



Chances and Challenges for Rainbow Families

NELFA ERASMUS+ PROJECT (01 JUNE 2017 – 30 JUNE 2018)

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AIM

This project has helped to strengthen NELFA, the Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations, based in Brussels, especially towards its educational activities. This was done by training staff and active volunteers on leadership skills, teaching and consulting skills, as well as guidance skills (through five-day events provided by the consulting corporation „In Dialogue“. In addition, there was a three-day job-shadowing in Lisbon at ILGA-Portugal, a leading LGBTIQ* organisation in the country.

NELFA was and is especially interested in improving its outreach work, meaning sharing and informing on LGBTIQ* parents and their children, towards the society at large and specific interest groups. Furthermore, in improving the work carried out directly to LGBTIQ* parents, both in terms of training and counselling.



MAIN PARTNER

In DIALOGUE

In Dialogue in Gouda/Netherlands is a consultancy and training organisation specialised in the communicative and relational aspects of organisational life. They have a vast international experience across Europe and beyond and find a great interest in facilitating dialogue in contexts characterised by professional as well as cultural diversity. Their main services are: professional education, consultation to organisations, teams and communities (in relation to strategic development, evaluation processes, conflict mediation and much more), development of leadership competences, coaching of individuals and teams. All of the work is based on the positive relational praxis, drawing upon principles of social constructionist and narrative approaches and systematic thinking.



TRAINING COURSE

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

04-08 DECEMBER 2017 in GOUDA

The course for one NELFA staff member (Belgium) looked at conflict mediation from a social constructionist and appreciative perspective. The focus was on giving an ability to inquire into the good reasons of others and appreciate their perspective (even when you disagree). Furthermore, it trained in asking questions that reveal the patterns of the conflict as well as of the times where things worked better. This encourages the parties to act differently without feeling blamed, and relationships will be repaired.



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

lessons learned during the course



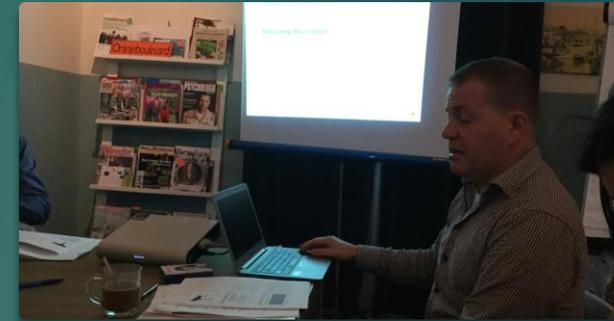
An understanding of the patterns and development of conflicts as well as an insight into the social constructionist and appreciative approach

A chance to practice advanced listening to get in touch with the dream hidden behind the frustration



A space to practice dialogue techniques that explore the patterns of the conflict and its exceptions, alternative ways of dealing with the differences

Time to practice mediation between two people as well as within smaller teams/groups



An opportunity to look at conflict situations at your own work, and reflect upon your own role as a mediator

And of course: Get to know new interesting people, not only LGBTIQ* activists, to improve the network in general!!!

TRAINING COURSE

INSPIRING FACILITATION, TEACHING AND TRAINING

15-19 JANUARY 2018 in COPENHAGEN

This course (for two NELFA volunteers from Germany and Portugal) offered diverse question techniques focusing on connecting the topic of the own training or teaching to the concrete practice of the learners, playing with scenarios and planning the future. It offered process exercises to stimulate engagement, creativity and dialogue in ways that ensure that everybody's voice is heard and that conclusions are reached when needed.



