

The background of the cover features a large, stylized rainbow flag with vertical stripes in red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. Overlaid on the top left of the flag is a graduation cap (mortarboard) with a tassel, also rendered in a rainbow gradient. The letters 'Pride' are written in a large, bold, white font across the middle of the image, with the 'P' and 'r' being significantly larger than the other letters. The text 'Campus Pride' and 'National Report' is centered over the 'r' and 'i' of 'Pride'.

Campus Pride **National Report**

LGBTQIA+ experiences in the
Romanian Universities

Campus Pride National Report

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mozaiqlgbt.ro/campus-pride/



1. Introduction

"Campus Pride - Community Advocacy Campaigns for Safe Universities" is a MozaiQ Association project, initiated with the aim of creating a welcoming and safe environment and a climate of acceptance for all students in the Romanian academic environment, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, as well as their ethnicity, gender, religion, (dis)ability, or any other identity elements that differentiate them and make them vulnerable.

The project, the first initiative of its kind in Romania, started in the 2015-2016 academic year in Bucharest, involving LGBTQIA+ students in activities such as LGBTQIA+ Allies Week, LGBTQIA+ History Month, a PhotoVoice exhibition, Transgender Day of Remembrance, Asexual Visibility Day, Queer Prom "How Queers Stole Christmas."

In 2017-2018 Campus Pride continued in Bucharest with community meetings, workshops on sexual education and combating violence of various kinds, the exhibition of snapshots from LGBTQIA+ student life "Brave To Be Me," two personal development trainings at the Faculty of Sociology and at SNSPA, in collaboration with IBM Romania.

The project was revitalised in April 2021, in partnership with Pride Romania (Cluj), Identity Education (Timisoara), Samtokin '78 (Iceland), with the financial support of Active Citizens Fund Romania, a programme funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and

Norway through EEA Grants 2014-2021. The project covered Bucharest, Cluj and Timișoara.

In October 2021, three student centers were inaugurated in Cluj, Bucharest and Timisoara, where LGBTQIA+ students and allies can safely meet and participate in various academic, personal and community development activities on a weekly basis. In addition to youth community organizing among LGBTQIA+ students, the project had a second important objective: the development, piloting and regular implementation of tools to measure the degree of inclusion in the Romanian university environment.

There is an urgent need for concrete measures to increase LGBTQIA+ inclusion in Romanian universities. Young people with different gender identities and romantic, sexual or family orientations who drop out of school because of homophobia, transphobia and biphobia in classrooms and on campus have lower chances of integration on the labour market, with all the consequences that follow: reduced access to health services, risk of homelessness, different risk behaviours, negative effects on mental health.

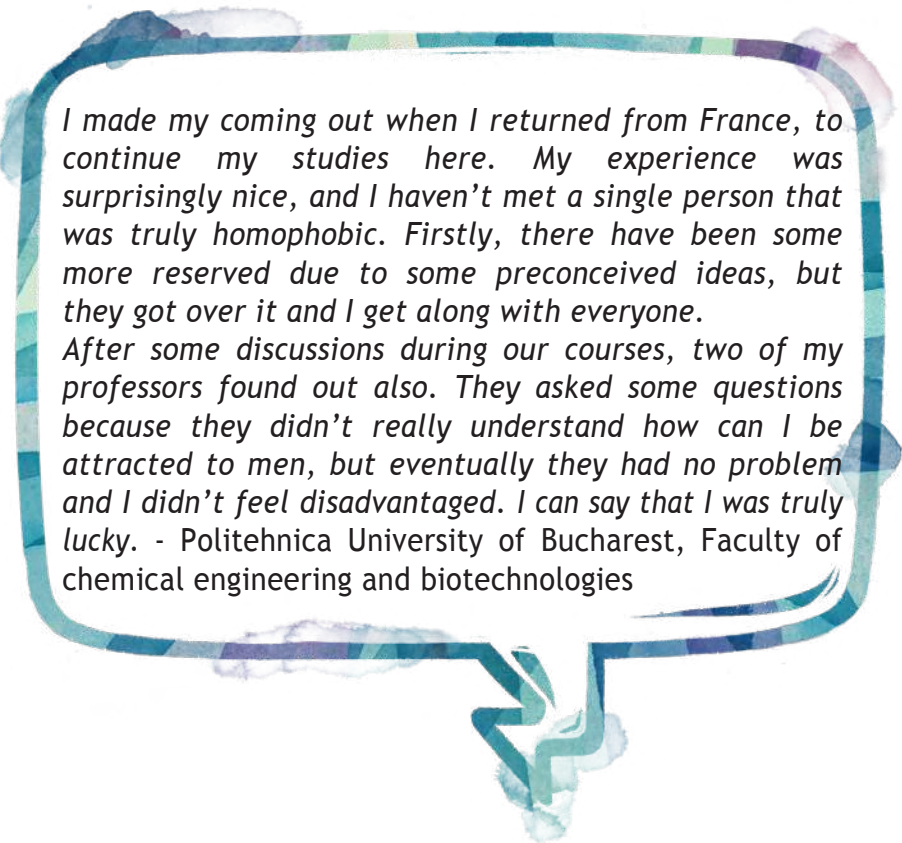
Achieving a high degree of LGBTQIA+ inclusion requires mapping LGBTQIA+ student communities by collecting data that mirrors their experiences during their university studies. In this way, policies and tools aimed at LGBTQIA+ student inclusion can be proposed and regularly updated.

After presenting the student survey data and analysing the

¹ We use the term 'romantic, sexual or family orientation' to educate the general public about the meaning of the term 'orientation,' which until now has been used exclusively with sexual connotations, with all the negative consequences. It is important to remember that the term encompasses a range of relationships made possible by strong connections with other people. Sometimes it's all three aspects at once, sometimes just one or two. For example, we can physically desire someone without being in love, or we can be married and happy with someone to whom we don't feel sexual attraction (anymore).

LGBTQIA+ inclusion policies of universities and central institutions, we will conclude the report with proposals for concrete measures to increase LGBTQIA+ inclusion in academia.

Subsequently, monitoring the implementation of these proposals through the LGBTQIA+ Campus Pride student centers, we will produce an index of all universities in Romania on the criteria of LGBTQIA+ student inclusion and satisfaction. This report is designed as a pilot, a first step towards the creation of this national index.



I made my coming out when I returned from France, to continue my studies here. My experience was surprisingly nice, and I haven't met a single person that was truly homophobic. Firstly, there have been some more reserved due to some preconceived ideas, but they got over it and I get along with everyone.

After some discussions during our courses, two of my professors found out also. They asked some questions because they didn't really understand how can I be attracted to men, but eventually they had no problem and I didn't feel disadvantaged. I can say that I was truly lucky. - Politehnica University of Bucharest, Faculty of chemical engineering and biotechnologies



2. Methodological resources

In this section we present some research and tools applied in other countries to measure LGBTQIA+ inclusion in education. In addition to the American model, which was our initial inspiration (in 2015), we also drew on the expertise of our Icelandic partners, the report on education of the LGBTQIA+ youth organisation IGLYO (which includes Romania), and the Bulgarian experience, as a cultural-political space closer to the Romanian one.

Campus Pride Index

The index is an initiative of Campus Pride, an organization that brings together student leaders and organizations from across the USA. Testing of the tool began in 2001, and in 2007 the first official index of US universities on LGBTQIA+ inclusion was released. The methodology was developed, and is periodically reviewed, by QRIHE (Queer Research Institute on Undergraduate Education), established for this purpose by Campus Pride.

The main areas covered are:

- internal policies to combat discrimination and harassment of LGBTQIA+ students
- housing conditions
- inclusive curriculum
- campus safety
- support services for LGBTQIA+ students (counseling, testing, etc.)
- recruitment
- retention.

To be featured on the Campus Pride website and enter the index, universities must delegate an official representative responsible for LGBTQIA+ inclusion on campus, who answers the 50+ questions on the index, thus determining the score of the university they represent. Subsequently, the score and all information related to the university from an LGBTQIA+ inclusion perspective is published on the CPI website (Campus Pride Index).

IGLYO report on education

The International LGBTQIA+ Youth Organisation, founded in 1984 with the support of the Council of Europe, brings together 100+ organisations from over 45 countries. In 2018 IGLYO launched the first report on inclusive education and in 2022 the second was launched.

The report includes an index of LGBTQIA+ inclusion in pre-university and university systems in all Council of Europe member countries, compiled on the basis of 10 indicators, including:

- anti-discrimination legislation targeting the educational environment, mandatory LGBTQIA+ awareness training for teachers;
- Collecting national or regional data on bullying and harassment of LGBTQIA+ students.

Romania remained almost as non-inclusive, with an increase of only 3 percent from 2018 to 2022, from 12% to 15% (figure 1).

