



Joining forces for the well-being of rainbow families

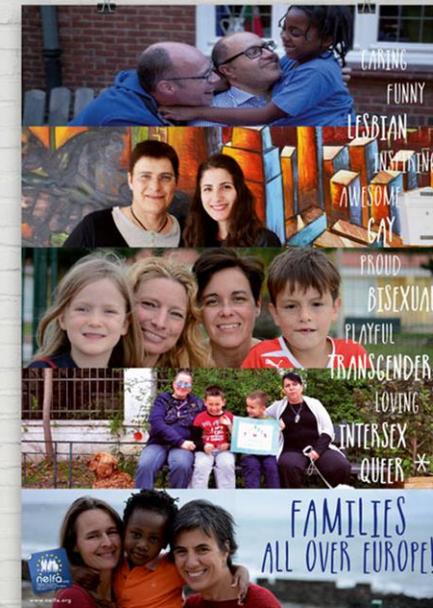
NELFA ERASMUS+ PROJECT (01 JUNE 2018 – 30 JUNE 2019)

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AIM

This project was dedicated to the empowerment of **NELFA**. The Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations wanted to strengthen its educational activities for the well-being of rainbow families in a (possibly) non-welcoming environment. This was done by **training staff and active volunteers** on leadership skills, teaching and consulting skills, as well as guidance skills (through nine different training courses provided by "In Dialogue", a Dutch consultancy corporation). In addition, there was a **job-shadowing in Helsinki** at "Sateenkaariperheet ry", the Finnish Rainbow Families Organisation (one of the largest and most professional in Europe).

NELFA was (and still is) interested in improving its **outreach work**, meaning **sharing and informing on rainbow families**, towards the society at large and target groups with distrustful, negative or even hostile attitudes. Furthermore, in improving the work carried out directly with LGBTIQ* parents.



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 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. In the pictures: course facilitators **Yvor Broer and Lene Mogensen**.



TRAINING COURSE 1

CLEAR LEADERSHIP

05-09 NOVEMBER 2018 in COPENHAGEN

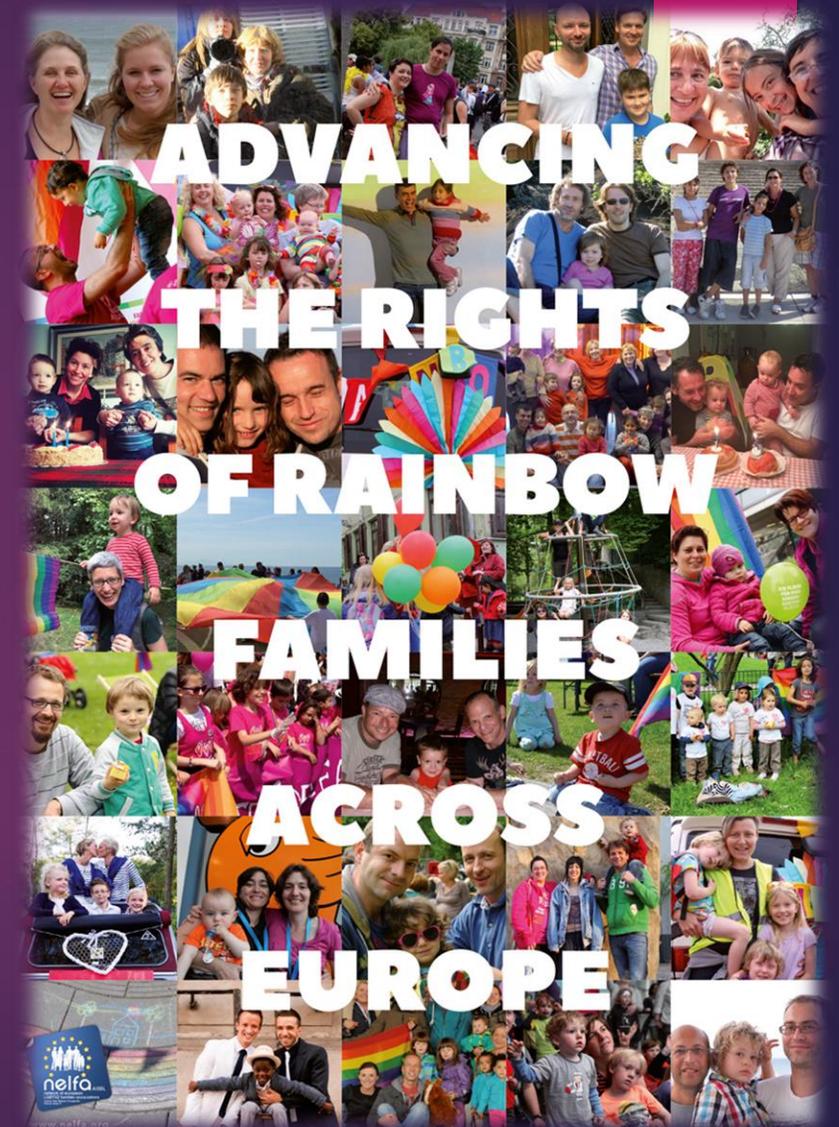
The course **for one NELFA staff member (Poland)** offered a valuable opportunity to reflect on the practice and to understand the relational aspects of leadership. The focus was on gaining concrete leadership tools to create transparency and direction while at the same time involving individuals, teams and groups in meaningful dialogues about goals and challenges. The course was based on the assumption that leadership is relational; we cannot change others, but only ourselves and through this invite others to change as well. Furthermore, there are many perspectives on reality. Appreciating the logic of each person's perspective increases the chances that complexity and diversity leads to innovative and sustainable solutions.



