

External evaluation of the project

**Creating Inclusive Spaces
through Human Rights Education and Alternative Learning Journeys
(Inclusive Spaces)**

External evaluator: Vera Juhász

March 28, 2024

INCLUSIVE SPACES



Content

- Introduction-----2
- Short summary of the project-----2
- Evaluation method-----4
- Findings -----5
 - A. Project content and activities (WP2, WP3, WP4)-----5
 - Milestones and deliverables -----5
 - Quantitative indicators-----7
 - Qualitative indicators -----8
 - Evaluation by work packages -----8
 - B. Internal project mechanisms (WP1)----- 16
- Conclusions ----- 18

Introduction

I have been mandated to carry out an external evaluation of the project *Inclusive Spaces: Creating Inclusive Spaces through Human Rights Education and Alternative Learning Journeys*, focusing on 3 tasks:

- Check the completion and quality of project activities and products
- Evaluate the internal project mechanisms
- Write a 20-page report on the results

This evaluation does not cover issues related to financial management, such as budgeting, distribution of funds, spending, invoicing, etc.

In the following, I will provide a short summary of the project, describe the method of my evaluation, present my findings, and finally, draw conclusions and sum up the results of my evaluation.

Short summary of the project

Four project partners: Amnesty International Hungary (hereinafter: AIHU), Háttér Society (hereinafter: Háttér), Labrisz Lesbian Foundation (hereinafter: Labrisz) and Rainbow Mission Foundation (or Budapest Pride, hereinafter: SZMA) (hereinafter jointly referred to as the project partners) received funding from the European Commission under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme for the project *Inclusive Spaces: Creating Inclusive Spaces through Human Rights Education and Alternative Learning Journeys* (in short: *Inclusive Spaces*; in Hungarian: *Befogadó terek*).

The project was launched in February 2022 and was planned to run for 24 months, but later the duration of the project was extended to 27 months.

The project objectives were the following:

- reduce negative attitudes towards and discrimination against LGBTIQ people in the workplace and in schools;
- encourage employers to create a safer place and appropriate policies for a more accepting and inviting workplace by sensitising and empowering them to reduce discrimination of LGBTIQ employees;
- raise awareness of society through the representation of the everyday experiences of LGBTIQ people;
- create a network of professionals to transfer knowledge within their networks.

The project partners planned to reach the above objectives by:

- making students in Hungary
 - become aware of the intersectional discrimination of LGBTIQ people and enable them to take actions to reduce bullying of LGBTIQ people;
 - recognize their own stereotypes and hostile attitudes towards LGBTIQ people;
 - become ready to reduce them;

- making teachers and other education professionals in schools such as social workers and school psychologist in Hungary
 - understand the root causes of gender based and LGBTIQ discrimination;
 - endow them with the necessary tools and knowledge;
- empowering employers and employees with the necessary skills to tackle bullying and discrimination in workplaces in order to create a safe place for LGBTIQ colleagues.

The project was divided into 4 work packages (WPs):

- WP1: Project management and coordination
- WP2: Learning journeys in schools and with educational professionals
- WP3: Learning journeys of employers and employees
- WP4: Communication and dissemination

The deteriorating political climate in Hungary made the realization of some previously planned project elements extremely difficult. There is an ongoing propaganda campaign launched by the governing party against LGBTIQ groups, NGOs, and independent media. School teachers are under heavy pressure, with their legal status and working conditions worsened and particular human rights (right to strike, right to privacy) curtailed recently. Extremist groups organized petitions and demonstrations specifically against LGBTIQ projects (asking head teachers not to let teachers participate in such trainings). Even a secretary of state expressed his worries about allowing such programmes in schools. A hate campaign by CitizenGo was explicitly attacking this project.

Act LXXIX of 2021 on taking more severe action against paedophile offenders and amending certain acts for the protection of children (hereinafter: propaganda law) bans access of minors to content that "depicts or propagates divergence from self-identity corresponding to sex at birth, sex change or homosexuality" contributed to this very negative developments. Due to these conditions, teachers, educators and even private persons became more likely to self-censor and avoid these topics.

AIHU has a wide array of partner schools previously welcoming NGOs to deliver human rights education classes, but even those schools made it clear that the LGBTIQ topic was too risky in this political climate. Labrisz reached out to numerous teachers through various channels, with very limited success.

Therefore, the project partners requested an amendment of the project in 2023, effective as of 12 July 2023. The modification mainly affected the content of WP2, the project duration and the reporting deadlines. The project partners decided to reduce the number of workshops in schools and find alternative ways (outside the formal education settings) to reach students and focus more on capacity building among teachers, other educators, youth workers to deliver the same messages and realize the objectives.

These capacity building activities include 'mini-trainings' for teachers: 90-minute sessions similar to the student workshops but delivered to teachers to allow them to have first-hand experience of the educational activities, so that later they could deliver such activities to their own students.