Bulgaria

From 2007 to date, 3 initiatives have been implemented to measure LGBTQIA+ inclusion in Bulgarian education, all at the

2 <https://www.campusprideindex.org/>

3 <https://www.education-index.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/EI-map-and-table-April-2018.pdf>

4 <https://www.education-index.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/IG-LYO-LGBTQI-Inclusive-Education-Report-2022-v3.pdf>

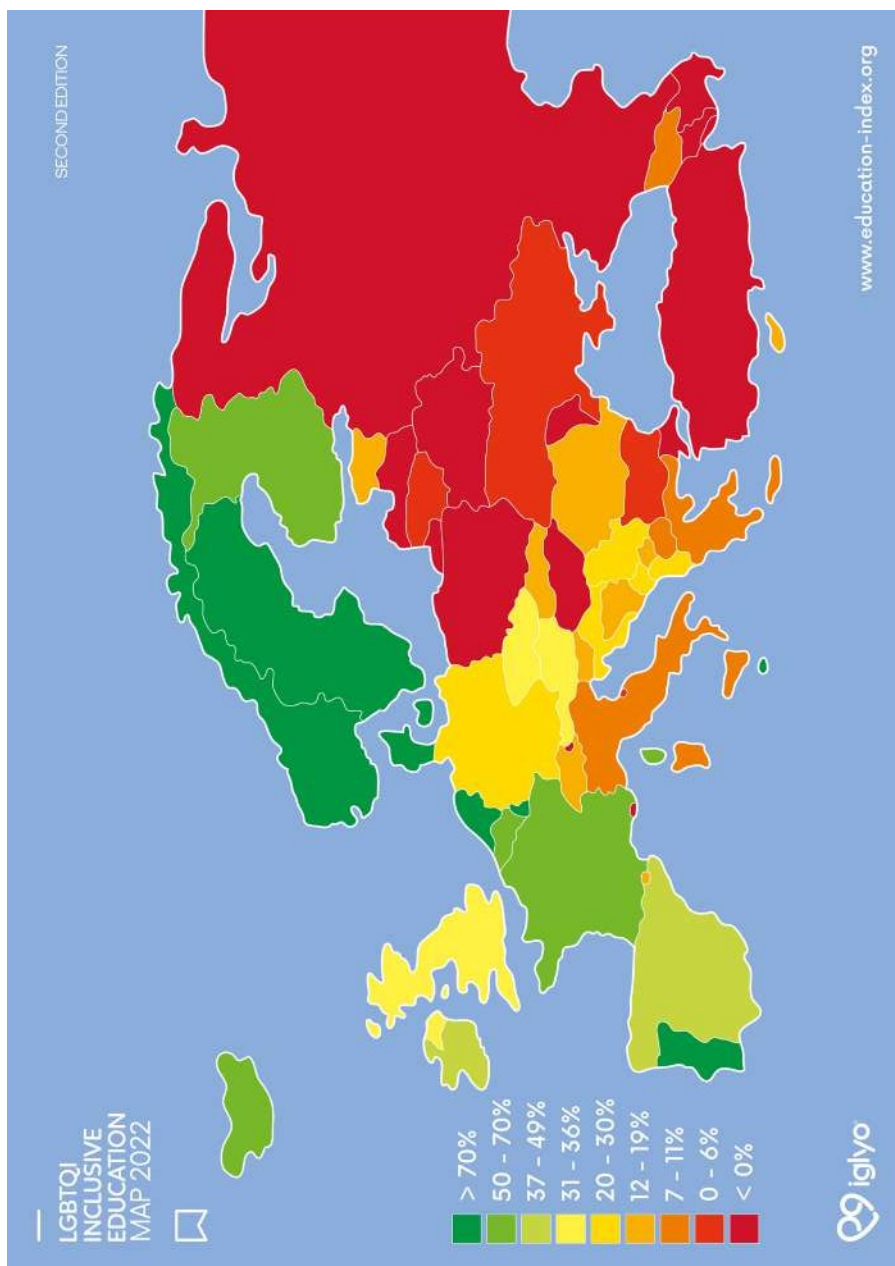


figure 1

pre-university level.

The first research⁵, implemented by Gemini in the school year 2007-2008 revealed that:

- 70% of LGBTQIA+ Bulgarian high school students do not finish high school due to systemic harassment
- 50% of them attempt suicide for the same reason

The FRA also released a report in 2010⁶, showing that the situation was equally bleak, with the Ministry of Education and Research taking no concrete action following the 2007-2008 research.

In 2015 the Bilitis Resource Centre carried out research in several high schools in Sofia to determine whether there are concrete measures in place to prevent systemic dropout and harassment of LGBTQIA+ students.

The Bilitis report⁷ found that homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are normalised and perpetuated in the school environment, and that most schools in Bulgaria do not have internal policies that identify and address discrimination and bullying on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sexual characteristics, despite the provisions of existing anti-discrimination legislation⁸. This situation is identical to that in Romania.

Iceland

From Icelandic good practice we note the equal rights report⁹ produced by the University of Iceland every 5 years, in which

5 S. Kukova (2008) 'Legal Study on Homophobia and Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation', Report on Bulgaria, FRALEX Legal Country Report.

Also: Fieldwork meeting with the LGBT NGO BGO Gemini, April 28, 2008, and the Commission for Protection Against Discrimination, April 29, 2008

6 https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/1346-lgbt-2010_thematic-study_bg.pdf Accesat la 17 septembrie 2022

7 M. Pisankaneva, "Schools for All? The Status of LGBTI Students and Teachers in Bulgarian Schools," Bilitis Resource Center, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2015

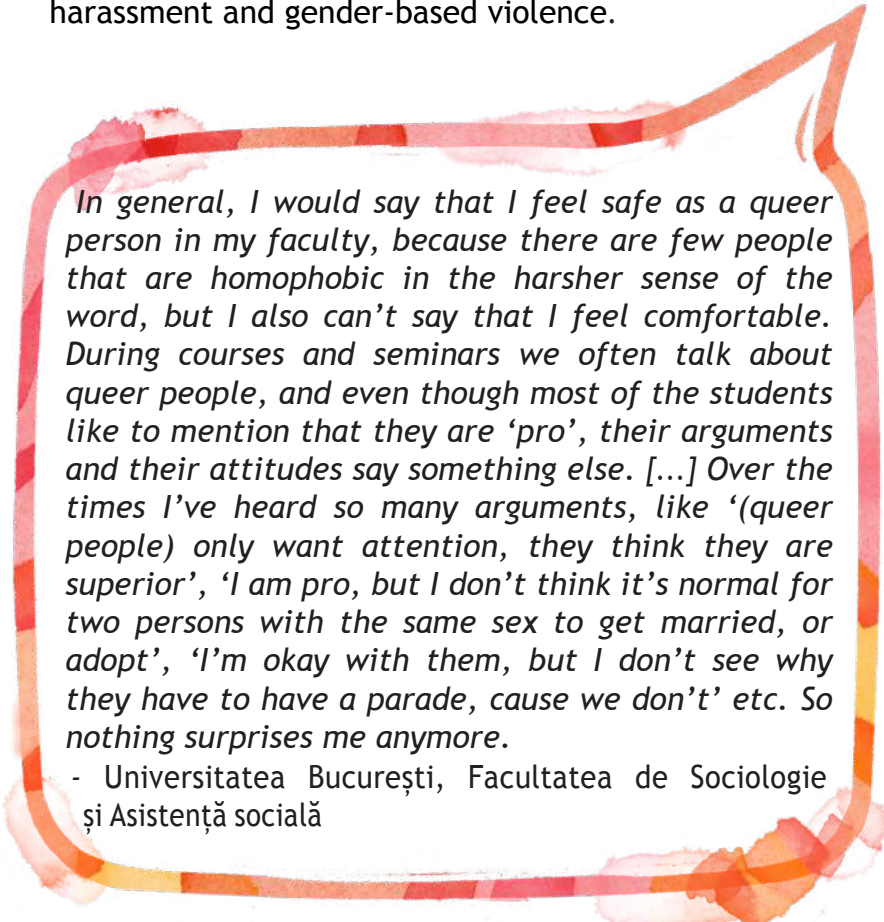
8 <https://www.rainbow-europe.org/#8626/0/0>

9 https://www.hi.is/sites/default/files/atli/pdf/skyrslur/stada_og_throun_jafnrettismala_2012-2016.pdf Accesat la 17 septembrie 2022

there is a substantial section dedicated to LGBTQIA+ students.

The report lists inclusive measures such as:

- minimum of one unisex facility per building, sensitizing faculty and administrative staff about microaggressions to which LGBTQIA+ students are exposed,
- thematic lectures in equality week
- specific measures for addressing non-binary people correctly
- equality standards checklist for teachers
- procedures for handling and resolving complaints of sexual harassment and gender-based violence.



In general, I would say that I feel safe as a queer person in my faculty, because there are few people that are homophobic in the harsher sense of the word, but I also can't say that I feel comfortable. During courses and seminars we often talk about queer people, and even though most of the students like to mention that they are 'pro', their arguments and their attitudes say something else. [...] Over the times I've heard so many arguments, like '(queer people) only want attention, they think they are superior', 'I am pro, but I don't think it's normal for two persons with the same sex to get married, or adopt', 'I'm okay with them, but I don't see why they have to have a parade, cause we don't' etc. So nothing surprises me anymore.