CLEAR LEADERSHIP

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 2

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

19-23 NOVEMBER 2018 in COPENHAGEN

The course **for one NELFA volunteer (Russia)** 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.



TRAINING COURSE 3

INSPIRING FACILITATION, TEACHING AND TRAINING

26-30 DECEMBER 2018 in BARCELONA (FOR LGBT)

This course **for two NELFA volunteers from Albania and Serbia** 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. The course was especially focused on LGBTIQ* activists.



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, to improve the network in general!!!



TRAINING COURSE 4

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

14-18 JANUARY 2019 in COPENHAGEN

The focus of the course, **attended by one NELFA volunteer from Serbia**, was on planning and conducting participatory evaluations. The participants learned how to involve diverse relevant stakeholders in setting indicators of success as well as describing strategies assumed to lead to certain results. In this way everyone involved develops a common language as well as a deeper understanding of the system at work. This enables the organisation to discuss results and reflect upon steps to take to improve the work. Learning arises from taking part in the whole process rather than from being presented for the end-results of the analysis and the recommendations by the evaluator.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Lessons learned during the course

- An understanding of participatory evaluation processes that ensures widespread learning
- An insight on how to balance accountability and learning
- An understanding of how to involve diverse stakeholders in the process
- An insight into the power of the right questions
- Concrete methods to work with the results of the evaluation - feed-forward
- A possibility to work on a tailor-made plan that fits your actual evaluation needs (selecting the right focus, involving stakeholders, planning the process and the follow-up)
- An opportunity to receive coaching on your exact challenges in relation to carrying out the evaluation
- **And of course:** Get to know new interesting people, not only LGBTIQ*, to improve the network in general!!!