Activities planned and realized in the project:

- conduct research on the experience of LGBTIQ youth at school and LGBTIQ people in the workplace, and on the effects of the propaganda law on school and workplace climate;
- develop educational tools including a toolkit for teachers, a guideline for schools on bullying of LGBTIQ students, educational materials for offline training activities, and e-learning modules;
- train teachers and volunteer trainers on how to create an inclusive school environment;
- organize educational sessions and workshops for employers and employees on LGBTIQ-related issues;
- organize educational sessions and workshops for students;
- publish e-learning materials for students and employees;
- hold a project closing conference;
- present the project to the visitors of the Civil Village at the Pride March in 2022 and 2023.

Other activities (originally not planned, but realized):

- forum and workshop (networking events) for professionals,
- mini-courses for teachers,
- podcast.

Evaluation method

I have received from my contract partner, Háttér, all project documents as well as access to the online google drive folders used by the project partners for the project.

First, I read the grant agreement and the amended grant agreement to see the project objectives, milestones and deliverables with deadlines, as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators planned to be used to evaluate the success. I also have read the progress report submitted in February 2023.

Second, I looked at the google drive folders and files

- for documents to verify if particular project elements (tasks/milestones/deliverables) have been delivered;
- to see how activities are documented, and thus get an idea of how the work is organised internally.

Third, I looked at the tangible products: Toolkit for teachers, Guideline on safe place for LGBTIQ people in schools, flyers, Child Protection Policies, Dissemination and Communication Plan, two baseline studies, training materials; and checked their quality. I also checked whether products planned to be made accessible to the public were in fact available on the websites of the project partners as promised in the grant agreement.

Fourth, I registered for and completed the e-learning modules for students and workplaces.

Based on all the above, I compiled a list of questions to be answered by the 4 project partners to clarify issues I was unable to clarify myself with the help of the available documents.

Fifth, I sent my questions to AIHU, responsible for coordination.

Sixth, I conducted interviews with representatives of the project partners, 2 from Labrizs, 1 from AIHU, 2 from SZMA and 1 from Háttér.

Additionally, I attended one of the project coordination meetings to have an impression on the project mechanisms, and the closing conference, where I had an opportunity to see presentations of the project results and gain a hands-on experience of some project elements.

In the next section, I will present my findings.

Findings

In the following, I will present the results of my evaluation in two sections: A. project content and activities (WP1, WP2, WP3), and B. internal project mechanisms (WP1).

Regarding the project content, I will summarise the status of milestones and deliverables, and the quantitative and qualitative performance indicators. Then, I will discuss the results in each work package, also presenting my evaluation of the quality of the products (e.g. training materials, promotion materials, communication activities, etc.), and the opinion of the project partners on the success of particular project elements.

Regarding the internal project mechanisms, I will look at the documentation structure as well as the uploaded files on google drive, and the ways and effectiveness of coordination based on the personal interviews with the representatives of the project partners.

A. Project content and activities (WP2, WP3, WP4)

Milestones and deliverables

The project partners have met the milestones (except for those that will become due only in April 2024, when the project will end) and delivered most of the deliverables, as specified in the grant agreement, sometimes with a delay.

| No. | Milestone name | Means of verification | deadline | done |
|-----|---|--|---------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Baseline study published | Report published on the website of Háttér | Month9 = Oct 2022 | 01 Dec 2022 |
| 2 | Workshops for schools developed, and volunteer educators equipped to hold the trainings | Outline of the workshops, list of participants of the volunteer educators training | Month8 = Aug 2022 | 11 Sep 2022 |
| 3 | E-learning for students | Release of the course on Amnesty Academy | Month15 = Apr 2023 | 10 Jan 2024 |
| 4 | Guidelines on safe place for LGBTIQ people in schools | PDF document guideline made available on the websites of the project partners and electronically sent to all educational institutions in Hungary | Month18 = July 2023 | 31 Jul 2023 |

| | | | | |
|----|---|--|---------------------|-------------|
| 5 | Workshops and trainings evaluated | Evaluation report | Month27 = Apr 2024 | coming |
| 6 | Baseline study | Report published on the website of Háttér | Month4 = May 2022 | 31 Jan 2023 |
| 7 | Modular trainings developed | List of modules and its scope published on the website of Amnesty. Outline of the training modules (internal document) | Month10 = Nov 2022 | 28 Oct 2022 |
| 8 | E-learning course is ready | E-learning course is released on Amnesty Academy | Month18 = July 2023 | 14 Sep 2023 |
| 9 | Trainings evaluated | Evaluation report | Month27 = Apr 2024 | coming |
| 10 | End of communication and dissemination activities | Relevant KPIs to communication and dissemination: - 50.000 supporters and followers reached with project content - National coverage on the project throughout the project period - 40 participants in offline events, such as conference for multipliers or press conference | Month27 = Apr 2024 | coming |

