



Artistic Education System
for Social Inclusion of young
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual
and Transgender adults

YEAR 1, NO. 1
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Update

How films and culture can help young LGBT adults

12 November 2013 - Welcome to the first newsletter of the ARES project. ARES stands for the "Artistic Educational System for the Social Inclusion of young Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender adults". The project is a Grundtvig Learning Partnership funded by Lifelong Learning Programme from 2013 to 2015.



ARES aims to develop educational strategies for the social and civil inclusion of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender adult people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds across the European Union. ARES aims to promote the use

of LGBT artistic and cultural media (ACM) including cinema, theatre and literature, as an effective platform to: provide young LGBT adults with pathways to improve their knowledge and skills in order to manage and be critical about artistic messages (deconstructing negative or prejudiced messages of media); and to exchange knowledge and understanding of the issues they currently face in order to raise public awareness, achieve social acceptance, improve social skills and develop powerful communication tools.

The ARES consortium has two key objectives:

- 1) to demonstrate that artistic education using ACM will facilitate learning and demonstrate how artistic education benefits young LGBT adults socially and culturally;
- 2) to promote a dialogue between local government, adult education providers, cultural associations and experts with LGBT associations concerning public policies to tackle homophobia and transphobia using ACM as a vehicle.

To achieve these objectives, ARES will create a communicative and innovative educational path (non-formal learning process) that, starting from the analysis of different contents (screenplays, plays and videos) of LGBT artistic and cultural media, will stimulate the development of artistic works with communicative, social and cultural value.

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Partners across Europe



The ARES consortium brings together five EU organisations who are collaborating in order to develop and exchange innovative practices using ACM to fight homophobia and sexual discrimination. The

participating organisations are:

ENFAP Toscana – Italy (www.enfap-toscana.org)

ENFAP is the coordinating partner of the project and is a non-profit organisation belonging to the National Trade Union U.I.L. based in Florence. It has a large range of activities targeted at vocational, education and training, counselling and advocacy for young people and adults. It develops studies, research, information and documenting material as well as offering assistance for workers and enterprises.



ENFAP, the coordinating partner is located in beautiful Florence

GALE - Netherlands (www.lgbt-education.info)

GALE is a global network of over 700 trainers and educators who promote social inclusion of LGBT people. GALE is based in Amsterdam and is a twin organization

of EduDivers, which is active in the Netherlands. The four priorities of the network is to monitor the implementation of the Right to Education, improving the quality and impact of teacher training, stimulating the inclusion of LGBT issues in school policies and improving the quality and impact of storytelling by LGBT volunteer educators.



Above: the ARES team discussing how to kick-off the project

RINOVA Ltd – United Kingdom. (www.rinova.co.uk)

Rinova is a social enterprise (non-profit company) specialising in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of innovative partnership projects in Skills, Learning and VET, Employment and Employability, Enterprise and Social Action. RINOVA is working with a wide range of training organisations across London to develop and deliver new programmes many of which target NEET ("Not in Education, Employment, or Training") young adults.

SEKU - Estonia. (www.seky.ee)

NGO SEKU strongly defends LGBT rights in Estonia. Alongside the protection and promotion of equal rights for the LGBT community, SEKU is also involved with advocacy and lobbying.

Szczecinskie Centrum Edukacyjne Sp z o.o. – Poland. (www.sce.com.pl)

Szczecinskie Centrum Edukacyjne Sp z o.o. is a training



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provider which has been active in the educational market since 1992. The training offered by this institution cover a wide variety of different knowledge and skills areas which offer learners the opportunity for requalification and the further development of their skills.

Kick-off for international exchange

On the 11th and 12th November 2013, the first transnational meeting of the ARES partnership took place in Florence, Italy. This involved the partner organisations actively collaborating to define the strategies and activities for the project in the coming months.

During the meeting the Consortium produced the first deliverables (plans; logo; Facebook page, etc...) as well as the delivery plan. The key roles and responsibilities between the partners were also agreed. On the second day, ENFAP staff presented eight international LGBT short movies, followed by an open discussion amongst the partners about the content and main themes. This was used as an example of how to organise and manage with non-formal learning activities using LGBT ACM content.