TRAINING COURSE 5

INSPIRING FACILITATION, TEACHING AND TRAINING

11-15 FEBRUARY 2019 in GOUDA

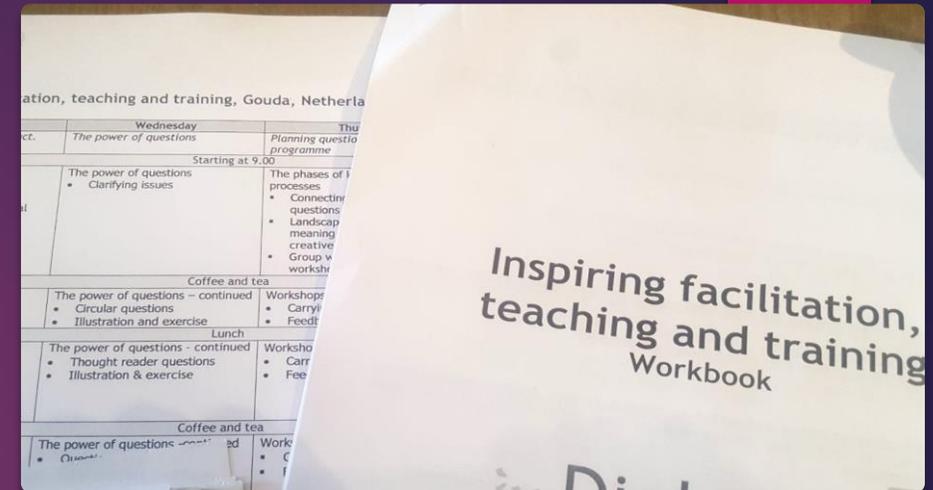
This course **for one NELFA volunteer from Croatia** offered diverse question techniques focusing on connecting the topic of the own training or teaching to the concrete practice of the learners, playing with scenarios and planning the future. It offered process exercises to stimulate engagement, creativity 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
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JOB-SHADOWING

In addition to the structured training courses, the project had another component: **The job-shadowing**. This year, **Sateenkaariperheet ry** in Finland was selected.

The job-shadowing 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.

Sateenkaariperheet ry gave us - **in detail 5 NELFA staff members and active volunteers from Bulgaria, Poland, Serbia and Romania** – for example the possibility to combine our project with an international seminar: „The Rights of the Child in LGBTIQ* Advocacy” (8 March 2019)



SHADOWING-PARTNER

Sateenkaariperheet ry

Sateenkaariperheet ry, seated in Finland's capital Helsinki is one of the biggest rainbow families organisations in Europe, with more than 950 members. General aim is to raise awareness of LGBTIQ* parents and their children, to advance their rights, to celebrate their diversity and to educate different stakeholders who deal with rainbow families. The organisation offers a wide range of activities, including trainings for parents, students and civil servants. Two years ago, they published the first national study concerning children in rainbow families. In the picture: Executive Director and coordinator for NELFA, Juha Jämsä.

Website: <http://sateenkaariperheet.fi/>



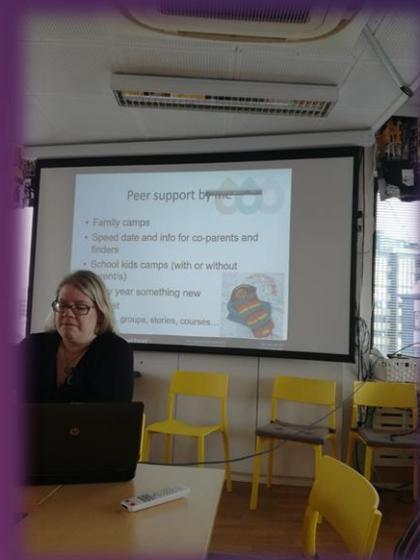
JOB-SHADOWING HELSINKI

Lessons learned during the weekend

- A deep insight into the work of Sateenkaariperheet ry, a day in the Helsinki headquarter of the organisation, including a comprehensive presentation and several staff encounters
- Discussion about the children's rights perspective in the advocacy work for rainbow families, especially in Finland
- Preparation and participation at the children's rights seminar on 8th of March, including speeches and a panel discussion
- reflection about the situation for LGBTIQ* parents and their children in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, sharing best practices
- Meeting with other rainbow family activists from all over Europe (including the Annual General Meeting of NELFA)
- And: a cosy encounter with local rainbow families, some queer karaoke trials and the inevitable visit of a sauna ☺...



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS SEMINAR IN HELSINKI (8th of March 2019)



TRAINING COURSE 6

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

11-15 MARCH 2019 in COPENHAGEN

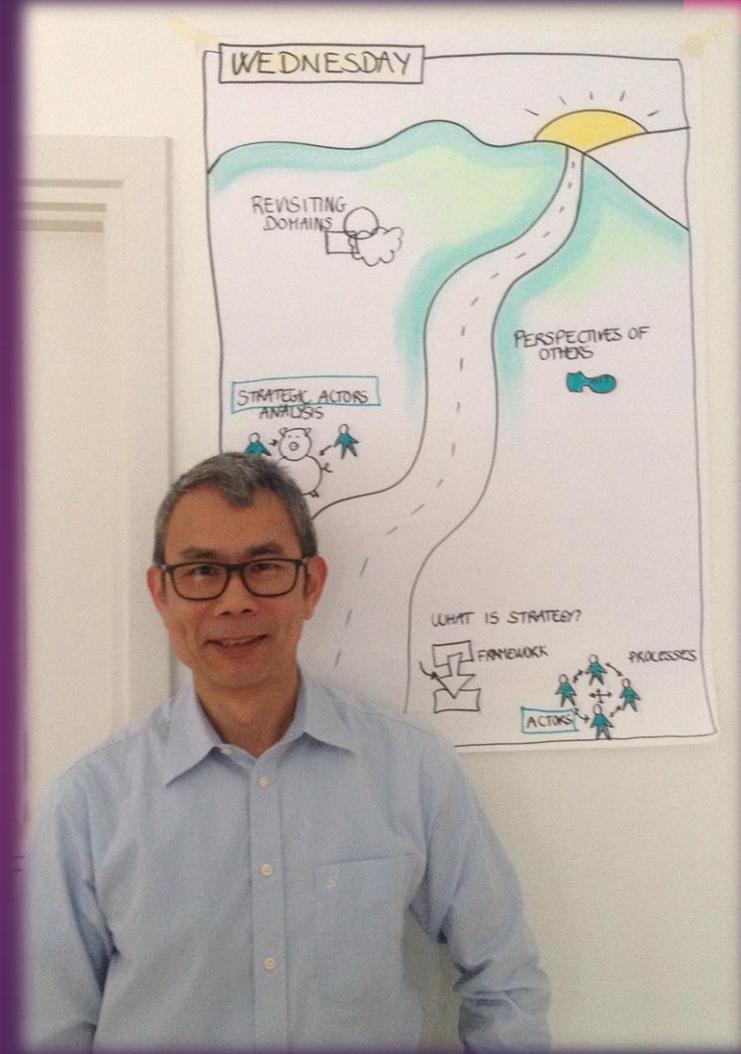
The course, **attended by three NELFA volunteers from France and Bulgaria**, targeted managers and other change agents who wish to create sustainable change in their team, organisation or community. The course focused on building commitment within management and among stakeholders, on planning and facilitating a successful change process as well as on the follow-up, ensuring that new initiatives are embedded in the daily practice. The participant will work on their own change ideas and receive feedback on their work.



STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Lessons learned during the course

- An understanding of how to create management commitment as well as involvement of the wider system in complex realities with many stakes
- A chance to practice asking the right questions with a diverse number of people
- Methods to structure and plan open-ended processes ... and the confidence to facilitate them even when things do not turn out as planned
- An ability to create clarity and set the framework, ensuring that change processes lead towards organisational goals
- A possibility to work on a tailor-made plan that fits your actual needs/visions (selecting the right focus, involving stakeholders, planning the process and the follow-up)
- An opportunity to receive coaching on your exact challenges in relation to implementing your ideas at home
- **And of course:** Get to know new interesting people, not only LGBTIQ*, to improve the network in general!!!