- Universitatea București, Facultatea de Sociologie și Asistență socială



3. Methodology

Based on the study of the methods and tools presented in the previous section, and with the generous support of research experts Irina Zamfirescu (Active Watch) and Fidelie Kalambayi (Romanian Angel Appeal), we prepared a draft methodology, which we discussed in 3 community consultations (Bucharest, Cluj and Timisoara), and a consultation with stakeholders (student associations, rectors' offices, deaneries, professors). Following these consultations we designed, piloted and finalized the Campus Pride Romania methodology as a set of methods and tools, namely:

- Perception questionnaire implemented among LGBTQIA+ students
- Testimonials from LGBTQIA+ students across the country, collected through grassroots monitoring by the 3 LGBTQIA+ Campus Pride student centers
- Interviews with academics from Bucharest, Cluj and Timisoara
- Analysis of responses to requests for information under Law 544 sent to universities, the Ministry of Education and ARACIS
- Analysis of university gender equality plans¹⁰

¹⁰ The 4 universities foreseen in the project were established in a consultation process with the LGBTQIA+ student community in Bucharest, Cluj and Timisoara. It was necessary to identify a finite number, i.e. 4, for reasons of funding management and planned use of resources.

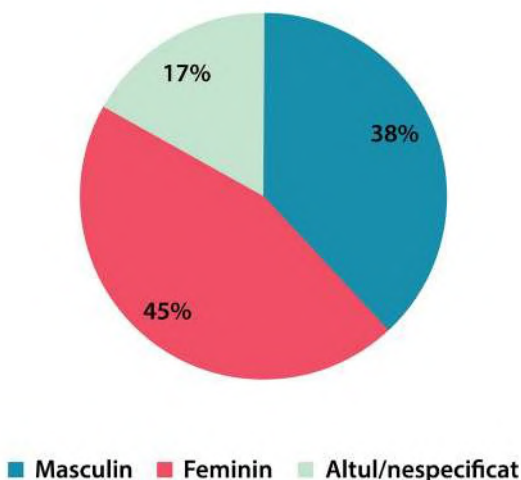
4. Demographic coordinates

The questionnaire was constructed with mandatory, optional or filter questions. Under these conditions, the total responses will vary, depending on the respondents' profiles. In total, the responses of 350 participants were validated. All individuals included in this study identify as Queer/LGBTQIA+.

The average age of respondents is 22 years. 68 of them identify as trans or non-binary, and 55 are from other minorities.

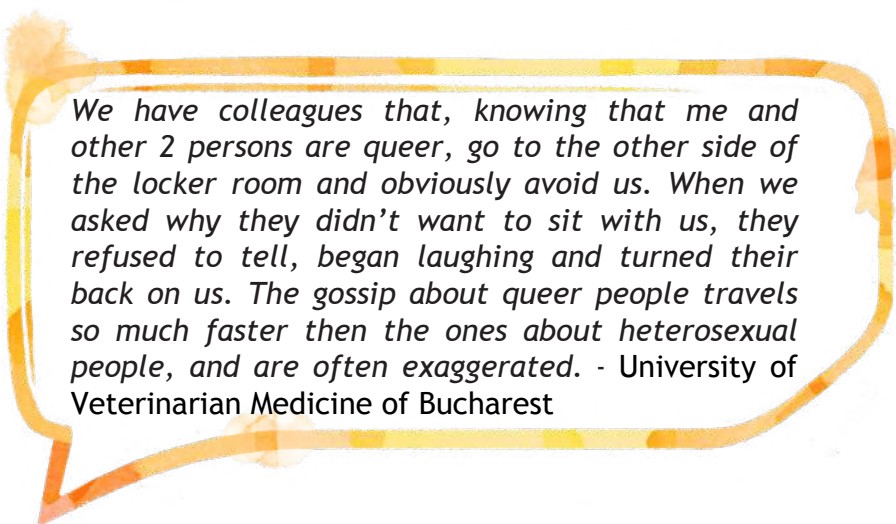
Gender distribution of respondents:

Care este genul cu care te identifiți?



The questionnaire was distributed mainly via the three LGBTQIA+ Campus Pride student centers in Romania (Timisoara, Cluj Napoca and Bucharest), but also through the social networks of community members. Therefore there was no control on the geographical areas of respondents. In this pilot we chose to include all the responses received. Respondents are from 13 municipalities and 44 universities (private and public). As there was no sampling procedure, the data collected is not relevant for any specific university centres.

Of the total number of participants in the survey, *bisexual persons* (37.7%) accounted for the largest share. 15.8% said they were also from *other vulnerable*. Of these, the highest percentage - 65.5% - said they were *disabled or neurodivergent*.



We have colleagues that, knowing that me and other 2 persons are queer, go to the other side of the locker room and obviously avoid us. When we asked why they didn't want to sit with us, they refused to tell, began laughing and turned their back on us. The gossip about queer people travels so much faster then the ones about heterosexual people, and are often exaggerated. - University of Veterinarian Medicine of Bucharest

5. Limitations

The main limitation of the study lies in the impossibility of having a representative sample at community or university center level. On the one hand, it is difficult to estimate the total population of students/masters/doctoral candidates belonging to the community. On the other hand, the way in which the questionnaire was distributed (distribution on social networks, closed community groups) did not allow for the collection of data at the level of university centers in a unified way. In order to manage this limitation, the data collected using the questionnaire was not processed by separate centers but rather globally.

Only a small group knows about my sexual orientation, most people didn't have a problem with that, but it did happen that one colleague outed me to others saying that I hit on her, even though that was not true, after coming out to her. Right now I don't feel safe anymore to come out to other colleagues and I refrain myself from entering into conversations about the community with other persons from my faculty.

- Alexandru Ioan Cuza University in Iasi



6. Research results

6a. Perception questionnaire

University space

The majority of respondents, 54.85%, say that there are no flyers, posters or other signs supporting the LGBTQIA+ community on university campuses (only 11 respondents confirmed the consistent presence of these materials on campuses). Only half of all respondents say they feel somewhat or completely safe on campuses.

18 respondents say they have been discriminated against by a teacher or a member of the faculty administration. Only one reported this to the university management in a written complaint. No investigation was made and no action was taken.

Relationship with professors

Of all respondents, 287 say they are *out* in college (with some or most colleagues) and 53 say they are not out to anyone on campus.

24.85% (87) of all respondents said that they have allies among teachers. Of these, 31 said that they have even more allies than one person. 31.42% of all respondents said that they do not have any teacher allies, while the majority, i.e. 153 people (43.71% of all respondents) did not answer this question - which can be interpreted negatively, i.e. the absence of allies for them.

196 people, or 56%, indicated that professors expressed their opinion about the LGBTQIA+ community in class. When asked about teachers' neutral/respectful discourse and attitude towards the LGBTQIA+ community, responses were relatively evenly distributed on a scale of 1 to 10. Of the 196 who confirmed the existence of discourse about the community by teachers, 21.4% rated the attitude and discourse as rather respectful/neutral, while 13.13% rated the discourse and attitude as rather not neutral or respectful.

33.42% of all respondents say they have at least one teacher who often has homophobic/transphobic speech. Only one person says that they have made a complaint to complain about this speech (complaint to the ethics committee, but without a satisfactory outcome).

81.13% of trans respondents say that professors and administrative staff are more likely to not respect the gender identity of trans students, while only 18.87% say that gender identity is respected in their department/college.

6b. Interviews and testimonials

In this section we will analyse the (4) in-depth interviews with university professors in Bucharest, Cluj and Timisoara, as well as the (14) testimonials collected either through the open-ended questions of the perception questionnaire or in person by Campus Pride coordinators in Bucharest, Cluj and Timisoara.

In the perception of the professors with whom we conducted in-depth interviews, there is a decrease in homophobia and transphobia expressed freely and publicly - among both students and teachers. Interviewees said that there are professors known as LGBTQIA+ allies or as people actively involved in combating bullying, harassment and discrimination, through work in the classroom, participating in Pride week events, surveying students to see which groups feel least safe.

At the same time, the interviewees also reported the presence of at least one teacher who blatantly violates codes of ethics and faculty regulations by making derogatory or mocking statements about LGBTQIA+ people, and even organising anti-LGBTQIA+ conferences.

In the classroom there is now greater potential for a student (often an ally) to correct a teacher about language or actions that are disrespectful or discriminatory towards the LGBTQIA+ community. Unfortunately, no complaints are filed, and this is understandable in the context of the power relations that the Romanian university system perpetuates.

Where there is a core of allied professors or experts in gender studies who integrate scientifically presented and non-denigratory LGBTQIA+ content in their courses, there are also greater premises for establishing, at the beginning of the relationship with students, rules of participation in the course that prohibit racism or homophobia.

