students extend their knowledge in this area by participating in the events and projects of NGOs or student associations. Given that it is mostly up to their own initiative, a certain will is required to study the topics, reflecting a high degree of personal exploration.

In some disciplines, there are qualified lecturers that could provide courses in LGBT topics, but they “officially” do not (at least LGBT issues are not included in the syllabi), most probably due to political reasons. Thus, informal practices have a crucial meaning: although the topic scarcely exists in official curricula, some teachers do refer to LGBT issues within other courses, such as in Sociology, Psychology, Literature and Medicine. Therefore, engaged scholars and students must act to produce knowledge and educate themselves and others.

3.1. EDUCATION

In Poland, teachers’ diplomas can be granted both to pedagogy graduates and to persons who graduated from subjects such as Philology, Literature, History of Art, Geography and Mathematics as majors. Consequently, many curricula are examined with a focus on

the Humanities. The results of the analysis demonstrate that few courses exist that tackle general LGBT issues in UW and UJ, but not UW. General pedagogy offers few courses that mention LGBT issues, e.g. within the course “Sexual Development and Health” there is a discussion on sexual orientations and attitudes towards orientations other than one’s own; in the course “The Sexological Problems of Youth and Sex Education”, an introduction of a definition of sexual orientation is provided; and the course “Family Knowledge” provides students with a discussion of different models of family life). However, in some cases it was not possible to distinguish the paradigm (diversity vs. pathologisation) that a certain class represented. For instance, the course “Social and Cultural Determinants of Sexual Behaviour” introduces the category of men who have sex with men (MSM), but in the context of sexual work, a separate lesson from sexual orientations.

It is worth highlighting that for years the Humanities and social sciences (especially Polish Philology, Sociology, Cultural Studies and English literature) constituted the areas in which LGBT and queer studies were taught (e.g. Queer Sociology and Gay Literature), hence future teachers were able to become educated about these subjects. It is likely that this situation remains true in the leading universities in the major cities.

3.2. SOCIAL WORK

LGBT issues are almost absent from the curricula, so future social workers lack opportunities to discuss any topics related to LGBT+ families. UJ and UWB do not address these subjects in official documents. UW introduces one course, “Work with Social Environment”, which mentions “LGBT theory”, while “Family from the Perspective of Challenges and Threats” dedicates some discussion to “homosexual families”. Despite not being present in official curricula, the family diversity, including LGBT+ families, is thought as a part of one course at UJ.

3.3. NURSING

The nursing curricula offer almost no information in official documents regarding LGBT issues. Non-obligatory courses mention homosexuality in courses such as “Human Reproductive Processes and Fertility Control” and, for midwives, “Sexological Issues and Care of Women and their Families”.

3.4. GENERAL MEDICINE

Medical studies in Poland do not provide students with proper education on LGBT+ family issues. Few examples of curricula that

include some LGBT issues to some extent exist, with none explicitly tackling the family topic. A sub-discipline of Medicine that offers students a window into LGBT issues is Sexology. Both the Warsaw and Jagiellonian Universities offer Sexology courses that examine topics such as gender identities, transgender and gender dysphoria, the psychology of LGBT persons, sexual orientations and minority stress. In addition, the Sexological Student Research Group at Warsaw Medical University includes LGBT issues and LGBT rights in its agenda.

3.5. PSYCHOLOGY

Some Psychology departments are relatively open to including LGBT topics in their curricula. A good example of such practice is the Institute of Psychology at JU, which offers several different courses on LGBT issues. Students have the opportunity to learn about and discuss topics like transsexuality (including information about the reproductive health of transgender people), sexual orientation (as part of the Human Sexuality course), psychological aspects of sexuality, gender and sexual diversity and psychosexual development. The institute also organises conferences on human sexuality, during which LGBT issues are very present. Although several courses concerning family/couple therapy at the aforementioned department exist, according to available information, none explicitly address

same-sex couples or families. Warsaw University offers a discussion on gender and sexuality only as an aspect of certain obligatory courses with a broad scope, such as “Development Psychology”. However, the topics are also examined during other facultative courses such as “Sexology”. Some of our informants working at WU mentioned that there is a degree of potential and willingness to offer more courses on the topic, but the lack of academic teachers employed able to lead the courses precludes any development. In terms of the final university studied, the UWB, no LGBT topics were found within the curricula.

