



## **Involving High School Students in Human Rights Promotion and Critical Use of Media**

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Although Europe promotes human rights for all and the European Union has adopted several directives to assure equal treatment, some groups are still discriminated [1]. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth are still regular victims of social exclusion and discrimination [2]. Schools are structurally found to be unsafe environments for LGBT students, while they should be a place where respectful and critical citizenship is learned [3].

A partnership of 6 partners in 4 countries (Italy, Estonia, Belgium and The Netherlands) cooperates on a joint strategy to mobilise high school students in human rights promotion and critical use of media [4]. The key activity in the project is the development and implementation of "Voice Out". Voice Out is a political game which offers a framework for two competing campaigns to promote human rights and to combat homophobia in each participating school. Over a period of 3 months, teachers, external facilitators and media educators support two groups of students who prepare and implement their campaigns. The game is closed with a school election, followed by national elections of the best campaigns. National winning teams are invited to meet and write a white paper for the European Parliament.

The method is supported by a theoretical foundation related to homophobia [5], heteronormativity [6], interactionism [7] and diversity pedagogy [8]. The tailoring of the game to different countries, cultures and varying levels of homophobia is also informed by needs assessment research preceding the implementation of the game [9].

This paper offers an overview of the method, the theoretical foundations and the preceding research.