The testimonials of LGBTQIA+ students in Bucharest, Cluj and Timisoara also reveal both positive and negative aspects.

Several testimonials describe positive experiences:

From what I've noticed, sociology professors are pretty open to all LGBTQIA+ discussions. [...] I expected to get some negative feedback from colleagues or professors, but they had no problem.

B. from the University of Bucharest

Personally I forgive his slightly sexist jokes, everyone has better parts and parts we don't always agree with, that doesn't stop me from respecting him though. Moreover, he grades very accurately and I have had no unpleasantness following coming out.

AD. From UMF Carol Davila in Bucharest

I have met queer people, classmates and year mates with whom I have a very good relationship as we are part of the same community.

A. from Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca

The best experience I've had in my 2 years of undergrad so far was with a professor from a major course who I explained to why some days I don't feel as feminine as others and why I change my style almost daily.

After the discussion in which I explained to him that I am genderfluid and what my pronouns and names are that I use (L./R.), he began that every day, orienting himself by how I am dressed, he would try to address me with that pronoun, and on days when my outfit was androgynous he would come up with a smile, politely asking how I was feeling today and how I would like to be addressed. She was my proof that the university system can still be changed, can still be adapted to the simple needs of a community deprived of freedom.

L.

Unfortunately, numerous testimonials speak of negative or even extremely problematic experiences:

Being in psychology and talking a lot about human nature, I realized even more how cishetero-normative the academia is. There are few instances where I felt included in class discussions. [...] Not to mention the daily misgendering, even though I'm out as a nonbinary person. [...] Although a large number of students are LGBTQIA+ and some professors are careful to bring queer issues into the discussion, I feel that Romanian academia still has a lot of work to do before it reaches a standard of safety and

education for people from the community.

N. from Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca

[...] There is still stigma from straight and cis colleagues who use hatespeech quite frequently. Also, this year a professor said at a seminar that the LGBTQIA+ community gets too much exposure and finds all this awareness unnecessary and annoying for straight people.

A. from Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca

I was talking to a teacher at one point about gender and I realized she didn't know the difference between gender and sex. Another professor has a specific course on masculinity and femininity where he promotes extremely toxic things like 'If you grew up, as a boy, with just your mother, you're not going to grow up to be a man.'

B. from the University of Bucharest

The university does not provide safe spaces for people in the community. I probably had many colleagues who were part of the community, but I didn't know any of them. It wasn't until I became a Campus Pride volunteer that I met people who were like me. The university needs centers like Campus Pride, a visible community that gives people in the community a voice and a place to be accepted. The existence of Campus Pride is proof that students in Romania want to fight against the toxic social norms that affect the lives of Romanians in the community and force them to live hidden, invisible lives. I am sure that if the University would get directly involved and provide support and spaces to organize events for people from the community, in a few years we would see differences in the quality of life of LGBTQIA+ students.

P. from West University of Timisoara

The professors at college, when they first saw me with my nails done, didn't react at all. They didn't give their opinion or ask questions. They didn't treat me differently or exclude me from the group I appreciated that. On the other hand, I am aware that at other faculties there are professors who are still not used to LGBTQIA+

people. They don't accept evolution and equality. And frankly this makes me a little sad. Because I was lucky to have such an environment, but I realize that others are not so lucky and are subjected to trauma and psychological attacks on a daily basis.

This is not at all healthy for them. It can harm them. And it can affect them very badly. I'd appreciate it if teachers didn't give their opinion on why a boy wears a skirt or why a girl sports a very short haircut. Yes, I understand, we need to speak our minds, but don't turn it into something that offends and incites hatred. It's not normal.

D.

The most serious misconduct on the part of some teachers during the data collection interval was reported by LGBTQIA+ students at a private university in Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology. The 3 teachers of this faculty stated in the classroom that:

- are disgusted by the feminine behavior of some gay men
- a former student had several mental problems, including being gay
- there are hundreds of genres today (in a context of mockery and amusement).

It is extremely grave that these things have been said from the lectern. LGBTQIA+ students and their allies in the classroom were extremely upset, feeling threatened in such a climate of study. Things like this lead not only to deep emotional and psychological wounds, but also to societal problems such as dropping out of school, poor qualifications and lower chances of professional and social integration for LGBTQIA+ people. MozaiQ Association has notified the university management about these serious misconducts of the three teachers of the Faculty of Psychology, but we have not received any response. We will continue to monitor.

6c. Information requests

Out of the 12 requests for information of public interest sent, we received 9 responses, 7 from universities/faculties, and the other 2 from the Ministry of Education and the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS). The requests were sent by the coordinators of the Campus Pride centers in the 3 cities, following a template provided by MozaiQ, built on 4 areas of interest:

1. Study programmes focusing on LGBTQIA+ or gender diversity;
2. Curricular elements related to LGBTQIA+ or gender diversity;
3. Tools for effective prevention, monitoring, reporting and sanctioning of bullying and gender discrimination, homophobia and transphobia;
4. Tools and mechanisms for inclusion and support of LGBTQIA+ students.

One of the 7 higher education institutions that responded stands out for the laconic nature of the response received from the spokeswoman who wrote the response email (not a formal institutional reply with letterhead etc), from which it is clear that there is no openness towards LGBTQIA+ student inclusion.

Their **full** answer was:

Further to your request, we inform you that [the institution] does not run study programmes focused on LGBTQIA+ or gender diversity and does not run monitoring tools and inclusion mechanisms for LGBTQIA+ students.

This type of response reflects the experience of most LGBTQIA+ students in Romania: according to the latest FRA report¹¹ (published

¹¹ https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-lgbti-equality-1_en.pdf

in May 2020) only 59% of LGBTQIA+ students in Romania are out to their peers, and only 21% are out to their teachers/supervisors. Romania is in the top 3 most homophobic and transphobic countries in Europe. Also, the report on the inclusion of queer and trans people on the labour market, published by MozaiQ at the end of 2021, reveals that of the 100+ respondents, 70% have been put in uncomfortable situations in an educational institution due to gender stereotypes. Of these, 37% have been exposed to verbal aggression, 23% have experienced some form of physical aggression from peers, 23% have experienced sexual aggression, inappropriate jokes or touching, 8% have been harassed by teachers, humiliated or singled out as a negative example.¹²

Another institution that stands out, this time positively, is the University of Bucharest, the only one of the 7 institutions that responded positively to the first area of interest. It is a very positive thing that UB has 2 gender master programs at the Faculty of Philosophy (one in Romanian and one in English), as well as a master program at the Faculty of Political Sciences. As for the second area of interest, UB has no less than 29 courses, in undergraduate or master study programmes, in Romanian, English or French, which incorporate curricular elements related to LGBTQIA+ or gender diversity. It is also important to mention that we have benefited from the participation of a number of academics and people from the UB management in the finalization of the methodology of this research, through formal (stakeholder consultation sessions) and informal discussions, in the different MozaiQ events attended by academics involved in the Centre for Equal Opportunities Policies, an academic entity with the mission to investigate the processes of democratization and citizenship consolidation, public policy making and evaluation, and the

12 https://www.mozaiqlgbt.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/trans_on_the_labour_market_in_romania.pdf

social processes of construction of gender, class, ethnicity, race, sexuality and other forms of social hierarchies. UB also has a rich portfolio of activities such as workshops aimed at LGBTQIA+ student inclusion and support, and is a Campus Pride partner.

Another university in Bucharest, the Academy for Economic Studies, responded negatively to the first two questions, and to the last two provided information about the institution's Ethics Committee and Career Counselling and Guidance Centre, stating that they have no specific procedures or support services for LGBTQIA+ students, but that the institution 'promotes the principles of non-discrimination, fairness, equality of opportunity.' Indeed, we do have a few allied faculty in this institution, but unfortunately they are rather the exception to the norm (less than 10 of the 753 faculty and 689 staff - teaching and non-teaching staff.) It is however heartening that these faculty turned to MozaiQ for support and guidance in dealing with the situation of a transgender student who had changed her legal identity documents during the registration period for her undergraduate exam, which was administratively challenging.

In the reply received from UMF Carol Davila in Bucharest we were informed that "curricular elements related to LGBTQIA+ or gender diversity are mentioned on endocrinology or urology/gynaecology courses." Unfortunately, it's not enough to just be mentioned. Furthermore, we are not aware of any effort on the part of UMFCd to educate faculty about the needs and specificities of LGBTQIA+ patients - therefore the fact that certain issues related to our community are mentioned in lectures does not necessarily also mean that the things mentioned are correct or non-homophobic/transphobic. We hope that UMFCd will incorporate a methodology to train teachers in this regard, so that they no longer overlap concepts such as sex and gender, for example, and differentiate

between sexual/romantic orientation, gender identity and gender expression. The stigmatization of LGBTQIA+ patients by doctors and medical staff is as serious as the lack of medical knowledge. We would like to welcome the work of the SSM (Society of Medical Students) in different cities (Bucharest, Sibiu, Brasov), which have invited MozaiQ several times to hold workshops to raise awareness and sensitize future doctors to the needs and particularities of the LGBTQIA+ patient. SSMB is also a Campus Pride partner.