The ARES Consortium plans to film the non-formal learning activities piloted in each country which will result in five video lessons and a final edited trailer showing the most salient and interesting extracts.

The next transnational project meeting will take place in Szczecin, a beautiful town in the North-West of Poland, in May. The meeting will be organised by Szczecinskie Centrum Edukacyjne Sp z o.o., our Polish partner. The first results and outcomes of the non-formal learning activities will be shared between the partners. This will be essential for moving on to the next phases of the ARES project, during which we will start to involve other

partners, “learners”, who will travel to the partner countries to participate and review cultural events. Ask your local partner how you can become involved!



Above: scene from “Cuba and the night”

Spring Festival in Montevarchi

ENFAP will present and discuss an anthology of LGBT short movies produced in different countries. This will involve young and adult people from public institutions, high schools and universities. The first dates will be on 14th and 18th of April with the presentation of some LGBT short movies during the Spring Festival organised by Montevarchi Municipality.

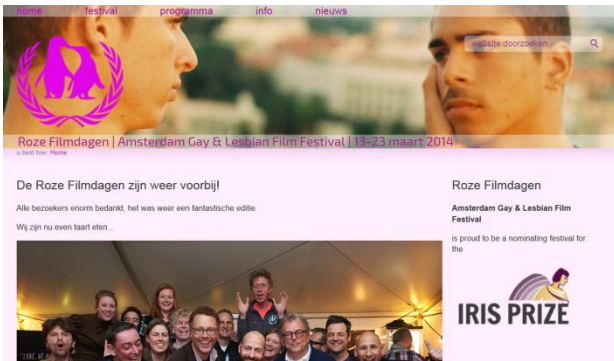


Above: scene from “A Good Son”

Two of the LGBT short movies that ENFAP will present are: **“A good son”**- (Usa, 1998): *When Joseph meets Tim at a diving competition, Tim invites him to see the roof, and when he kisses him...Can a gay boy be a good son? Probably not....* And **“Cuba and the night”** – (Germany-Cuba, 2007): *A Cuban boy struggles to become a girl and opens her soul to the camera describing her life, afflictions, desires, longings and joys in Cuba. A moving story about despair and hope.*

Amsterdam Pink Film Days

GALE organised two film screenings as part of the Amsterdam Pink Film Days (17-18 March). The screenings were short educational films; the first night 7 films with gay themes and the second evening with 6 films on lesbian themes.



You can read more about this in the article "Reviewing educational films can mobilize youth" (page 4 of this Update). Attending teachers have asked GALE to organize regular film screenings in their schools. GALE is considering to develop this experience into a regular service.

Screening and focus group style workshop in London

RINOVA's plan is to organise a movie screening and a focus group style workshop in May. Clips from films and TV shows will be shown, to a diverse group of young people. Two videos that they will incorporate in their screenings are **Sugar Rush (UK 2005)** a drama TV series based on the novel by Julie Burchill. It centres on 15-

year-old Kim, who has just moved to Brighton and developed an earth-shattering, hormone-surging crush on her new best friend, Sugar. And secondly **Eastenders (UK Jan/Feb 2014)** which includes the much publicised Danny Dyer Story (which involves his on-screen son Johnny Carter 'coming out') and an interview with Jonathan Ross. Eastenders is a British soap that has been running since 1985, about the lives of people living on Albert Square in the fictitious Walford borough of East London.

Screening and workshops in Szczecin

The Polish partner Szczecinskie Centrum Edukacyjne Sp z o.o. has 2 workshops planned during this phase of the project. They will draw on the help of a partner organisations and the local community. They will be screening **Can't Think Straight (UK 2008)** which concerns Christian Tala and Muslim Leyla, who differ from each other like 'fire and water'. Despite this, their mutual relationship turns into a feeling deeper than friendship. Concealed love and fear of exposure cause conflict between the two women, which encroaches on the upcoming wedding day of one of them.

The second selected movie is **80 Egunean aka 80 days**



(Basque country 2010). Its story line starts with Axun and Maite meeting at a hospital. One of them was visiting her father-in-law, unconscious after the accident, whilst the other was looking after her brother in a coma. A moment of conversation and ... yes! They know each other!

