



Gender Equality Matters Tackling Gender- Based Violence

Gender equality is a right for everybody

We have now entered the second year of the GEM-programme. In this article we present to you the latest news about the milestones we have achieved in the Gender Equality Matters – Tackling Gender-Based Violence project. The objectives of GEM are to raise awareness, change attitudes and promote behaviour changes in relation to gender-based violence in general, with specific reference to violence perpetrated against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community in and around schools. Please refer to our website www.genderequalitymatters.eu for the project description, partner information and tools.

The Gender Equality Matters (GEM) news from **Ireland** is exciting. **Dublin City University** (Seline Keating, seline.keating@dcu.ie) has been busy training teachers and parents in October and November. So far this term we have held three training events for teachers involving over 30 teachers who will pilot



the GEM classroom materials with the children at 5th and 6th class levels (800 children, approximately 11-12 years of age) in Irish primary schools. Over 1000 children will be involved by the end of the year. This adds to the numbers from May/June, where 19 teachers received training and piloted materials with approximately 500 children. The profile of schools who are piloting is a mix of large urban and small rural schools, predominantly denominational (Catholic), which is in keeping with the national profile of Irish primary schools.

Working through the National Parents' Council (primary) in Ireland, we advertised parent sessions on the theme of gender equality. Uptake has unfortunately been slow but steady.

Preparatory planning for the GEM conference in Dublin in June 2020 is ongoing. We are excited to have to have Professor James O'Higgins Norman (UNESCO Chair on Tackling Bullying in Schools and Cyberspace) and Peter Dankmeijer (Executive Director of The Global Alliance for LGBT Education (GALE)) as two confirmed keynote speakers. The paper call will begin in December. We look forward to

showcasing all the work that has been done in promoting gender equality and tackling gender-based violence at this capstone event. In the meantime, we will continue to work with parents, teachers and the wider community in Ireland to advance the GEM aims.

In **Italy**, the GEM project is involving 9 secondary schools that are part of the **Fondazione Mondo Digitale** network (represented by Annaleda Mazzucato, a.mazzucato@mondodigitale.org). In total 16 classes and 22 teachers are conducting the training modules based on the GEM manual. Teachers report some difficulties introducing at school the discussion around gender equality: "Many professors are still reluctant to confront the issue of gender violence or gender identity with students; they are afraid of the parent's' reaction". In fact, some parents decided their children do not take part in the GEM activities. Despite the initial difficulties in the classes where the GEM activities are undergoing, students responded with great interest: "It is important for students, even the youngest, to talk about gender equality and gender identity, and it is important to highlight what it is possible to do at school to counter gender violence and bullying" said one of the teachers taking part in the GEM training at Fondazione Mondo Digitale. During the upcoming weeks, teachers, students and parents are invited at Fondazione Mondo Digitale to exchange their experience, discuss and explore further the topic.

The training of teachers in **Spain** was already carried out by the **University of Murcia** (Paz Prendes, pazprend@um.es). Currently we have ten primary schools participating in GEM Project and a training session for teachers was held in Murcia for the teachers and the principals of the schools. The session was structured in two main parts:

The first one served to talk and debate with teachers about sexism and gender inequalities. It began with a relationship activity between



teachers from different schools to introduce themselves and get to know each other through the game ("Find your partner!") in which each teacher received a letter with information about an important character for gender equality. In this part of the session the analysis of heteronormative stereotypes was addressed and it was tried to understand the impact they have on the life of the students with success. We presented the structure of contents of GEM and the toolkit for teachers with all the information to work with their students.

The second part of the training session consisted of explaining to the teachers the proper application of the questionnaires in detail. They have also been offered strategies and various possibilities to integrate the activities manual and how to develop a final group activity aimed at generating a wide debate and obtaining information as a focus group.

We can say that the satisfaction of teachers with this training session has been high and they let us know that the debate on the proposed topics was too short and they were left wanting more. The real educational

work has now begun with students, the more important part of the project. We hope that the work with students will be as successful as it turned out to be with educators!

ESHA (Edwin Katerberg, edwin.katerberg@esha.org) has reviewed, translated and adjusted the lesson materials for primary and secondary schools to reflect Dutch standards and is eagerly waiting for the final results of the pilots and training sessions that have been performed in Ireland, Italy and Spain.

ESHA will also participate in the LifeLong Learning Week that is held in Brussels from December 2nd – 6th. Please find the program for the entire event here: <https://lllplatform.eu/events/lll-week/>. We are particularly content that as a partner in LLL we have been given the opportunity to highlight the GEM programme on the LLL Platform on December 6th: Inclusion in Schools: from policy to practice.

All GEM project materials that are generated are delivered free of cost and are for general use to the benefit of school leaders, educators, parents and pupils. Please keep an eye out on [our website](#) for national and international events, articles, information about national initiatives and projects, classroom and school resources and tools, training modules and manuals, and training workshops.

In case you are interested in lending your support to the GEM cause, we invite all school leaders, educators, parents and pupils to consult <http://www.esha.org/esha-projects/> and www.genderequalitymatters.eu and to contact local GEM partners directly. Please consult <https://www.genderequalitymatters.eu/partners/> for partner details.



We hope that you will participate actively and share your opinions on the GEM social media accounts on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Instagram](#).

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