3.6. LAW

Given that the research has revealed few examples of the presence of anti-discriminatory or human rights approaches in legal curricula, the common perception that Law departments in Poland are very conservative and portray a rather traditional approach towards notions of marriage and the family is difficult to dispute. In fact, the study documented only three courses in which LGBT issues are discussed with students: one for each university. One of these courses is focused on sexual deviations and is taught as part of Criminology (UWB), suggesting a degree of pathologisation. The other, taught at Jagiellonian University, is devoted to ethics and bioethics and

examines different social processes and practices from an ethical point of view. One of the topics concerns same-sex partnerships. The last one, taught at Warsaw University, is a non-obligatory course, during which students discuss legal aspects of sex and gender. Separate courses or workshops that address legal issues of LGBT+ families were not identified. It is interesting to note that more progressive and supportive legal actions for LGBT rights (including family issues) take place outside of the universities. Several different NGOs are working in the area of human rights and anti-discriminatory law, offering legal aid and advice to LGBT people.

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ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC CURRICULA:

SPAIN NATIONAL REPORT

1. Introduction

Spain can be considered one of the European countries that most profoundly recognises LGBT+ families. Same-sex marriage was approved in 2005 (Organic Law 13/2005). Two years later, the Act 3/2007 allowed trans people to change their name and sex in the Civil Register, and additionally permitted married lesbian women to be mothers of their wives' in vitro children without going through an adoption process. In addition, the current law on assisted reproduction techniques (Organic Law 14/2006) grants access to fertility treatments to all women, regardless of their sexual orientation or marital status. Moreover, several Autonomous Communities, such as Navarra, Basque Country, Galicia, Andalucía, Catalonia, Canarias and Madrid have their own laws to guarantee lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights and/or to eradicate homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. Some contain specific reference to universities. For instance, the Catalan Act 8/2014 states

that Catalan universities must “promote protection, support and research measures for the visibility of LGBTI people”.

At the national level, no explicit education policies exist regarding LGBT+ families and issues. The Organic Law 6/2001 of Universities (Ley Orgánica 6/2001, de 21 de diciembre, de Universidades) states that public and private universities must respect “the constitutional principles”, statal and regional norms, as well as “the rights and freedoms of teachers, students, and administration and services staff”. Although it notes that “all curricula proposed by universities must take into account that training in any professional activity must be carried out with respect for and promotion of Human Rights and the principles of universal accessibility and design for all”, it does not specifically refer to LGBT+ issues.

At the university level, no recommendations or specific policies incorporate LGBT+ topics into academic curricula. However, at some universities can be found action protocols and/or organisations that work for the non-discrimination of LGBT+ people inside the university. For example, the Master Plan of the Autonomous University of Barcelona includes among its objectives the implementation of social responsibility measures in various areas, one of which is gender equity. The Observatory for Equality is the body that carries out action plans in this sense, promoting equity and

supporting vulnerable groups such as LGBT+, among others. Following the Catalan Law 11/2014, the University has developed two protocols: one against sexual harassment and harassment based on sexual orientation, identity or gender expression; and a second that allows trans* and intersex persons to have their name changed in all university documents.

2. Methods

In order to assess the academic curricula in university education in relation to the contents offered regarding LGBT+ families, a sample of three universities was selected. In Spain there are 82 universities, 61% of which are public and 39% private, hence two public universities and one private were chosen. Each belong to one of the three autonomous communities with a greater number of universities (11 in Andalusia, 12 in Catalonia and 14 in Madrid). Geographically, they are situated in very different locations: one in the north, one in central Spain, and one in the south. Finally, in Spain there are 14 Catholic and/or Christian-inspired universities, hence it was desirable to include a Catholic university.

Thus, the three universities assessed were:

- University of Granada (Universidad de Granada)

This is a public university located in Andalucía, South Spain. It was founded in 1531 and has more than 60,000 students. It offers 89 Bachelor's degrees, 121 Master's degrees, 28 doctoral programmes and 100 complementary courses.

- Autonomous University of Barcelona (Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona)

This is a public university located in Catalonia in north-eastern Spain. It was founded in 1968 and has more than 40,000 students (and 3,700 teachers). It offers 88 Bachelor's degrees, 133 Master's degrees, 67 doctoral programmes and 602 postgraduate courses.

- Pontifical University of Comillas (Universidad Pontificia de Comillas)

This university was founded in 1890 as a seminary for the formation of priests. Since 1986 it has incorporated other university studies. It currently has more than 13,000 students and 1,700 teachers. It offers 36 Bachelor's degrees, five ecclesiastical degrees, 48 Master's degrees, 12 doctoral programmes and 25 specialisation programmes.