| Deliverables (as in the amendment) and their status | status |
|--|-------------------------------|
| D1.1 Partners kick-off meeting | done |
| D1.2 Project coordination meetings | ongoing |
| D1.3 Progress report | done |
| D1.4 Final evaluation report | coming |
| D1.5 CPP | done |
| D2.1 Baseline study | done |
| D2.2 Trainings for teachers and educators | done |
| D2.3 16 workshops delivered | done |
| D2.4 Training and educational package | done |
| D2.5 E-learning module | done |
| D2.6 Toolkit for teachers | done |
| D2.7 Guidelines on safe place for LGBTIQ people in schools | done |
| D3.1 Comprehensive study on the lived experience of LGBTIQ people in the workplace | done |
| D3.2 Available training modules ready | done |
| D3.3 Delivering scoping workshops and trainings | done |
| D3.4 An e-learning module for employers and employees | done |
| D4.1 Dissemination and communication plan | done |
| D4.2 1000 printed posters and 3000 flyers to reach educational institutions | done, for more info see below |
| D4.3 Final conference for multipliers | done |
| D4.4 Press conference | cancelled |
| D4.5 Visibility in form of a separate tent during Pride March in 2022 and 2023 | done |

Quantitative indicators

The project partners defined a set of quantitative indicators, which was later amended to deal with the challenges in the local environment. The table below shows the plan and fact figures.

| Plan | Fact |
|---|--|
| 8 participatory scoping workshops targeting different employees and employers from the LGBTIQ community, reaching 64 employees and employers | 5 workshops, reaching 33 people |
| 13 trainings for teachers in 8 different cities in Hungary reaching 120 people (16 working hours: 8 hours offline + 5 hours online + 3-hour long offline closing session) | 13 training sessions, reaching 131 people |
| 2 trainings for volunteer educators (2 cities, with 20 participants) | 3 training sessions, reaching 31 people |
| 2 mini-courses (90-180 min) to experts to present the workshops and the methodology to more multipliers working with the target group | 5 mini-courses, reaching 58 people |
| 16 workshops (45 to 90 min) delivered to 250 students | 20 workshops reaching 316 students |
| Reach over 1000 students, directly or indirectly | Educators attending the closing conference claimed they had reached 3255 students in the past year |
| 20 modular trainings on LGBTIQ inclusion in the workplace in 8 cities to reach 200 employees and employers | 31 training sessions, reaching 325 people |
| E-learning course for schools developed, and through this reach 1000 students and teachers across Hungary within the first 2 years of the launch of the course | 77 enrolments by March 2024 |
| E-learning course developed for employees, with 1000 enrolments | 88 enrolments by March 2024 |
| 1000 printed posters and 3000 flyers to reach educational institutions | designed 3 different flyers and printed 1000 copies in total, plus 4 billboard posters |
| 1 press conference | 0 |
| 1 closing conference | 1 |
| 40 participants at the offline dissemination events | 105 participants |
| 3 press releases | 7 articles in online news outlets, 2 blog posts, and 4 radio interviews |
| 50.000 supporters to be reached with project content | 322 messages about the project content (in social media posts, newsletters, posts on own websites, articles in news outlets, radio interviews, blog posts, offline events) with a reach of 531.730 by March 2024 |

Not planned, but (soon to be) realized

| | |
|--|---|
| Forum for educators – networking event | 1 |
| Budapest, LIFT festival – networking event | 1 |
| Podcast episodes | 2 |
| Attendance/display at a human right educational conference | 1 |

It must be noted that the propaganda media mentioned and attacked this project 14 times.

Through the 3 offline networking events 105 professionals have been reached.

As the numbers indicate, the project partners have met most of the target numbers, and if not, they have made up for the unrealised project elements with alternative products. The e-learning modules were published with delays, the number of enrolments is low, but they have two years from the date of publication to meet the target numbers. For more details see section *Evaluation by work packages* below.

Qualitative indicators

AIHU usually uses the Kirkpatrick training evaluation model for the educational activities, and, as indicated in the grant agreement (Annex 1, Part B) this model was planned to be used in this project as well, and partners were supposed to measure all relevant aspects of change through participatory evaluation sessions.

I have not found a document on the qualitative indicators to be used. At the interviews, I asked the project partners about the qualitative indicators. It turned out that no systematic evaluation of performance against a set of qualitative indicators has taken place (yet). To evaluate the quality of the training sessions, they used verbal feedback at the end of every training course and sometimes paper-based feedback forms (some of which are available in the google drive folders). In addition to verbal feedback, they used the EU platform for feedback at the training session for employers and employees.

Evaluation by work packages

In the following, I will provide an overview of the content and performance of each work package, broken down by tasks (WP1 will be discussed later, in section *B. Internal project mechanisms*).