The response received from UMF Iuliu Hațieganu (Cluj Napoca) contains some positive elements: in the academic year 2021-2022 the Inclusion, Diversity and Equal Opportunities Office has been established, and in some courses of the Faculty of Medicine and in the General Medical Assistance study programme (Psychiatry, Endocrinology, Gynaecology) aspects related to gender diversity are taught.

However, it should be noted that there is no mention of concrete elements of content, or concrete measures as part of the mission of the newly established Office that would indicate an active interest in LGBTQIA+ student inclusion and support, or a concern for ensuring specific training to future doctors on LGBTQIA+ gender and diversity issues. In principle, the response received reflects a cautious openness on the part of the institution, and we hope that in the academic year 2022-2023 concrete actions will be started, in collaboration with Campus Pride Cluj or other LGBTQIA+ community organizations. This is imperative, given that heterosexism, transphobia and homophobia are systemic barriers to LGBTQIA+ people's access to quality health services.

Babeş-Bolyai University (Cluj Napoca) no longer has study programs focused on LGBTQIA+ or gender diversity, but has 23 courses integrating content related to gender diversity and LGBTQIA+, as well as a 12-hour workshop in the Department of

Pedagogy and Applied Didactics, entitled Sex Education, taught by biology professors and accredited sex education instructors. Regarding the prevention, monitoring, reporting and effective sanctioning of bullying and gender discrimination, homophobia and transphobia, the measures mentioned in the response received are rather generic, not specifically targeting the protection of LGBTQIA+ students. Regarding tools for inclusion and support of LGBTQIA+ students, we welcome the establishment of the performance grant "Effectiveness of an online intervention based on Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) in reducing distress of people with same-sex attraction", and hope that UBB will increasingly collaborate with Campus Pride Cluj to run varied and regular activities that create safe spaces (also) for LGBTQIA+ students. Interviews with two UBB teachers revealed that, although in their perception homophobic/transphobic behaviour is heard/seen much less often (compared to 10 years ago, for example), there are still teachers who express personal opinions and pass judgment on LGBTQIA+ people in class, or open criticism of teachers who support LGBTQIA+ inclusion through rules prohibiting homophobic, transphobic, racist, etc. comments and behaviour in class, or who directly support LGBTQIA+ students to face challenges and not to drop out.

At the West University of Timisoara, although there are no undergraduate programs focused on LGBTQIA+ or gender diversity, there are 11 courses (one or two semesters, in bachelor or master programs) that incorporate curricular elements related to LGBTQIA+ or gender diversity, as well as a core of teachers committed to creating an inclusive environment, especially in the Faculty of Psychology. They support LGBTQIA+ student initiatives such as various workshops and events or research projects. Regarding point 3 of the request for information, the fact that no complaints have been received about facts concerning bullying, gender discrimination, homophobia, transphobia etc. does not mean

that LGBTQIA+ students do not face these things - according to the testimonies collected from them. We will suggest in the third section of this report monitoring tools that do not put students at risk of exposure if they make a referral.

We conclude this discussion of the institutional responses to the public interest information requests with the two responses from the central institutions: the Ministry of Education and ARACIS.

The Ministry of Education sent us a two-and-a-half page response, which mentions various legal regulations and instruments (regulations, codes, commissions, etc.) aimed at "avoiding all forms of direct or indirect discrimination against any member of the academic community," without any direct reference to LGBTQIA+ students or gender diversity. Only sexual orientation is mentioned twice, in enumerations listing different criteria for discrimination: "In higher education, no discrimination on the basis of age, ethnicity, gender, social origin, political or religious orientation, sexual orientation or any other type of discrimination is allowed, except for affirmative action as provided by law." (LEN 1/2011, art. 118 para. 2).

The reply also refers to courses on ethics and academic integrity, which is clearly inappropriate, given that the focus of these courses is on combating plagiarism and not discrimination.

At the end, it refers to a few issues that are at least unrelated to our request - or even **offensively irrelevant**: access routes adapted to students with disabilities, state budget subsidies for university dormitories and canteens, non-attendance and distance learning programmes.

In conclusion, we consider the response of the Ministry of Education to be lacking in good faith, and we express our hope that in the future the Ministry will actually start working on the implementation of the Strategy for Equality for

LGBTQIA+¹³, developed and approved by the European Commission for the period 2020-2025. The strategy develops and clarifies many of the provisions of Directive 54/2006, for which Romania has anyway missed the implementation deadline (15 August 2008).

The response from the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in University Education (ARACIS) is also extensive (2.5 pages) and without any recognition of the need for support measures for LGBTQIA+ students, either through direct services, teacher training or monitoring the safety and quality of education that LGBTQIA+ students receive. Reference is made to academic integrity, without understanding how exactly this provision in the methodology for evaluating higher education institutions relates to combating homophobia and transphobia in the Romanian university environment:

The education provider/institution has a Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct/Academic Integrity, which upholds the values of academic freedom, academic autonomy and ethical integrity, has clear practices and mechanisms in place to ensure ongoing vigilance against possible fraud in academic, research or other activities, including active measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of plagiarism and to promote the principles of ethics and integrity among all members of the academic community.

The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) relieves itself of the responsibility of assessing LGBTQIA+ inclusion by monitoring study programmes focusing on LGBTQIA+ or gender diversity, or integrating elements of this theme. The reason given (the

13 https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/lgbtiq_factsheet_2020-2025_ro.pdf

principal of university autonomy) is not an excuse for the lack of concern for assessing inclusivity in the university environment. We urge ARACIS to take this into account and to include in the methodology for evaluating higher education institutions criteria related to the effectiveness of the fight against homophobia and transphobia, as well as the existence in the curricula of content that combats gender stereotypes and increases awareness and information about people with different gender identities and romantic, sexual and family orientations.

Moreover, although the ARACIS response begins with the release of responsibility for courses/curricular elements on LGBTQIA+/gender diversity, it ends with the mention that the institution participated, in the period 2017-2021, as a partner, in the implementation of the International TARGET project which, among others, also has the objective of initiating a national discourse on gender equality in research and development - which means that it is really its institutional duty to pursue the topic proposed by us and to initiate measures and mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the degree of inclusion and the quality of education benefiting people with different gender identities. The obligation and commitment to do so, as well as the important activities already undertaken in this regard, are moreover recorded by ARACIS itself, in the final report TARGET¹⁴:

Another activity that took place within the project was a comprehensive study on the most recent gender studies in the Romanian higher education system. This includes relevant information such as statistics, university programmes - to see how many gender studies programmes exist in Romania, at what level, when they were introduced into the educational landscape, the level of training of academic staff, what subjects are taught, what paths

14 https://www.aracis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/3.-ARACIS_reportGEP_RO.pdf 31 august 2022

graduates of these programmes follow and how many programmes are no longer offered at these universities. We also analysed previous studies written on the same topic to highlight the progress (or regression) of gender studies programmes in the Romanian higher education system.

Moreover, in the same report we found the following information: *A fluent dialogue has been established between ARACIS and Romanian universities to modify the evaluation methodology in order to include gender issues on the list of university evaluation criteria.*

In conclusion, we consider ARACIP's response to be lacking in good faith as the information provided is either irrelevant, incomplete or untrue. We strongly urge ARACIP to consider that the phrase 'gender issues' - used repeatedly in the 20+ pages of the above-mentioned report - includes people with different gender and sexual identities. It is therefore mandatory that the evaluation methodology includes criteria such as LGBTQIA+ inclusion measures and mechanisms.

6d. Analysis of gender equality plans

In this section we will look at 4 gender equality plans, respectively of the 4 universities we focused more on during the 2021-2022 academic year. After the end of the TARGET project, towards the end of 2021, ARACIS launched a gender equality plan, after which all universities in Romania had until summer 2022 to develop their own plans. The model provided by ARACIS includes absolutely no reference to other genders than the two binary genders, so it is more than commendable that all 4 plans presented in the following pages make clear reference to LGBTQIA+ people.

West University of Timisoara

As of 31 August 2020, a person responsible for gender equality and non-discrimination has been appointed in the

In addition to this concrete measure, the first 4 pages¹⁵ of the gender equality plan list numerous principles (principle of motivation, principle of professionalism, principle of transparency, fairness, academic freedom, professional and social responsibility, honesty, etc.) which are either the basis for the operating regulations of the HR department or the basis for the functioning of the UvT Ethics and Academic Deontology Committee. Under the principle of fairness, facts are listed that constitute violations of the principle that may include discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people, but this is not explicitly mentioned. Sexual orientation as a factor of discrimination is mentioned twice in the 8 pages of the plan. Gender equality is most often discussed in binary terms, plus a few factors such as ethnicity, religion, ability, sexual orientation, age.