For each of the selected universities, the official syllabus 2017-2028 of the Bachelor's and Master's degrees, as well as summer schools and other courses, in the areas of Education, Social Work, Nursing, Medicine, Psychology and Law were analysed. First a search of the following key words was made in every syllabus: LGBT*, homosexual*, homofob*, trans, orientación sexual, identidad, familias, diversidad and género (LGBT*, homosexual*, homofob*, trans, sexual orientation, identity, families, diversity and gender). If one of these key words was found to be present, the syllabus content and bibliographic references were analysed.

Finally, some short interviews were undertaken with teachers and former students who had completed their studies in the past year.

3. Findings

Three different levels of reference to LGBT+ families' issues can be identified:

- LGBT+ families: LGBT+ families are specifically mentioned.
- LGBT+ issues: references are made to LGBT+ people, the diversity of sexual orientation and/or gender identities and sex/gender systems.

- Related topics: syllabi contain issues that may or may not be related to LGBT+ issues, such as family diversity, human diversity, gender studies and gender equity.

In general terms, few references to LGBT+ issues were found in the syllabi of the selected universities, and even less on LGBT+ families. Few references are made to LGBT+ families or issues in Bachelor's degrees, and when they are, they tend to appear in optional subjects. A greater number of references can be found in Master's degrees, both in relation to LGBT+ families and issues, as well as to family diversity and gender. Most findings point to related issues such as social diversity, human diversity, family diversity, gender studies and gender equity, and several subjects incorporate the study of "new family configurations" without specifying what these are and whether LGBT+ families are taken into account.

According to the teachers and students interviewed, LGBT+ families are at best mentioned when addressing family diversity, but very little information is offered regarding how they should be incorporated into professional practices. The main exception recalled was the Master's degree in Psychosocial Research and Intervention at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, which includes a four-hour session on LGBT families.

It is worth highlighting that the syllabi synthesise the content of each subject, which each teacher subsequently develops in their classroom. Thus, teachers could actually teach more about LGBT+ families than written in the syllabi. Moreover, some syllabi are quite specific, while others are far less detailed.

Psychology studies is the only field that includes LGBT+ families explicitly, as well as being the one that makes most reference to LGBT+ issues, both at Bachelor's and Master's levels. However, there a wide disparity can be seen among the three universities. In one (University of Granada), there is no reference at all, while the approaches in the other two vary from inclusive and normalising to pathologising. Medicine is the only field in which no references to LGBT+ issues are reflected in the syllabi. In Nursing and Law, a small number of issues such as gender identity and sexual orientation are considered, and always in optative matters and/or Master's degrees. Finally, in Social Work degrees and courses, numerous references are made to social diversity in relation to gender, class and ethnicity, as well as to "new family models", but not LGBT+ families more specifically.

3.1. EDUCATION

Information was gathered from the syllabi of the Bachelor's degree in Primary Education and Master's degrees in Teaching in Secondary Schools, Vocational Training and Language Centres, which are compulsory for teachers working in public official education. No direct mention of LGBT+ families was found. However, several references are made to issues that might be considered related and that may incorporate LGBT+ issues.

In the Bachelor's degrees' syllabi, numerous references are made to social diversity in terms of class, gender and ethnicity. Along the same lines, one of the basic learning competencies highlighted in several subjects is to acquire the necessary values and attitude to teach in an educational environment "subject to a diversity scenario". In addition, some syllabi include training in techniques to work on diversity in the classroom, thus promoting inclusive education. According to the compulsory and recommended bibliography in the syllabi, the importance of paying attention to students' diversity is usually understood in relation to diverse learning needs. On the other hand, there are different subjects where family diversity appears, such as "Education and Educational Environments", "School and Family" and "Planning, Research and Innovation". The historical evolution of the family, different lifestyles and parental educational styles are considered, but again it appears to be up to the teacher

whether LGBT+ families are included in any way. Issues pertaining to gender are present in various subjects, where sexual and gender stereotypes, the social construction of gender, coeducation, gender equity and respect for human rights in educational contexts are examined.

Accordingly, in Master's degrees exist topics related to diversity, family diversity and gender. In subjects such as "Society, Family and Education" and "Family and School", information is provided regarding contemporary family models. In spite of there being no direct reference to LGBT+ families, it is probable that some teachers mention same-sex families in their teaching. Topics such as diversity and equal opportunities for men and women, as well as "respect for the diversity of opinions, ways of being and doing" are also tackled in the syllabi.

3.2. SOCIAL WORK

Information was gathered regarding Bachelor's degrees in Social Work, as well as Master's degrees offered by the faculties of Social Work in all three universities. The academic curricula of the Bachelor's degrees do not include any explicit reference to LGBT+ issues. However, they contain topics related to gender studies and kinship, which may or may not include LGBT+ issues. For instance, the subject

"Anthropology" addresses kinship relations and gender and sex systems, while in "Feminist Perspectives and Gender Relations", anthropological theory is offered regarding the difference between gender, sex and sexuality. Basic learning competencies in the syllabi of various subjects include the development of "sensitivity to inequalities (gender, ethnicity/race, class, identity ...)" and "open and empathetic attitudes based on respect and recognition of diversity". In addition, respect for human diversity and gender equity are also considered important values.

Only the University of Granada offers Master's study in the field of Social Work, entitled Social Intervention in Immigration, Development and Vulnerable Groups. However, it makes no explicit reference to LGBT+ issues, even though social exclusion and non-discrimination are considered, including non-discrimination on the grounds of sex.

3.3. NURSING

In the Bachelor's degrees of Nursing, no reference to LGBT+ families has been found and LGBT+ issues are only mentioned in elective courses. The elective course of "Sexology and Preventive Aspects of Reproduction" contains a section on sexual difference and homosexuality, while the subject of "Imported Diseases and Sexually

Transmitted Infections” has one on sexual and gender difference. However, no recommended bibliography is mentioned on the topic, so the approach and content of the sections remain unknown. In the remainder of the subjects of the teaching plan, only “respect for the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and contexts” is mentioned.

Neither in the official Master’s degree studies nor in other postgraduate courses is any explicit or related reference to LGBT+ issues included.

3.4. GENERAL MEDICINE

Neither in the Degrees of Medicine nor in the Master’s degrees offered by the faculties of Medicine is any explicit reference made to LGBT+ issues, and there is also no mention of related topics such as family diversity or gender-related issues. In the subjects of “Medical Communication” and “Pediatrics” there is not even any reference to family diversity. In the same vein, the subject of “Obstetrics and Gynecology” does not contain anything related to gender identities or sexual orientations.

3.5. PSYCHOLOGY

As previously mentioned, in the field of Psychology there is a great disparity among the three universities. Whereas at the Autonomous

University of Barcelona can be found references to LGBT+ issues in compulsory subjects at both Bachelor’s and Master’s levels, the University of Granada makes no mention at all, and in the Pontifical University of Comillas, only the syllabi of elective subjects of the Bachelor’s degree and Master’s degrees refer to the topic.

The syllabi from the Pontifical University of Comillas reflect a biomedical, pathologising approach. In some of them, homosexuality is framed in the distinction between “normal and abnormal behaviour”, and several bibliographic recommendations address transsexuality and gender-identity issues as “sexual disorders”.

The Bachelor’s degree in Psychology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona is the only one of its type that offers information about LGBT+ families. Specifically, the syllabus of the subject “Childhood and Family in Contexts of Difficulties” (Infancia y familia en contextos de dificultades) includes explicit references to same-sex families, single parents and reconstituted families. References to LGBT+ issues can also be found in others subjects such as “Social Psychology in the Contemporary World”, where sexual and affective diversity is mentioned, as well as sex/ gender systems and social inequalities in the field of sexuality and gender. The subject of “Psychology of Collective Action” addresses the study of the movement for gender equality but also gender diversity.

In Master's degrees, the only one to include content on LGBT+ families and LGBT+ issues is the Master's degree in Psychosocial Research and Intervention at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, which includes a four-hour session on LGBT families as part of the optative module "Areas of Psychosocial Intervention. Inclusion and Diversity: Culture, Minorities and Genre". For its 2018-2019 edition, it will also include a session on "LGBTI policies and Activisms".

In contrast, the absence of any reference to sexual diversity is conspicuous in the subject "Intervention in Sexual and Couple Problems" of the Master's degree in General Health Psychology, whose approach, according to its syllabus, seems to be completely heteronormative.

3.6. LAW

At Bachelor's degree level, no explicit references are made to LGBT+ issues, although there are plenty of topics that could be related, such as family, kinship relations, marriage and filiation in the subject of "Civil Law". Some optative subjects such as "Gender and Law" do not include explicit references but do address related issues such as the law and "new family models".

In contrast, specific topics regarding LGBT+ families and issues can be found in the Master's syllabus. Indeed, as part of the Master of Fundamental Rights at the University of Granada, the subject "Equality and Non-discrimination" includes information regarding the protection of fundamental rights and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the EU.

This report has been produced by the six institutions developing the project “Doing Right(s): Innovative tools for professionals working with LGBT+ families” (2017-2019), co-financed by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union.

www.doingrights.eu

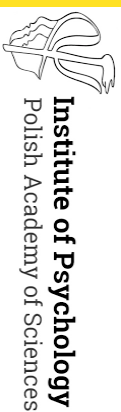
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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

DOIN
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working with LGBT families

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