INSPIRING FACILITATION, TEACHING AND TRAINING

lessons learned during the course



An understanding of social constructionist, systems and appreciative approaches to change and learning

Practical exercises for groups that you can directly apply at home - and reflection on them



An insight into the elements of the dialogue that make a difference: question techniques, separation of the dialogue, domains and phases

An ability to plan and facilitate change and learning processes



A chance to look at and reflect upon the own reality and position as a facilitator of change and learning

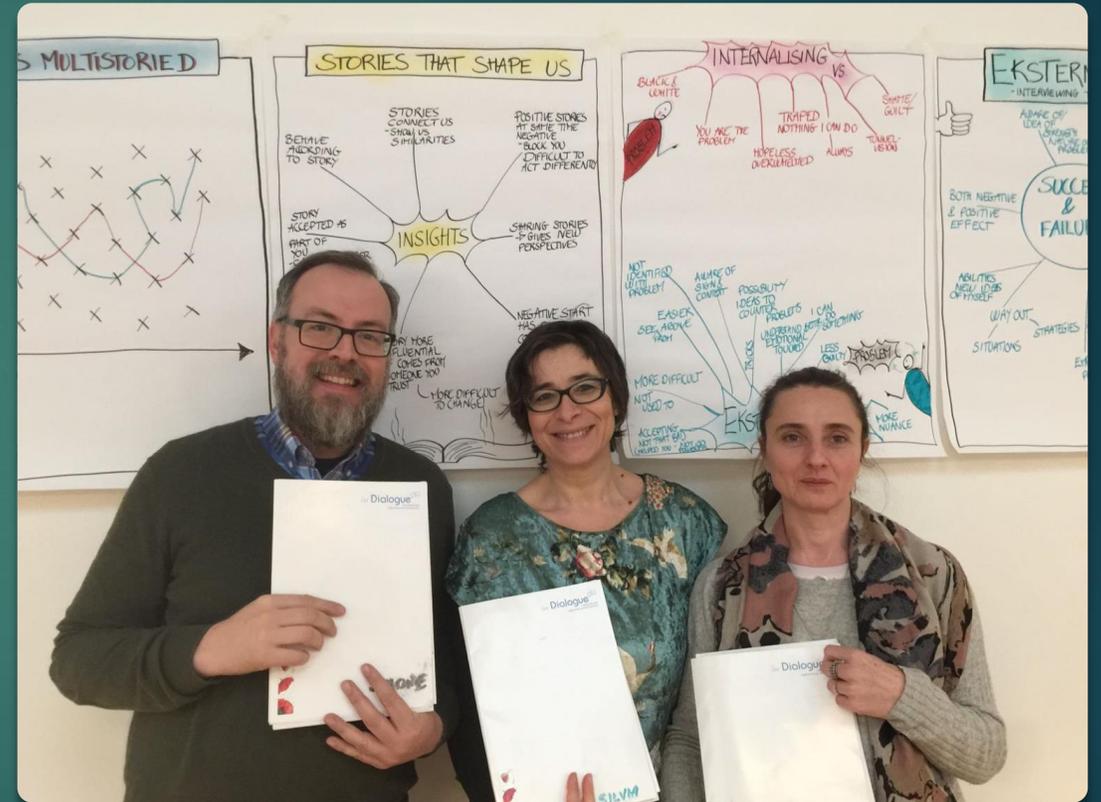
And of course: Get to know new interesting people, not only LGBTIQ* activists, to improve the network in general!!!

TRAINING COURSE

NARRATIVE COACHING AND GUIDANCE

05-09 FEBRUARY 2018 in COPENHAGEN

The course, attended by five NELFA volunteers from Italy and Portugal offers a narrative approach to coaching. This is very powerful when self-limiting ideas have played a role in a person's life for a longer time and when these ideas are standing in the way of living out dreams and values. The approach works with externalising conversations: the focus person realises that he is not the problem, and that alternative stories exist. Elaborating and unfolding - "thickening" - these stories helps the person finding his way back to his own resources, hopes, dreams and values. New opportunities for action arise.



NARRATIVE COACHING AND GUIDANCE

lessons learned during the course



Insight into the theoretical foundations of social constructionist theory and narrative coaching

A chance to practice externalising conversations and the deconstruction of dominant ideas and to construct alternative stories about resources, hopes and values.