TRAINING COURSE 7

CLEAR LEADERSHIP

08-12 APRIL 2019 in LINZ/AUSTRIA

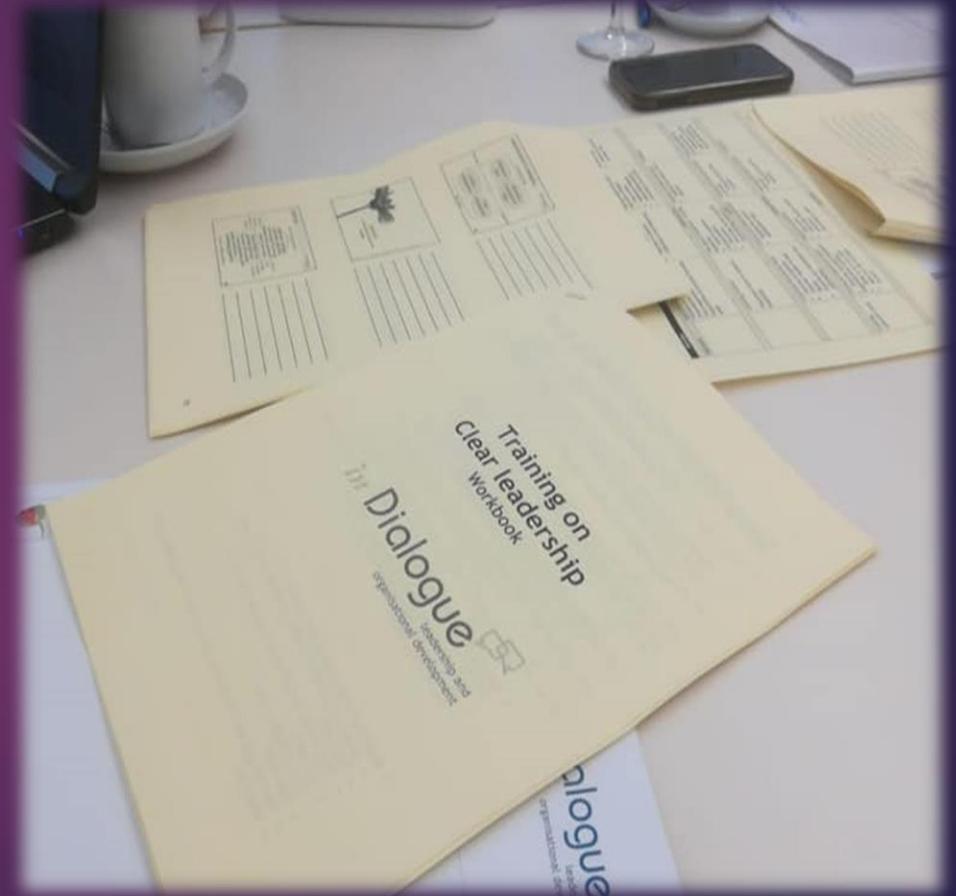
The course **for two NELFA participants (Croatia and Romania)** offered a valuable opportunity to reflect on the practice and to understand the relational aspects of leadership. The focus was on gaining concrete leadership tools to create transparency and direction while at the same time involving individuals, teams and groups in meaningful dialogues about goals and challenges. The course was based on the assumption that leadership is relational; we cannot change others, but only ourselves and through this invite others to change as well. Furthermore, there are many perspectives on reality. Appreciating the logic of each person's perspective increases the chances that complexity and diversity leads to innovative and sustainable solutions.



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TRAINING COURSE 8

STRENGTH-BASED COACHING AND GUIDANCE

13-17 MAY 2019 in BERLIN

The course **for two NELFA participants (Estonia and Serbia)** offered a palette of questions that helps the focus person set goals and overcome difficulties at work (or in life generally) in a relatively short time. The focus of the coaching techniques was on what works rather than what doesn't work. The road went via goals, wishes, previous experiences of success, and resources. Rather than getting blinded by staring at problems and all the things that fail, the course asked about what the person wants and what the person succeeds with. Concretely, the approach consisted of a set of questions that made the focus person reflect, and which eventually leads to change. The person that has a problem also has the key to its solution. We do not need to understand the reason of a problem to solve it (we do not need to know why the house is burning to extinguish the fire).



STRENGTH-BASED COACHING AND GUIDANCE

Lessons learned during the course

- An insight into the theoretical foundations of appreciative and solution-focused coaching
- A chance to practice different questioning techniques that draw out resources, create new perspectives and alternative ways of dealing with difficulties
- An understanding of how to apply the techniques in different situations – individual approach, team and group approach – and specifically to your target group
- A possibility to have a look at your own learning goals in relation to your profession through being coached
- Skills in collegial coaching 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 9

CONSULTING AND DEVELOPMENT OF TEAMS AND GROUPS

20-24 MAY 2019 in COPENHAGEN

The focus of this course (**with two NELFA attendees from Bulgaria**) 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!!!