They used to be good friends. Their paths cross again, the story begins, the women let themselves become involved in an increasingly complicated relationship. Notably this will be the 5th year of the Polish LGBT movie

festival which is taking place in several cities from the 4th to the 10th of April.

Movie nights in Tallinn

The Estonian partner SEKU is organising several movie nights in April and May, in collaboration with other Estonian partners and LGBT organisations. The presentation will include full-length LGBT movies as well as shorter clips. The screenings will be followed by open discussion style workshops focused on the films stories and themes. Two movies that SEKU will be showing are “Bridegroom” (USA 2013) and “Latter Days” (USA 2003). “Bridegroom” tells the true story of a gay couple, how they grew up, lived different lives and what became of them after they met. It is a story of becoming of age, great love and dreadful loss. A similar story is played out in “Latter Days”, a movie about two young men from two completely different worlds meeting, falling in love and their struggles to stay together. It is especially difficult when one of those worlds is a strongly religious one.



Above: scene from “Latter Days”

Reviewing educational films can mobilize youth

On 17 and 18 March, GALE cooperated with EduDivers to organise two film screenings, one with 7 short films on gay themes and one with 6 short films on lesbian themes. Both evenings also featured transgender themes, and the 'boys' screening also featured the only known educational film about bisexuality. After each screening, there was a discussion with the audience on

the question "what is a good educational film?"

The material varied with one video being shown that was made for primary school children, and the others for higher ages. The lesbian screening was more difficult to organize, as there are less educational films with a specific lesbian theme. Therefore GALE also selected some clips that are designed to promote awareness rather than pure educational films.

European premiere of forbidden Brazilian films

Part of the screenings were 3 video's from Brazil, which had been made by order of the government in the context of the national "Schools without Homophobia" program. Regrettably the Evangelical party in the parliament lobbied the president to forbid the films, because they would "entice young people into masturbation, homosexual behaviour and drug use".



Above: scene from “Mede de quê?” (“Afraid of what?”), a Brazilian educational film which was forbidden to be shown to youth by the Brazilian government

So now it is formally forbidden to show the videos in schools. But, the videos are still available, online and screened with the starting caption that "these films are meant as a case study on the influence of the gay and lesbian movement on Brazilian society". It was the first time these films are shown in Europe. They are unique, because there are four films in the Brazilian package: one film about a gay boy, one about a lesbian girl, one about a trans M to F and one about a bisexual boy.



Above: scene from "Probabilidade" ("Probability"), one of the few (or maybe the only) educational film in the world on being bisexual in school

Review as educational method

The discussion of the "gay" themed films was extremely interesting and open. In comparison the "lesbian" themed viewing was attended mainly by a class of young Muslim girls who were arguably prejudiced in their views and the discussion turned into a basic level information session. In contrast, the "gay" themed viewing was attended by a mix of teachers, media experts and film makers. The discussion focused on two Dutch films, which had been made recently.



Above: scene from "Ruben"

One of them, "Ruben", shows an effeminate boy who is bullied in school and eventually plans to commit suicide. In the other film, "Caged", two boys are good friends who go running together regularly. When it turns out

one of them is gay, the heterosexual friend has to decide whether to fall in line with his homophobic peers, or to keep up his friendship. The discussion, was both on the content and on the way the stories were told through the film-making.



Above: scene from "Caged"

Whereas "Ruben" is a rather typical story about discrimination and the terrible consequences, being told from the victim's perspective, "Caged" is told from the perspective of the heterosexual. Although "Caged" shows bullying, the focus is not so much on the bullying itself but on how the heterosexual friend deals with the peer pressure of his other friends. Opinions differed: "Ruben" is a 'tear jerking' film which elicits high emotions, both in favor of the victim (pity for him) but also against the victim (he looks effeminate, behaves like a 'softy', does nothing to stop the bullying and does not ask for help). So it has enough in it to start a discussion but it does not offer any role models, not for the victim or for the perpetrators. "Caged" explicitly presents the heterosexual friend as a role model for someone who in the end chooses friendship rather than go along with the social exclusion by his peers. The audience liked this best. However, in a group of strongly prejudiced young people, "Caged" might not work so well if basic prejudices prevent young people to see the value of staying friends.