Possibility to practice witnessing methods and an understanding of how to apply the techniques in different situations – to individuals and teams – and specifically to the target group

A possibility to have a look at the own learning goals and identity as a coach through being coached



Skills in collegial coaching (outsider witness groups) in order to continue the reflection and learning process at home

And of course: Get to know new interesting people, not only LGBTIQ* activists, to improve the network in general!!!

TRAINING COURSE

CONSULTING AND DEVELOPMENT OF TEAMS AND GROUPS

12-16 MARCH 2018 in COPENHAGEN

The focus of this course (with one NELFA volunteer from Italy) was on facilitating dialogue and decision-making in teams and groups with diverse stakeholders, different levels of hierarchy, disagreement about past challenges and future direction etc. (for example a project-team, a unit at an organisation). The methods can be applied both for team development (coaching) as well as for dealing with disagreement and challenges in the team or group.



CONSULTING AND DEVELOPMENT OF TEAMS AND GROUPS

lessons learned during the course



An understanding of social constructionist systems and appreciative approaches to change and learning

A chance to practice and reflect upon different questioning techniques that stimulate dialogue



Practical tools for separating the dialogue during meetings and workshops to make people truly listen to each other

An ability to plan and facilitate open-ended processes with teams and groups, where decisions about the future have to be made



A chance to look at and reflect upon your own reality and position as a facilitator of change and decision-making

And of course: Get to know new interesting people, not only LGBTIQ* activists, to improve the network in general!!!

JOB-SHADOWING

In addition to the structured training courses, the project had another component: The job-shadowing.

It offered a chance to observe good practices. NELFA sought closer exchanges of experiences and lessons learned from a strong and effective LGBTIQ* organisation - in working as professional organisation, building institutional partnerships, bringing about social, political and legal changes thus contributing to strengthening NELFA's role and capacity in international networking, European advocacy, members coordination and support. This year, **ILGA Portugal** was selected. They gave us – **10 NELFA staff members and volunteers from France, Italy, Belgium, Croatia, Poland, Finland and Albania** - the possibility to combine our project with a major international conference concerning rainbow families in Europe: „We speak out: LGBTI & Family Rights“ (Lisbon, 16th of March 2018)



SHADOWING-PARTNER ILGA PORTUGAL



ILGA PORTUGAL is the largest and oldest NGO in Portugal striving for equality and against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Since its foundation in 1995, ILGA Portugal's mission in the social conclusion of LGBTIQ* (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer) people through a program of social support. ILGA Portugal is seated in Lisbon, has around 1,500 members and is founding member of NELFA. The organisation has experiences with Erasmus+ and a special section for rainbow families (the only one in Portugal).



Website: <http://www.ilga-portugal.pt/ilga/index.php>

JOB-SHADOWING, ILGA PORTUGAL IN LISBON

14-16 MARCH 2018 – major events...



A deep insight into the work of ILGA Portugal, a day in the Lisbon headquarter including a comprehensive presentation and several staff encounters

Meeting with a lesbian mother of FIVE children who recently published her own rainbow families website, entitled: www.ourkidsareallright.com



A meeting with the local group of Amnesty International, including a discussion about professional and successful human rights campaigns

The aim was to learn more about the work of „amnistia“ to be able to create similar touching and heartwarming campaigns for LGBTIQ* parents and their children



The participation at a hearing in the Portuguese Parliament with other LGBTIQ* activists concerning a new important law for trans and intersex rights and a speech of NELFA Vice President Giuseppina La Delfa

And: the preparation of the major conference with other European LGBTIQ* activists...

JOB SHADOWING

Rainbow Families Conference

The participants prepared the conference logistically (badges, attendee packages including leaflets, postcards, programme etc.).

NELFA staff members and volunteers from France, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Croatia and Poland held speeches or attended panel discussions.

The aim of the conference was to highlight the achievements (i.e. in Portugal) for LGBTIQ* people in general and rainbow families in particular, but also to explain the remaining legal hurdles and day-to-day problems in different countries.