RAINBOW FAMILIES CONFERENCE IN ZAGREB

EXTRA: NELFA staff members and several (new and former) Erasmus+ volunteers from different countries co-organised a **European Rainbow Families Conference in Zagreb**, Croatia (10-12 May 2019). The event was entitled „Our kids are OK“ and included a NELFA presentation, testimonies of rainbow families(to-be) in the Balkans (i.e. Croatia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Serbia).

Furthermore, NELFA's national member **Dugine obitelji** presented a video of a gay couple that would like to be accepted as foster parents. High-level activists of the region shared their recent experiences and researchers presented their findings.

The participants of the Conference celebrated the **International Family Equality Day**, #IFED2019. This year's motto was: „Families: United we stand!“

*Our kids
are OK*

Rainbow Families
Conference

10. - 12. May 2019.
Zagreb, Croatia

Organised by
Dugine obitelji & NELFA



RAINBOW FAMILIES CONFERENCE IN ZAGREB (10-12 MAY 2019)



EVALUATION

NELFA staff members and volunteers from eleven European countries attended in total 15 training courses (In Dialogue) and five additional job-shadowings (in Helsinki, with Sateenkaariperheet ry)

All 20 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 (18/20) or rather satisfied (2/20) with their experience and would recommend it

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: 5/5 points

... with NELFA's project management: 5/5 points

... with the expected content of the mobility: 5/5 points

OTHER INDICATORS (positive answers):

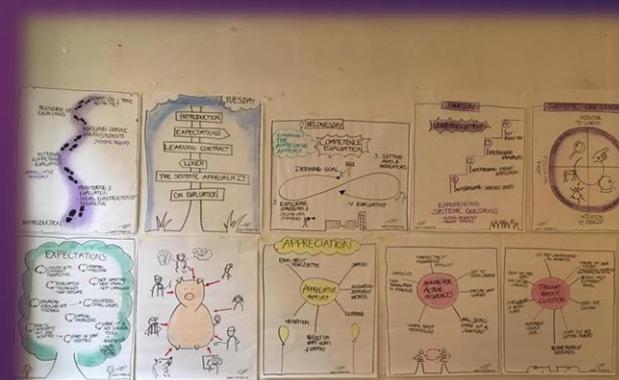
I learned from good practices abroad: 17/20 (strongly agree)

Opportunity to share knowledge with colleagues: 16/20 (strongly agree)

I gained practical skills for my current job: 15/20 (strongly agree)

Strengthening the cooperation with project partners: 13/20 (strongly agree)

Other competences: Emotional skills, social and civic competences, higher motivation for the professional development, strengthening the efforts to internationalise the activities and to cooperate with players in the civil society



SUMMARY 2016-2019

The NELFA Board is very pleased with the outcome of its third Erasmus+ project in a row. We were able to realise...

- **68 mobilities from June 2016 to June 2019**
- training courses with „In Dialogue“ in Copenhagen, Gouda, Barcelona, Berlin and Linz/Austria
- job-shadowings at Stonewall/UK (London), Rainbow Family Centre Berlin, ILGA-Portugal (Lisbon), Sateenkaariperheet ry in Helsinki)
- The participants came from 16 European countries
- NELFA was able to attract several new member organisations, also because of the opportunity to take part in the Erasmus+ projects: Tolerado and FTR in Poland, Deystvie in Bulgaria, Dugine obitelji in Croatia, Asociatia Accept in Romania, Eesti LGBT Ühing in Estonia, OMSA in Albania, ERA (The LGBTI Equal Rights Association) in Serbia...
- We empowered our educational skills, strengthened our network internally and externally through conferences, workshops, meetings, key speeches etc. to raise awareness of rainbow families and their struggles
- The next project of NELFA as partner will be in the framework of REC (Rights, Equality, Citizenship), funded by the European Commission. It's a cooperation with our member organisation Deystvie in Bulgaria (and other groups in Bulgaria and Romania) and is called **RAINBOW SHIELD**

Further information: write an Email to info@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(s)!