The inclusion of indicators such as:

- Gender dimension in research and teaching content
- Gender-based violence (structural, physical, psychological), including sexual harassment
- Existence of a gender equality reference group/office
- Existence of gender awareness training policies
- Equality Days/Events or gender equality awareness-raising efforts
- Master's degree in gender and women's studies, gender-related learning activities, number of research centres in gender and women's studies, number of courses with a focus on gender and gender dimensions.

Sometimes in the list of indicators there are unclear formulations such as 'Number of scientific publications per year, broken down by gender and research areas' or 'Number of PhD theses defended per year, broken down by gender and research areas'.

¹⁵ <https://www.uvt.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Anexa-2-Planul-de-Egalitate-de-Gen-al-UVT.pdf> 16 septembrie 2022

Whenever reference is made to gender there is no indication of gender diversity (trans, non-binary identities, etc.), only men vs. women.

Overall, we consider the plan a good start to increasing LGBTQIA+ inclusion at Western University. It will be interesting and relevant to consider how the indicators listed above are evaluated and disseminated at the end of the academic year, and what concrete steps will be taken as a result of this evaluation. The plan is proposed for a single academic year, 2022-2023. As mentioned above, there is a core of faculty actively involved in combating homophobia and transphobia, and creating an inclusive academic environment for queer people, especially at the Faculty of Psychology. LGBTQIA+ students at Western University are supported by both these professors and the Campus Pride centre. Therefore, there are reasons to hope for an improvement of the situation in the near future.

University of Bucharest

The first¹⁶ Equality Plan of the University of Bucharest is adopted for the period 2022-2024 and is characterized by the authors as strategic, realistic and dynamic. Of all the four plans analysed, this is the only one that mentions the emergence of the *backlash* phenomenon in recent times: 'the emergence of increasingly visible manifestations of resistance or even hostility towards gender equality policies, (p. 4) stressing that this means new forms of inequality and vulnerability. It is also the only one to mention the obligation of such strategies to obtain European funding, and the fact that this type of approach will contribute to better implementation of national legislation. Last but not least, it is the only one that discusses sexual harassment and gender discrimination in taboo terms - the cause of under-reporting.

16 <https://unibuc.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Plan-de-Egalitate-de-Gen-UB-2022-2024.pdf>
16 september 2022

In this context, it is salutary that the UB proposes activities such as:

- Combating discrimination and sexual harassment through campaigns run with the help of student associations and relevant NGOs
- Online training module for employees and students on sexual harassment and gender discrimination

We also welcome the fact that the university is proposing activities such as renaming lecture halls/classrooms, setting up a series of conferences, events, awards, or producing a guide to promote inclusive language, in the hope that these will include the LGBTQIA+ community. Our queer name suggestions for lecture halls, conferences or awards: Nicola Tesla, Alan Turing, Petru Cercel, Alexandru Bogdan-Pitești, Radu cel Frumos, Jeana Gheorghiu, Mateiu Caragiale, Radu Ionescu, Petre Sirin, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault. Rachel Carson, Jeanette Winterson, Alexander the Great, Radu Stanca, Alice Voinescu.

Although gender-queer or LGBTQIA+ people are not mentioned anywhere in UB's PEG, there are many elements that indicate a high level of UB's commitment to gender diversity inclusion, from running a summer school on gender studies, to conducting research (pilot analysis) on gender in a faculty's curriculum, starting a collection of gender studies as part of the editorial plan of the University Publishing House, to setting up a Gender Equality Office to coordinate the implementation of this first two-year GSP and then evaluating and reviewing it every 4 years. As mentioned above, through the faculty involved in the Center for Gender Equality Policy, with the support of UB leadership, there is already a partnership and commitment by UB towards increasing the inclusivity and quality of the educational experience of LGBTQIA+ students.

Carol Davilla University of Medicine and Pharmacology Bucharest

The plan¹⁷ presented on the UMFC D website is defined as a framework document, and is a vision for 3 academic years, i.e. 2022-2025. Of the 4 PEG objectives, the last one is the most generous, in the sense of LGBTQIA+ inclusion: *mainstreaming gender in teaching programmes and in the whole research process*. (p. 5) In Annex 4, which details activities to achieve this objective, are listed both activities that we consider salutary, such as *'Internal training seminars on the use of gender perspective in research'* (p. 14) or *'Workshops on integrating gender equality and diversity issues in curriculum design [...]'* (p. 15) or courses for teachers and students *'on sex and gender variables'* (p.15) but also some proposals that we find unclear or even problematic, such as:

- Developing, communicating and implementing standards for incorporating sex and gender variables in research
- Institutional recognition of gender-sensitive dissertations and papers (e.g. master's/doctoral thesis awards)

We consider measures such as these two as potential *pinkwashing* activities, as it is not specified what these variables mean, i.e. their size and quantification, thus becoming a purely random matter. Moreover, throughout the 17 pages of the UMFC D PEG there is only one mention of sexual orientation, and no reference to gender diversity. Worryingly for an exclusively scientific university, on page 8 ecumenism is listed alongside the cultivation of tolerance and acceptance of difference and diversity as a means of promoting intercultural and interethnic understanding. It is disappointing that in such a document terms such as 'tolerance' and

17 https://umfcd.ro/wpcontent/uploads/2022/CERCETARE_SI_DEZVOLTARE/PLANUL_PENTRU_EGALITATEA_DE_GEN/PLANUL%20PENTRU%20EGALITATEA%20DE%20GEN%202022-2025%20UMFCD.pdf 16 september 2022

'ecumenism' are used, and no reference is made to LGBTQIA+ people. It is especially alarming that no reference is made to transgender people, and the imperative need for training of medical professionals to be able to competently and responsibly assist LGBTQIA+ patients, and especially transgender patients during HRT (Hormonal Gender Affirmation Therapy), surgery or periods of dysphoria.

To end this brief review on an optimistic note, we believe the appointment of a UMFC-wide PEG Officer is timely, and we hope that this person will be announced soon so that we can begin dialogue on the imperative need for training of health care staff to ensure equitable access to public health services for LGBTQIA+ people.

Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca

Of the four plans under analysis, this one¹⁸ is the only one that starts with setting a small conceptual framework in which terms such as sex, gender, equal opportunities and treatment, gender stereotypes are defined. In paragraph 4 of the first article we find a definition of women and men as male and female respectively - which is limiting and denotes a wrong overlap of sex with gender. In Article 2(2), however, the phrase 'persons of a particular sex or gender' is used, which allows for the inclusion of intersex or transgender persons. Paragraph 3 of the same article states that any order or provision to discriminate against a person on grounds of sex or gender is prohibited. Article 9 deals with harassment and gender-based violence and is the most extensive of the four plans analysed, with 18 paragraphs and over two pages, which is very welcome. It should be noted, however, that Article 19, entitled *Prevention and Punishment of*

18 https://www.ubbcluj.ro/ro/infoubb/files/InfoUBB_2021_09/2021_09_30_HCA_11981_privind_Ghidul_pentru_egalitate_de_gen_la_UBB.pdf 16 september 2022

Harassment and Gender Discrimination, does not provide for any sanctions. Article 12, which is a welcome article, contains many concrete activities to combat explicit or implicit gender bias, as well as clear definitions of such bias. The plan proposes setting up a gender equality structure with a mandate for data collection and expertise in various fields, from designing courses and campaigns to promote gender equality to organisational psychology, legal advice or public health. Although gender-queer people are not referred to at any point, they are implicitly included through wording such as that identified in Article 2. It is surprising that at a university with a strong gender studies department there is no mention of gender diversity or sexual orientation at all. We put this in the context of the uncertainty created by the proposed 2020 gender studies ban¹⁹, reinforced by the more recent legislative proposal²⁰ this year²¹. Also, in the UBB faculty, as indeed in all 4 universities where we interviewed professors, there are professors who openly express their homophobic/transphobic views, both in the classroom and on various platforms/publications, sometimes even organising conferences.

19 <https://www.g4media.ro/peste-800-de-universitari-reclama-la-ccr-legea-care-interzice-referirea-la-identitatea-de-gen-in-scoli.html> 16 septembrie 2022

20 <https://www.g4media.ro/asociatia-mozaiq-despre-proiectul-de-lege-initiat-de-sapte-deputati-udmr-un-nou-atac-periculos-impotriva-comunitatii-lgbt-din-romania-preia-modelul-lui-orban-din-ungaria.html> 16 september 2022

21 <https://www.qmagazine.ro/in-universitatea-babes-bolyai-poate-fiecare-student-sa-isi-aleaga-genul-si-sa-fie-baiat-sau-fata-fara-ca-sexul-biologic-sa-conteze/> 31 august 2022



7. Recommendations

7a. Campus Pride Intervention Model

The Campus Pride project is a very important one for our association and its results continue to be beneficial for the LGBTQI+ students of Romania. Its implementation had a couple of important elements that make it be as successful as it is. The main branches of this project and the main elements of our intervention model are: **Community Building** with all that it entails, **Outreach**, **Advocacy**, and **Management**.