For the first time, NELFA came together with the new European Network of Parents of LGBTQI+ Persons and its national branch AMPLOS. Specific topics were trans rights and also the EU Directive on freedom of movement.

Besides LGBTIQ* activists, there were also a range of high-level politicians and other stakeholders who contributed to the conference (i.a. Paola Panzeri from COFACE Families Europe). The co-chair of the European Parliament's Intergroup on LGBTI Rights, Terry Reintke, had sent a video message.

We Should

Speak Out:

LGBTI and Family rights

16 de março
ISEG
2018



JOB SHADOWING

Rainbow Families Conference [photos: Flavio Alberto]



TRAINING COURSE

INSPIRING FACILITATION, TEACHING AND TRAINING FOR LGBT

30 APRIL – 04 MAY 2018 in BERLIN-MOABIT

This course (for seven NELFA staff members and volunteers from France, Spain, Italy, Croatia, Bulgaria and Poland) offered diverse question techniques focusing on connecting the topic of the own training or teaching to the concrete practice of the learners, playing with scenarios and planning the future. It offered process exercises to stimulate engagement, creativity and dialogue in ways that ensure that everybody's voice is heard and that conclusions are reached when needed. This time, the course was specialised on LGBT(IQ*) activists.



INSPIRING FACILITATION, TEACHING AND TRAINING FOR LGBT

lessons learned during the course



An understanding of social constructionist, systems and appreciative approaches to change and learning

Practical exercises for groups that you can directly apply at home - and reflection on them



An insight into the elements of the dialogue that make a difference: question techniques, separation of the dialogue, domains and phases

An ability to plan and facilitate change and learning processes



A chance to look at and reflect upon the own reality and position as a facilitator of change and learning

And of course: Get to know new interesting people - to improve the network of LGBTIQ* activists!!!

EXTRA: EUROPEAN RAINBOW FAMILIES MEETING IN BERLIN

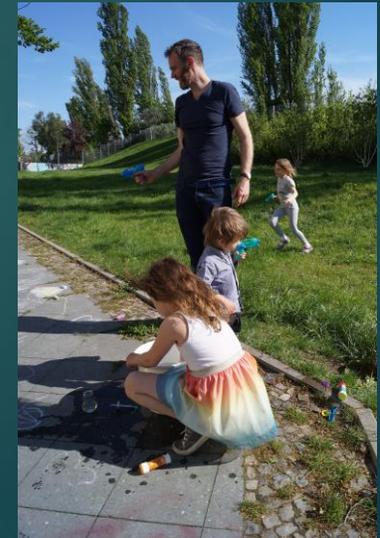
NELFA took the occasion of the Erasmus+ training course in Berlin to organise a little European Rainbow Families Meeting – with course participants, their relatives and other interested families as well.

LSVD in Berlin-Brandenburg (NELFA's job-shadowing partner in 2016-2017) invited us to celebrate in their **Rainbow Family Centre** (Berlin-Schöneberg). Around 70 people from 11 different European countries were gathering together in a cosy atmosphere on Saturday, 28th of April 2018.

On Sunday, 29th of April, around 90 LGBTIQ* parents and their children took part in a boat tour on the river Spree and a following picnic in front of the German chancellery. The event was part of this year's celebration of the **International Family Equality Day IFED**, under the motto „Children's Rights Matter“.



EXTRA: EUROPEAN RAINBOW FAMILIES MEETING IN BERLIN



EXTRA: EUROPEAN RAINBOW FAMILIES MEETING IN BERLIN



EVALUATION

NELFA staff members and volunteers from eleven European countries attended in total 16 training courses (In Dialogue) and 10 additional job-shadowings (in Lisbon, with ILGA Portugal)

All participants received an Attendance Certificate of the host organisations and an official „Europass Mobility Document“ of the European Union

100 % of the participants would like to participate in other Erasmus+ activities and/or are motivated to carry on developing their skills

All participants were very or rather satisfied with their experience and would recommend it to colleagues

All participants already shared or want to share their new knowledge - at staff meetings, conferences, workshops, and/or with written (media) reports



EVALUATION

Participants satisfaction rate...

... with the mobility experience in general: 100 %

... with NELFA's project management: 100 % (86 % very)

... with the expected content of the mobility: 100 % (71 % very)

OTHER INDICATORS (positive answers):

Opportunity to share knowledge with colleagues: 96,15 %

Using the lessons learned for the sending institution: 92,31 %

Strengthening the cooperation with project partners: 92,31 %

The rainbow families movement will benefit from the project: 90 %



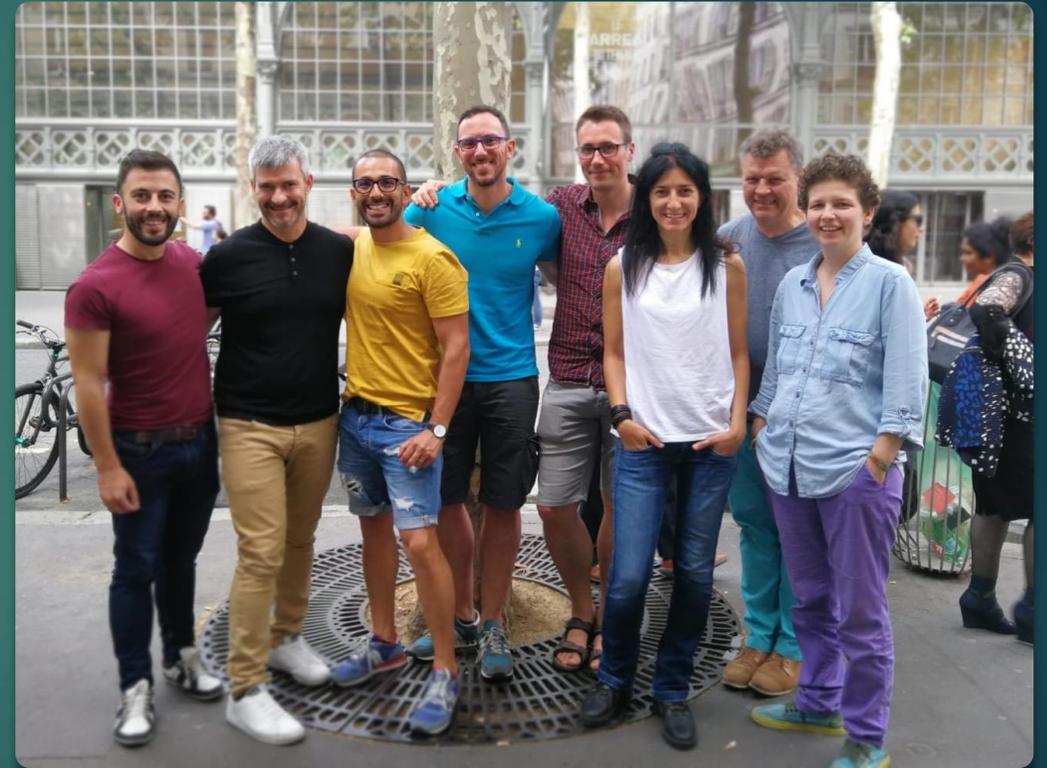
SUMMARY

The NELFA Board summed up at the end of the project – during a Board meeting in Paris (9th of June 2018):

„We are very pleased with the successful project. We fulfilled our aim to improve our educational skills and to strengthen our network through many face-to-face meetings. We want to follow up this positive experience in a third project which has already started...“

JOINING FORCES FOR THE WELL-BEING OF RAINBOW FAMILIES
(including 19 training courses and 3 job-shadowings)

Further information: write an Email to secretary@nelfa.org!



THANK YOU 😊



Special thanks go to the national Erasmus+ agency „aef-europe“ in Brussels for their support at different stages of the project!