WP2: Learning journeys in schools and with educational professionals

The aim of WP2 is to create a more inclusive school environment for LGBTIQ students, through workshops and training courses for students and teachers. In this work package, the following tasks were identified:

T2.1 Baseline study on the school climate

- T2.2. Development and delivery of workshops for students
- T2.3 Development and delivery of training for volunteer educators and teachers
- T2.4 Creation of a HRE toolkit for teachers and educators
- T2.5 Creation of a guidebook for schools on practices that enhance inclusion of LGBTIQ students.
- T2.6 Development of e-learning module

T2.1 Baseline study on school climate

Two baseline studies were carried out in the project: one study among teachers and students (in WP2), and one among employers and employees (in WP3), both by an external contractor. Neither survey was representative. The study reports were posted on the project partners' websites in line with the grant agreement. It turned out, however, that there had been some problems with presenting the statistics, so Háttér had the reports fixed by the researcher and updated the reports.

The aim of the study on school climate was to gain an overview of the LGBTIQ community and LGBTIQ issues in school settings, and use the results as arguments for the need to make schools more inclusive, and as a source of information for the developers of the training courses in this WP and related communication activities. So this study was mainly for internal use. To reach a wide and diverse audience, invitations to fill out the questionnaire used for the study were posted and advertised in Facebook and Instagram, and sent in e-mails to schools and in newsletters.

The report gives a good overview of the results of the study, with informative diagrams and charts. However, sometimes it is hard to understand what the figures in the diagrams actually show without first reading the text, as many diagrams have no captions, and sometimes it is not clear what quantities are compared to calculate percentages. For instance, the report says that x% of LGBTIQ students have experienced verbal harassment because of their sexual orientation, but it is not explained whether that x% was calculated on the basis of the number of all LGBTIQ students in the survey, or only of those who were included in the sample because of their sexual orientation (and not for other reasons, e.g. because of their sex or gender identity).

The project partners found the baseline study useful (as I was told in the interviews). The trainers often referred to the statistics in the training sessions to underline the importance of the inclusion of LGBTIQ people, especially in today's political and social climate, and the need for empowering students and teachers to stand up against bullying. They used research data also in infographics for communication purposes.

T2.2. Development and delivery of workshops for students

The project partners AIHU and Labrisz have delivered 20 workshops in 5 different cities in Hungary (most of them in the capital city, Budapest), reaching 316 students.

A training offer was sent to all elementary and secondary schools (i.e. 2607 schools) in Hungary, and the training course was advertised 6 times in the newsletters of the organisations, sent to 667 addressees.

The outlines of the workshops along with handouts are available in the relevant folder in google drive, and they are professionally sound (in terms of structure, content, methods).

The project partners (as explained in the interviews) were rather frustrated when they had realised that, due to the new propaganda law, it would be impossible to reach students like they did in the past. Nevertheless, they could deliver 20 workshops to 316 students, which is a real success in the face of hardships.

T2.3 Development and delivery of training for volunteer educators and teachers

13 training courses for teachers (multipliers) in 8 different cities (Budapest, Miskolc, Pécs, Szeged, Debrecen, Veszprém, Szombathely, Győr) with 131 participants, 3 training courses for volunteer trainers with 31 participants, and 5 mini-courses with 58 participants have been delivered so far.

The lesson plans for all three types of training and related handouts are available in the relevant folders in google drive. The training modules (structure, content, methods) are professionally sound.

The duration of the training of teachers (multipliers) was 16 working hours: 8 hours offline + 5 hours online + 3 hours offline. Participants were required to develop and put into practice a mini-project on LGBTIQ inclusion in their own localities. Three of such projects were presented at the closing conference. The materials (presentations, lesson plans, etc.) were uploaded to google drive.

The duration of the training for volunteers was 6 hours, and that of mini-courses was 90 minutes. As the new propaganda law made it almost impossible to hold training programs by NGOs for students at schools, the capacity of the newly trained volunteer trainers could not be fully exploited.

In addition to the training sessions, three networking events were organised for multipliers. These events were highly successful, reaching over 100 people in total. At such events, the participants had an opportunity to take part in a workshop similar to that otherwise delivered to students.

T2.4 Creation of a HRE toolkit for teachers and educators

This 65-page long publication is available in printed and digital versions. Hard copies were made available to participants of on-site events for free.

It is a high quality manual, with a logical structure, easy-to-read language. The main messages are highlighted. It is a comprehensive material, including background information on the current situation in Hungary (based on the results of the corresponding baseline study), explanation of LGBTIQ terms, related educational activities and further resources. It is a useful resource for teachers and other educators who want to address LGBTIQ issues with their students.

T2.5 Creation of a guidebook for schools on practices that enhance inclusion of LGBTIQ students (also called ‘Guideline on safe place for LGBTIQ people in schools’)

It is an attractive little booklet of 9 pages, with a logical structure, easy-to-read language and nice graphic elements. The main messages are highlighted. It explains why it is important to create safe places, and provides recommendations on what teachers can do at the school to prevent discrimination and bullying, and support those affected. It also explains the foreseeable negative consequences of the propaganda law, and draws the attention of teachers to the importance of acting locally for the protection of LGBTIQ students. It also mentions other relevant publications and training courses offered by the project partners on LGBTIQ-related issues and bullying. The digital version was delivered by e-mail to 2555 schools in Hungary.

T2.6 Development of an e-learning module

The module was completed on December 31, 2023, and made publicly available on the Amnesty Academy platform on January 10, 2024, so with a significant delay.

The e-learning course for students offers a rich variety of exercises: personal stories, videos, definitions of key terms, data from the related baseline study indicating the prevalence of prejudice and discrimination against LBMTQI people, multiple choice or other kind of questions for self-evaluation (of understanding or knowledge of information presented in a previous section), etc.

The course has an easy-to-understand language and is accessible for hard of hearing people too: videos have subtitles or transcripts. Lessons have a common format, with logos, colours and other elements consistently used throughout the e-learning material.

The training module also includes links to the partner organisations’ websites as well as links for further information, including contact details of help services for LGBTIQ people. Participants who have completed the course can fill out a feedback form and receive a certificate.

I had found a number of problems with content in the online training module (e.g. confusion regarding the concept of prejudice and stereotype), which I indicated to the project partners. They welcomed my feedback and promised to correct such problems.

WP3: Learning journeys of employers and employees

The objective of WP3 is to increase inclusiveness of LGBTIQ employees in the workplace. In this work package, the following tasks were identified:

T3.1 Baseline study on work climate

T3.2 Development and delivery scoping workshops on LGBTIQ inclusion in the workplace

T3.3 Development and delivering of training for employers and employees on LGBTIQ inclusion in the workplace

T3.4 Development of e-learning for employers and employees

T3.1 Baseline study on work climate

The baseline study on workplace climate was not representative. The study report was posted on the project partners' websites in line with the grant agreement. Similarly to the other baseline study, there were some problems with the statistics here too, so Háttér had the report fixed by the researcher and updated the related report.

The quality of this report is good, the language sounds professional but easy to understand. It first provides a comprehensive summary of the results of previous similar surveys, the legal background, prior related initiatives, guidelines and other materials, and then presents the new findings. The charts and diagrams have captions to help the reader interpret the figures. The authors draw conclusions and come up with recommendations as well. This study and report was intended to be used by the project partners as a source of information for the developers of the training courses in this WP and related communication activities, on the one hand, and to inform employers on LGBTIQ -related work climate and motivate them to create a safer environment at the workplace, on the other hand. One shortcoming I identified is that the report uses abbreviations (SD, M - > standard deviation, mean) that are not explained therein.

To reach a wide and diverse audience, invitations to fill out the related questionnaire were posted and advertised in Facebook and Instagram.

T3.2 Scoping workshops on LGBTIQ inclusion in the workplace

The project partners planned 8 participatory scoping workshops to identify the scope and focus of the training courses to be developed later for employers/employees. Eventually, 5 such scoping workshops were delivered (4 online and 1 offline) with a total number of 33 participants. Some of the workshops were specifically for LGBTIQ people, others were for mixed groups. The outcome and conclusions were summarised in memos about the scoping workshops.

In the interviews with the project partners, the representatives of organisations involved in training at workplaces said that they found these scoping workshops useful as 1. a source of information to better design the training courses, and 2. an opportunity to test some of the training activities planned. Some findings were surprising, e.g. non-LBMTQI people thought that being LGBTIQ had no impact on performance at the workplace, whereas LGBTIQ people thought just the opposite.

As one representative of the project partners told me in the interview, some participants might have been confused about the aim of such scoping workshops and felt a little disappointed when realised that scoping workshops were not training activities, but more like focus group sessions to collect information. Therefore, the interviewee concluded, these sessions should be called focus group rather than workshop to avoid potential confusion.

T3.3 Development and delivering of training for employers and employees on LGBTIQ inclusion in the workplace

To reach business companies with their training offer, the project partners involved (AIHU, Háttér and SZMA) mainly relied on their existing contacts. They combined their lists of contacts, and divided the clients among them. In addition, if any other company approached them and asked about training options, they offered them the *Inclusive Spaces* training module. In the course of the project they reviewed the status of this project task from time to time, and reallocated the work load to match the available capacity of the partners.

The training module (structure, content, methods) is professionally sound. Participants of these training sessions gave feedback orally on the spot and also on the relevant EU platform. Trainers have made slight changes to the lesson plan based on such feedback. Here the project partners have overperformed: instead of the planned 20 modular trainings they have delivered 31 sessions, reaching 325 people.

T3.4 Development of E-learning for employers and employees

The module was completed on July 31, 2023, and made publicly available on the Amnesty Academy platform on September 14, 2023, with a slight delay.