Building the team – Raising leaders in the community

The Campus Pride model of intervention focuses on identifying and raising strong leaders in the community that will afterwards empower their communities and develop actions to build an united front for advocating for the rights of the LGBTQI+ students and youth. These young people will lead the efforts of community building, outreach and advocacy, having at their disposal the resources of the piloting NGO - knowledge, expertise, finances etc. The selected LGBTQI+ youth will be the core team of the Campus Pride initiative, depending on them to later expand their

team by analyzing their needs and the volume of work and doing the necessary steps in that direction.

Building a core team should start with identifying LGBTQI+ students and youth with initiative, persons that show a sense of civic responsibility and a will to make a change in their communities. In our case, this was done by organizing an online open call where LGBTQI+ students and youth were invited to write their motivation, their aspirations and their view of a LGBTQI+ student-led community centre. The selection process also included holding interviews with the ones that filled out the online questionnaire, a selection being made by taking into consideration both the questionnaire and the interviews.

After the selection has been made and a core team has been formed on paper, our model addresses the need of forming an actual functional working team and the topic of equipping them with the necessary tools to pilot the LGBTQI+ community centre for students and youth. In our experience, both of the two goals can be achieved through training activities intercalated with free time that put the persons in situations where they have to interact with each other (eg. a camp, a weekend training). In our case, the Campus Pride core team participated in a week's long training camp in another city, where they received intensive training and participated in workshops with the topics of community building, advocacy, outreach, building a community space. In their free time, the participants bonded, imagined plans for the future and put the basis of their relationships. We recommend having a similar approach that intertwines the team building activities with training activities in a manner that facilitates the team members interacting as much with each other, especially in their free time.

Community building - Bringing the community together

Community Building begins with a safe space. It is extremely necessary for the student to feel safe and at home when entering the Campus Pride space. This can be done in a preexisting location such as the office of an LGBTQI+ NGO, or it can be a space rented with the specific purpose of being a safe space. This space can be available when the students need it and during the community building events.

When trying to build a strong community, it is important to be consistent and understand the needs of the target group. In this sense, the team may organize events that are meant to consult the community regarding their needs and wants. These sorts of events can be organized at the beginning of the educational year, or after each vacation. Keep in mind that a diverse array of events will attract a diverse crowd of people that feel the need for a safe space, so try not to be limited to only a couple of types of events and always try to come up with new and interesting ideas.

For the organization of an event, the team will need a couple of resources besides the space. Firstly, they will need a couple of volunteers, employees or facilitators to coordinate the event and ensure the safety of the participants. Secondly, they will need necessary resources such as drinks and food, this can include finger food or snacks. Moreover, depending on the type of event they may need other materials such as paper, scissors, yarn, pens, etc.

Communication is an important element when it comes to community building as well, thus a social media presence is a must, especially on platforms that are used by students. Identify which social media platforms your target audience uses the most, and try to be consistent in publishing content

on your pages. For example, it may be a good idea to post other content relevant to your audience such as news, relevant international days, announcements for student opportunities and so on.

You should also build a distinct visual identity that your followers can recognize. There are easy to use apps and websites that can help you with this, such as Canva, which is free for NGOs. In your design you should always include the necessary details such as the day, the hours, the location, and the title of your event. It may be a good idea to take photos during your events to post them afterward, provided everyone that is taken a picture of agrees to its publishing, the safety of your beneficiaries must always come first.

Another important aspect when it comes to community building activities refers to the way in which the participants are encouraged to return for the next event and be part of the community that is being built. All of the above help with the retention of participants coming to the events, showing a high level of involvement, effort, and professionalism from the team. Adding to that, making people return to the following events requires connecting personally to the participants and building relationships with them in order for them to feel a sense of familiarity, friendship and community. It is essential that the participants feel welcomed, heard, and included, and an active effort in this direction is needed. This effort may include taking an interest in their life, discussing their needs and problems, listening to them if they are going through a hard time etc.

Outreach - You are not alone

An important part of our intervention model refers to the involvement of local stakeholders in the efforts and actions conducted by Campus Pride. We are not alone in addressing

the needs of the LGBTQI+ students and youth and addressing the realities that they face, that being true even if we talk about organizations and stakeholders that don't target the community specifically, but through their actions they advocate for the members of the community also. Having this in mind, it is important to get in contact with all potential partners that would help in achieving the goal of making the university environment a more inclusive space for LGBTQI+ students and youth. These stakeholders may include student associations, members of academia, other LGBTI organizations and groups, other allied organizations and associations, friendly locations and businesses, media outlets etc.

In our working experience, student associations are open to collaboration and have often proved important allies in Campus Pride's efforts, both in disseminating the information further, as well as conducting events in partnerships and holding workshops. Student associations can help with leading the message further by using their platform and by offering a level of integrity and credibility to Campus Pride - by sharing the actions of Campus Pride, the student associations put a seal of trust on Campus Pride that raises the students' level of trust in the initiative. Throughout the implementation of the LGBTI student and youth center, the team held several events with facilitators from student associations, also holding workshops for the members of the student associations and participating at their galas. It is important to keep the dialogue open and maintain a close contact with the student organizations, so tailored and individual invites to some bigger events during the year is recommended.

Campus Pride also organized events in collaboration with several friendly spaces, building partnerships that benefit the both parties. Even though these collaborations often include paying for services, good relationships with friendly locations

and businesses are key to diversifying the activities and creating a community ecosystem of safe spaces for the LGBTQI+ students and youth community. For example, the team organized in other safe locations parties, drag shows, and even arts & crafts events.

Another important outreach tool refers to sending monthly newsletters to former participants, recurring participants, stakeholders, and other interested persons and persons that are already in the organization's database. The newsletter may contain the activities conducted throughout the preceding month, activities that will happen in the current month, and other important announcements or news. A recurring newsletter helps with the retention of participants and the overall visibility of the activities planned, being an important dissemination tool.

Volunteers - Expanding the team

Volunteers are a core part of the implementation of Campus Pride. They can come up with ideas for events, invite friends to participate, facilitate events, post about them on social media, and overall increase the visibility and capacity of the initiative/project. Recruitment can be done through a volunteer call or during the entirety of the initiative by mentioning the opportunity to the participants during the events. A couple of core volunteers are: the facilitators, the organizers, the logistics team, the communication team. You may be surprised by the amount of people willing to get involved. In order to keep the volunteers engaged, you must provide a level of flexibility while also allowing them to take up responsibilities. Try to make their experience a fun one as much as it is a productive one, the volunteers of today can be the employees of tomorrow, or advocates for your project.

Advocacy - Efforts of making the university environment a more inclusive space for LGBTI students

Our model of intervention also addresses the advocacy element and stipulates a series of actions that would raise the awareness towards the realities of LGBTQI+ students and youth and that would advocate for respecting the LGBTQI+ community rights.

Firstly, we mapped the experiences of the LGBTQI+ students and youth in their universities by launching an online questionnaire, as well as conducting peer-to-peer meetings and interviews with the LGBTQI+ students and youth that participated in the events and that were willing to share their stories and experiences. These were dubbed by information requests addressed to stakeholders of academia in order to map the situation of the LGBTQI+ students and youth through an institutional lens. All of these and their results are described and elaborated in the present report, another important advocacy tool that can help in the dialogue with the authorities and members of academia.

Furthermore, as part of our advocacy strategy we paid close attention to the experiences and stories of the LGBTQI+ students and youth that contacted us both during the events, as well as on social media and other platforms of communication. As such, we were able to identify problematic behaviors and attitudes of certain university staff, and managed to respond accordingly. Our response included writing letters towards the administrative staff of the respective faculties and making them aware that the civil society is not impassible towards inappropriate behavior and is watching closely in order to best protect the rights of the LGBTI community. With the permission of the universities, posters had been put up in universities in order to increase

the visibility of the initiative and disseminate the existence of our actions even further.

Management - Internal organization

Management can make or break a project/initiative. Campus Pride needs to be a safe space for everyone, including the team (volunteers or not). For that to be the case, management must not take a top-down approach but rather listen to the recommendations of the students involved and invite them to the round table when possible. Involve them as much as possible in the life of your organization without obliging them to do anything they do not feel inclined to do. If decisions need to be taken that directly affect the students you should try to take these decisions in a democratic fashion and be transparent in all your endeavors, thus building credibility with the team, the volunteers, the target audience and the public as well.

Sustainability - Going forward

The sustainability component addresses the ways in which the initiative can go forward and grow. Thus, in order to professionalize and improve their skills and knowledge, the Campus Pride team has participated over the course of their activities to numerous training, workshops, national and international conferences, and received first-hand help from the members of MozaiQ. This continuous professionalization is facilitated by MozaiQ and serves the purpose of building strong leaders and empowering them with the informational and practical tools necessary to further grow and represent their community.

Furthermore, the sustainability element refers to the financial aspect as well. In this regard, the Campus Pride members have been involved in all processes of grant writing

with the subject of LGBTQIA+ students and youth that MozaiQ started. They were consulted with regards to the activities that should be included in the project proposals, the needs and realities of the community. The team was also asked to be actively involved in writing the project proposal, being another tool for further professionalizing the Campus Pride core team.