The quality of the e-learning course for employers and employees is very similar to that of the e-learning course for students. It offers a rich variety of exercises: personal stories, videos, definitions of key terms, data from the related baseline study indicating the prevalence of prejudice and discrimination against LBMTQI people, multiple choice or other kind of questions for self-evaluation, etc.

The language is easy to understand. The course is accessible for hard of hearing people too: videos have subtitles or transcripts. All lessons have a common format, with logos, colours and other elements consistently used in all parts of the e-learning material.

The module includes links to the partner organisations' websites as well as links for further information, including contact details of help services for LGBTIQ people. Participants who have completed the course can fill out a feedback form and receive a certificate.

I had found a few problems with content in the online training module, which I indicated to the project partners. They will correct these problems.

WP4: Communication and dissemination

The aim of WP4 is to maximise the impact of the project. In this work package, the following tasks were identified:

T4.1 Communication and dissemination plan

T4.2 Designing and dissemination of posters and flyers in school

T4.3 Conference for multipliers

T4.4 Press conference

T4.5 Tent for the project at the civil village during Pride March in 2022 and in 2023

T4.6 Communicate the results and main milestones of the project on online and offline events and platforms

With the exception of the press conference (which was cancelled), all tasks have been completed. T4.6 is still going on till (and beyond) the end of the project in April 2024.

The project partners have made efforts to harmonise communication and dissemination activities, especially on social media. As I was told by the representative of one of the project partners in the interview, at some point they planned to set up a dedicated communication team to coordinate such tasks, but eventually managed without, and discussed such issues at meetings and through a messaging app.

All printed and digital products created in the framework of this project have a consistent look with design elements specifically created for this project. The EU support is acknowledged, the European flag (emblem) is displayed and a funding statement in Hungarian is included on all materials, as specified in the grant agreement. All posts on the project partners' websites or social media accounts presenting the project or posting news about the progress of the project include a project summary, list of participants, European flag, funding statement, special logo, and project results. The only missing element from such posts is the project coordinator's contact details.

Regarding the quality of the visual and graphic elements used for communicating about the project, it must be noted that they are of very high quality, look really attractive; the logo, the colours and other design elements are used consistently on every printed product and in every other medium.

T4.1 Communication and dissemination plan

The Dissemination and Communication Plan was completed with a slight, 2-week delay. The plan defined milestones and outputs with deadlines.

T4.2 Designing and dissemination of posters and flyers in school

This task was marked complete as previously reported in the progress report even though this task had been modified. The partners designed 14 different infographics and printed a total of 1000 copies of 3 different flyers (one general, one for schools and one for companies). They did not print posters for schools as it seemed hopeless to have them displayed there. Instead, in order to have more participants in the baseline study they printed flyers and stickers, which were disseminated by volunteers. They also created and printed two huge posters for the civil village of the Pride March to promote the project.

Furthermore, 4 billboard posters were created and displayed in 4 busy streets of Budapest in March 2024 to advertise the e-learning courses.

T4.3 Conference for multipliers

A closing conference was held on January 24, 2024 in Budapest to communicate the project results to the public and relevant stakeholders. It was attended by 22 previously trained

multipliers and other professionals. Here, the results of the project and some of the mini-projects developed by participants of prior offline training sessions were presented. This conference also served as a networking event allowing professionals to (re)connect and thus help ensure the sustainability of the project outputs.

Additionally, 2 more networking events were held during the project period: one on June 26, 2023 during the Pride Month, and one on October 14, 2023 at the LIFT festival to promote the Inclusive Spaces project, raise awareness of the impact of the propaganda law, involve teachers and other professionals through whom students could be indirectly reached, and to strengthen the network of such professionals. As LGBTIQ-related programmes may attract the attention of homophobic right wing protesters, help of the Hungarian Police was requested beforehand to ensure the safety of the participants of the event held during the Pride Month.

The 3 offline networking events reached 105 professionals in total.

Based on the available documentation (and my own first-hand experience in the case of the closing conference), all these events were professionally sound, and provided a safe place for participants to connect and reinforce their motivation and cooperation for the future. They were carefully planned (with a written script, specifying goals, messages, expected number of participants, task list with responsible person, etc.), and thoroughly documented (attendance sheets, photos etc.)

These events were promoted in social media posts, shared in Facebook groups of target groups (e.g. social workers, human rights educators etc.) and through newsletters of the partner organisations.

T4.4 Press conference

This event was cancelled, because (as I was told in the interviews) the project partners decided it would not be a good investment in terms of time, effort and money, because the Hungarian press in general is not interested in this kind of projects. Instead, the project partners decided to spend the resources to create 2 podcast episodes and issue a press release.

T4.5 Tent for the project at the civil village during Pride March in 2022 and in 2023

In 2022 and 2023, a tent to present the Inclusive Spaces project and involve the target groups/audience was erected in the so-called Civil Village organised as part of the Budapest Pride programme. Visitors to the tent could pick up leaflets and talk to activists about the Inclusive Spaces project, and experience some of the interactive elements of the workshops developed in the project.

In both years, 100-200 people visited the tent, where they could subscribe for newsletters on related training opportunities and leave a note about what inclusive schools and workplaces mean to them.

T4.6 Communicate the results and main milestones of the project on online and offline events and platforms

Based on the dissemination and communication plan, the project partners planned and carried out all related communication activities in cooperation, using a rich variety of tools and channels, including social media posts, paid ads, infographics, project partners' websites and mailing lists, publicly accessible databases of schools, newsletters, printed materials (e.g. leaflets, posters), media invitations, scoping workshops, training sessions, offline events such as the tent at the Pride March, networking events, podcast, news articles, radio interviews, blog posts, etc. All communication materials include information on EU funding, with logos, funding statement, etc. as required in the grant agreement.

The project partners used their own platforms in a coordinated manner to share information on the project, publish and promote project products (e.g. Toolkit for teachers, and Guidelines on safe place for LGBTIQ people in schools), and advertise scoping workshops, online and offline training opportunities, the e-learning modules, and offline events. Training offers for students were sent by e-mail to 2607 elementary and secondary schools in Hungary. Training offers to business companies were advertised in social media and sent to the exiting business partners of Háttér and SZMA.

They sent 322 messages about the project content, including 243 social media posts (FB, Instagram and Twitter), 37 newsletters, numerous posts on their own websites, 7 articles in news outlets, 2 blog posts, 4 radio interviews, and offline events, resulting in a reach of over 500 thousand. There will be 2 podcast episodes broadcasted on SZMA (Budapest Pride) podcast channel in the near future.

It must be noted though that at the moment it is difficult to find any information on the Inclusive Spaces project on SZMA's website. The representatives of this organisation explained to me that they had launched a new website and had not managed to migrate all information from the previous platform to the new one yet.

In the personal interviews, the representatives of the project partners told me that the online communication channels had proved to be much more useful than offline channels in reaching the target groups. They added that probably they had not been able to raise awareness in the society at large. But those who attended their programmes seemed to be very committed and motivated to pass on the knowledge and skills to other people (to students or colleagues at the workplace) and to raise awareness of related issues in their environment.

B. Internal project mechanisms (WP1)

WP1: Project management and coordination

In this work package, the following tasks were identified:

- T1.1 Administrative and financial coordination and management
- T1.2 Educational coordination
- T1.3 Financial management

T1.4 Reporting to the EC

T1.5 Independent evaluation and audit

In this section of my report I will not look at the tasks one by one, but rather give a general overview of the internal project mechanisms: how the project have been managed and coordinated, how the partners have worked together, responded to emerging challenges and mitigated risks.

Regular meetings and the use of shared documents form the backbone of coordination between the project partners. Project coordination meetings were held in every second month or in every month. Invitations to the meetings along with meeting agendas were sent to the representatives of the project partners by the AIHU project coordinator. Memos were filed on google drive.

To plan and coordinate educational activities, a pedagogical team was set up including educational professionals from the project partners. Relevant educational outputs of the project (including workshop and training outlines, e-learning content and other products such as the educational toolkit and the guideline) were also created by this team.

According to the partner organisations' representatives I interviewed, the coordination was quite smooth. Most of the interviewees said that the best thing about the whole project was working together. They very much appreciated personal project coordination meetings and the meetings of the pedagogical team. The professionalism of the team members (especially that of the pedagogical team members) was highlighted by most interviewees. Working together on the project gave them opportunity to learn from each other and grow professionally, they said.

The only problem with coordination seemed to be due to the frequent replacement of project coordinators at AIHU: there have been 5 coordinators in 2 years. When a new coordinator started working they needed time to learn processes, find their way in the documents, etc. As a result, sometimes there was some confusion and a lack of information.

The representatives of two project partners mentioned that sometimes they had felt highly stressed when they had too many tasks to juggle, or when they had to wait for the project coordinator to provide some important information or for colleagues to finish a particular task in order to meet the deadlines.

For working online and for documentation purposes the project partners have mainly used google drive. Most documents (memos, lesson plans, handouts, attendance sheets, etc.), photos (made at offline training sessions or other events) and other files produced during the project were created or uploaded here, and are accessible to the project partners. These files are organised into folders, so generally it is easy to find whatever one may look for, although not all project documents are available here. For reporting purposes, AIHU uses OneDrive and collects all documents there, but this database is not available to me.

Regarding external evaluation: a call for an external evaluator was published on the website of Hättér and was posted on a few other websites and Facebook. The project partners have fully cooperated with me as the external evaluator, and provided all the data I requested, answered my questions in personal interviews, and given access to the project documents on google drive.

Regarding risk management: the project partners originally identified 6 critical risks:

1. Difficulties in ensuring effective cooperation and communication among partners
2. Inefficient financial management
3. Schools are not engaged in the project and teachers will not allocate time for its implementation
4. New laws banning LGBTIQ visibility and inclusion
5. The employers will not be open for dialogue at the scoping workshops, as they will see this as a possible attack on the company's culture. The companies will not support us in offering trainings to employees
6. Educational institutions will not allow the dissemination of content that promotes LGBTIQ equality

The level of some risks and the proposed mitigation measures were modified later in line with changes in the legal and social environment. The results of my evaluation show that the partners have successfully dealt with the challenges and managed to modify the tactics and project activities to meet their objectives.

Conclusions

According to what the project partners told me in the personal interviews, and based on the materials I have found on the Internet and in the google drive „document library” of the project, the project has been successful. Although the changing social and legal environment in Hungary made it necessary to change particular project elements and prolong the project duration, the partners were able to adjust flexibly, and to amend plans and the activities to achieve their objectives. They are satisfied with the results.

The project objectives were the following:

- reduce negative attitudes towards and discrimination against LGBTIQ people in the workplace and in schools;
- encourage employers to create a safer place and appropriate policies for a more accepting and inviting workplace by sensitising and empowering them to reduce discrimination of LGBTIQ employees;
- raise awareness of society through the representation of the everyday experiences of LGBTIQ people;
- create a network of professionals to transfer knowledge within their networks is very difficult to tell.

In the lack of systematic testing of the changes brought about by the project, it is impossible to measure the extent of such changes, which is especially true for the long-term impact on the attitude, skills and behaviour of the target audience.

All project partners said in the interviews that they had witnessed positive changes in the participants of training activities: better understanding, increased motivation, confidence and commitment, creativity etc. Also, they have received a lot of positive feedback from the participants. Concerning the third objective – “raise awareness of society” – the project partners told me in the interviews that they probably had not been able to reach far beyond the ‘bubble’.

According to information available to me, no set of qualitative indicators has been defined by the project partners, and no overall qualitative evaluation has taken place yet.

I have examined the quality of the project content (educational materials and modules, communication materials, documents of offline events, etc.), and found it quite sound from a professional point of view. I detected some shortcomings, but the project partners are on the way to fix all of them.

Regarding quantitative indicators, most target numbers have been met, or even exceeded. For instance, the number of modular trainings for employers and employees on LGBTIQ inclusion in the workplace was 50% more than planned. The same is true for the number of training sessions/workshops for multipliers.

The number of training sessions delivered to students is below the original target number (the deteriorating legal and social environment made it almost impossible for NGOs to organise educational programmes in formal settings, as explained earlier), but 25% above the amended target number.

The e-learning modules were published with delay, so the number of enrolments is not very high at the moment, but there is a good chance that the project partners will achieve the plan figures – 2x1000 enrolments – within two years after the launch dates.

The project structure proved to be good, with individual elements built on one another. For instance the results of the two baseline studies and those of the scoping workshops were taken into account when planning the offline and online training modules. None of the deliverables turned out to be superfluous or not instrumental for the success of the project. A bigger emphasis on the networking part would have been useful, according to one of my interviewees.

Concerning the internal project mechanisms, I found that in spite of difficulties arising from the changes in the project team, the coordination and cooperation was smooth. The project partners could rely on each other for information and professional support at any time. They are all very happy with the activities they have carried out and are proud of the results of the project in which they have invested so much time and energy.

What they enjoyed most was the offline training sessions. They found them most motivating mainly because they could see for themselves the change of attitude and commitment of the participants and their increased confidence to address LGBTIQ issues. They consider the training for multipliers (including mini-trainings), the training for employees and employers and the networking events the most useful, but these elements would not have been possible without the work done before: scoping workshops, baselines studies and the educational materials developed in the first part of the project.

The project partners used a very rich variety of communication tools and channels in a coordinated and professional way. They have reached a lot of people with their messages, recruited participants for offline training sessions and events, and organised networking events to connect multipliers and thus create a network of professionals to transfer knowledge.

To bring long term change in the society seems a Sisyphean task. The sustainability of the project outputs, however, seems to be ensured. Labrisz is committed to continue the offline training for students and multipliers, and is now looking for funding opportunities to cover

future costs. Multipliers already trained will integrate the knowledge and skills acquired into their teaching, continuously reaching a high number of students. School teachers and other educators will hopefully use the Guideline and the Toolkit. All the materials developed in the project will circulate around national NGOs and human rights educators, as well as internationally within Amnesty International. AIHU will keep supporting trainers after the end of the project. AIHU and the partners will send newsletters about related training opportunities and other programs.

Employers and employees who participated in offline training or completed the e-learning modules are expected to take action when facing or witnessing discrimination against LGBTIQ people in the workplace. Háttér and SZMA will continue offering training for business companies. The e-learning materials will be available in the long run on AIHU's Academy platform. The baseline studies conducted may serve as sources of information to employers and schools interested in promoting inclusion of LGBTIQ people.

All in all, I believe this project has been a success and the project partners have managed to achieve the objectives.