Although, remembering that Campus Pride is a student-led community center, we have to keep in mind that the core team and volunteers will be in a constant state of change, as students are leaving their universities and with that their touch with the realities that continue to happen in their absence. As such, a constantly changing team is the appropriate thing, as it allows the initiative to always be anchored in reality and strongly tied with the real needs of the LGBTI students and youth. In our case, even though the current Campus Pride team is still in university, they have already recruited new people, organizing an open call for volunteers. From the ones that were accepted, the team plans to select a few of them to empower into becoming community leaders, continuing the work and further building the LGBTQIA+ students and youth community. The same processes that were applied to the pilot core team must be repeated to the following ones as to raise the level of succes.

7b. Universities

An inclusive, welcoming and safe academic environment for LGBTQIA+ students requires that faculty/professors and non-teaching staff do not engage in homophobic or transphobic attitudes and behaviors in the classroom, in public spaces on campus or online.

This requires the following measures:

1. Teacher training: at least once a year a course delivered by an LGBT+ organisation is needed to train professors on basic terms in the discussion of gender diversity and LGBT+: gender identity, romantic and sexual orientation, gender expression, gender norms, etc. University training centers and counseling and guidance centers can be supported with TOT's by community organizations such as MozaiQ, to deliver this course in-house on an annual basis.
2. Mechanisms and procedures that allow LGBTQIA+ students and allies to report bullying based on homophobia and transphobia without the risk of being persecuted and discriminated against: this can be done through a confidential online form, but with regular information to students about ensuring confidentiality, and what the student can do in case of disclosure of his/her identity (criminal complaint etc.)
3. Support to monitor own prejudices and negative attitudes towards different gender identities and romantic, sexual or family orientations²²: discussion group, peer-to-peer support, collective coaching by an LGBTQIA+/aligned mentor
4. Inclusive curricula: this does not necessarily have to mean themed curricula or specific curricular elements, although there is clearly interest in this type of curriculum/content given the growing LGBT+ student population. It is enough for a maths or history teacher to mention, for example, that Alan Turing was gay, without ironic or malicious comments.

22 We use the term 'romantic, sexual or family orientation' to educate the general public about the meaning of the term 'orientation,' which until now has been used exclusively with sexual connotations, with all the negative consequences. It is important to remember that the term encompasses a range of relationships made possible by strong connections with other people. Sometimes it's all three aspects at once, sometimes just one or two. For example, we can physically desire someone without being in love, or we can be married and happy with someone to whom we don't feel sexual attraction (anymore)

5. Ensuring the physical and emotional safety of LGBTQIA+ students, both in classrooms and in public spaces on campus, from libraries to canteens or dormitories: unisex facilities on campus, display of materials (posters, banners, etc.) in public spaces that support LGBTQIA+ diversity, regular information to students about support and protection services available to LGBTQIA+ people facing harassment, discrimination, difficult situations caused by homophobia/transphobia, as well as sanctions/consequences of acts of harassment, discrimination and harassment of LGBTQIA+ people (teachers or students) in the academic environment.

Last but not least, gender equality plans must include these measures in good faith, and with accountability by university leadership for their implementation, monitoring, evaluation and periodic review, with consultation with LGBTQIA+ students and queer community organisations.

7c. Student associations

LGBTQIA+ students are more vulnerable than other students, not only because of homophobia and transphobia in society, but also because they often lack family support, experience anxiety, depression and suicide risk more than other young people²³, and lack LGBT-friendly spaces and services - which isolates them and magnifies all their other problems.

23 Miranda-Mendizábal, A., et al. "Sexual orientation and suicidal behaviour in adolescents and young adults: Systematic review and meta-analysis." *The British Journal of Psychiatry* (2017).

- During orientation week for first-year students, activities can be organised to present the university's inclusion policies on different levels, including LGBTQIA+.
- Organise thematic events (IDAHOT, TDOR, TDOV, etc.) and awareness-raising campaigns among students and teachers about the causes and consequences of harassment, discrimination and abuse to which LGBTQIA+ students are often subjected.
- Student organisations such as ANOSR, SSM or AIESEC, with national resources and impact, play a key role in changing the paradigm in which LGBTQIA+ students are invisible and exposed to risks of all kinds, from dropping out of school to serious precariousness on multiple levels: economically, socially, emotionally.

7d. Ministry of Education and ARACIS

Gender equality means equality for all identities, including those of LGBTQIA+ people. Gender equality is not just about equality between men and women, but between people of all genders and family, romantic or sexual orientations.

It is unacceptable that your gender equality plans never once mention gender diversity or hate-based gender violence against LGBTQIA+ people.

It is imperative that you take responsibility and fulfill your obligation to ensure equal opportunities for all students, recognising the existence of LGBTQIA+ students and their right to a safe, quality education, through measures and mechanisms that actively combat homophobia, transphobia and any form of intolerance or hatred in academia.

It is imperative that you consider issues such as protecting trans students with institutional email addresses or recording

in administrative documents the name they use, whether they have changed their identity papers or not. Otherwise, these students are publicly exposed as trans people, which puts them at risk of being harassed, humiliated, bullied, discriminated against.

It is also imperative to apply evaluation criteria to teachers and higher education institutions that measure the effectiveness of concrete actions to raise awareness and combat homophobia and transphobia (training opportunities, inclusion of LGBTQIA+ diversity in the programme of events celebrating diversity in general, conferences with guests from the community in the Week of the Other, etc.) in order to ensure equitable access to education for LGBTQIA+ students and successful completion of university studies.

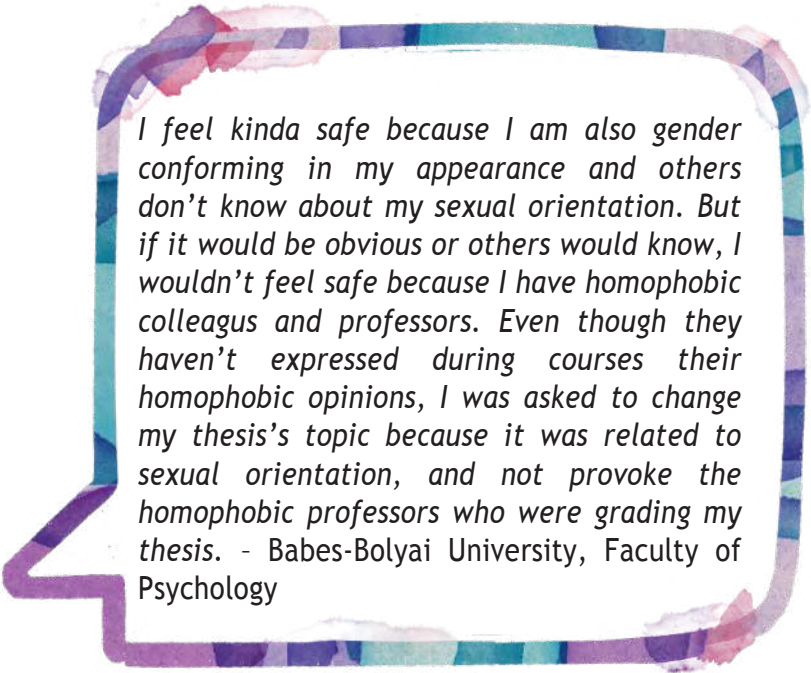
LGBTQIA+ people are equal citizens in Romanian society, and Romania will not become truly educated until it ensures equitable access to education and support for the success of *all* students. It is imperative to include in the curriculum of psycho-pedagogical modules the training of teachers at all levels to understand what homophobia, transphobia or biphobia means, and to be aware of the legal, professional and emotional effects of hate speech or acts of bullying, discrimination, harassment and humiliation in the school and academic environment.

You have an obligation to monitor academic institutions and promote the good practices that some universities already have in this regard²⁴. You also have an obligation to monitor and address the causes of school/academic failure and dropout, and to ensure that the principle of non-discrimination in terms of age, ethnicity, gender, social

24 <https://inclusion.uvt.ro/communication.html> 1 September 2022.

origin, political or religious orientation, sexual orientation, gender identity, HIV status, (dis)ability or any other criteria based on stereotypes and prejudices is fully respected.

These matters need to be clearly affirmed and regularly monitored, in a safe framework for LGBTQIA+ students and teachers. We strongly urge you to create concrete mechanisms that LGBTQIA+ students and teachers can use safely, without public exposure and without suffering additional negative consequences, so that they can carry out their work in the best possible way for the benefit of society as a whole.



I feel kinda safe because I am also gender conforming in my appearance and others don't know about my sexual orientation. But if it would be obvious or others would know, I wouldn't feel safe because I have homophobic collegues and professors. Even though they haven't expressed during courses their homophobic opinions, I was asked to change my thesis's topic because it was related to sexual orientation, and not provoke the homophobic professors who were grading my thesis. - Babes-Bolyai University, Faculty of Psychology



Project implemented by:

