



Sexual health online training: *lessons learnt*



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Project background

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Response to Covid-19 sanitary measure and shift to online reality



Objectives

1. Develop an online platform that will act as an exchange of best practices for youth training programmes between organisations.
2. Create online tools/trainings that would be useful for youth advocacy work in the field of human rights/ organisations led by key populations.

Project partners

European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG)

A patient-led NGO that advocates for the rights and interests of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS and related co-infections within the WHO Europe region.

European Sex Workers Rights Alliance (ESWA)

A network of sex worker organisations and allies supporting the development of national and international law, policy and practice, which respects and upholds the human and labour rights of sex workers throughout Europe and Central Asia

Legebitra

The largest Slovenian LGBTQIA+ NGO that provides support and empowerment for individuals, the LGBTQIA+ community, and people living with HIV

Train-the-trainer sessions

Open call and selection of four peer trainers

Between the ages of 18-30 years of age

Located in an Erasmus+ Programme country

Involved in sexual health and rights advocacy of people living with HIV, LGBTQI+ communities, and sex workers.



Four train-the-trainer sessions:

1. Introductions and intersections of identities, experiences, topics
2. Focus on HIV message framing
3. Focus on digital safety
4. Focus on mental health

Pilot training programme

Open call and selection of 25 participants

Between the ages of 18-30 years of age

Located in an Erasmus+ Programme country

Involved in sexual health and rights advocacy of people living with HIV, LGBTQI+ communities, and sex workers.

- 8-week training programme.
- Two training sessions per week (each session 90-minutes in duration).
- Guest speakers.
- Facilitated discussions.
- Recommended resource materials.
- Certificate of completion.

Project outcomes

M&E Guide

Summarises the framework and methods we used to monitor and evaluate training content and session format.

Includes our findings and **recommendations** for future online sexual health trainings of youth activists.

Guide for assessing psychosocial well-being

Read about the approach and tools we used to measure the psychosocial well-being of our peer trainers and trainees during the programme.

Recommendations are included too!

Online Toolbox

A selection of 20 resource materials the project partners recommend for youth sexual health advocates, or those working closely with youth, to **design your own** online training programme.

The logo for eMPOWER features a stylized lowercase 'e' in pink with three radiating lines to its left, followed by a wavy line, and the word 'MPOWER' in a bold, pink, uppercase sans-serif font with three radiating lines to its right.

Monitoring & *Evaluation* report



Methodology

- 1 Pre-assessment survey of peer trainers
- 2 Post-assessment survey of peer trainers
- 3 Pre-assessment survey of pilot training applicants
- 4 Post-assessment surveys of training sessions (Modules 1-4)

Results

- 1** Pre-assessment survey of peer trainers
 - ▶ Knowledge on the different topics
 - ▶ Ability to talk openly about sex
- 2** Post-assessment survey of peer trainers
 - ▶ Quality of the train-the trainer training
 - ▶ Knowledge, clarity and time management
- 3** Pre-assessment survey of pilot training applicants
 - ▶ Motivation, knowledge and skills of participants
- 4** Post-assessment surveys of training sessions (Modules 1-4)



Post-assessment surveys of training sessions (Modules 1-4)

PARTICIPANT ATTENDANCE PER SESSION

Session #	1	2	3	4
Amount of participants	23	16	21	17
% of attendance (n=25)	92%	64%	84%	68%
Session #	5	6	7	8
Amount of participants	19	14	18	12
% of attendance (n=25)	76%	56%	72%	48
Session #	9	10	11	12
Amount of participants	11	13	17	N/A
% of attendance (n=25)	44%	52%	68%	N/A
Session #	13	14	15	16
Amount of participants	16	9	11	12
% of attendance (n=25)	64%	36%	44%	48%

Post-assessment surveys of training sessions (Modules 1-4)

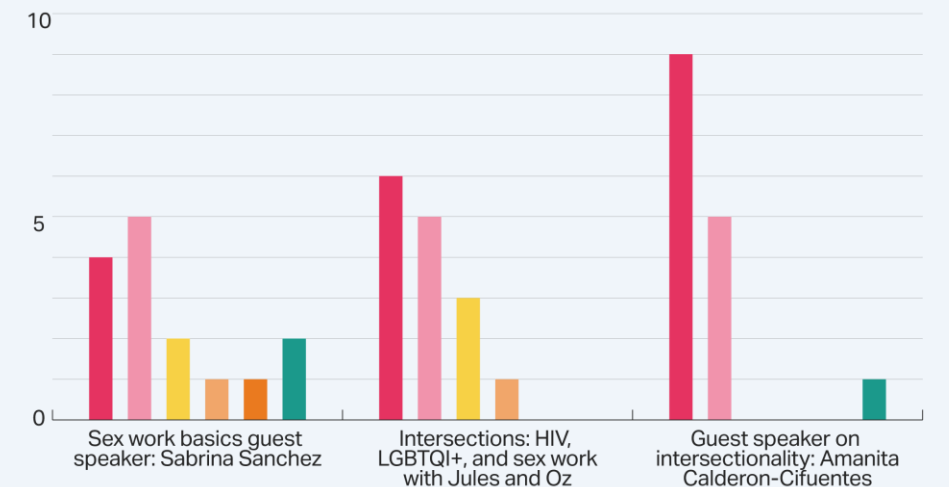
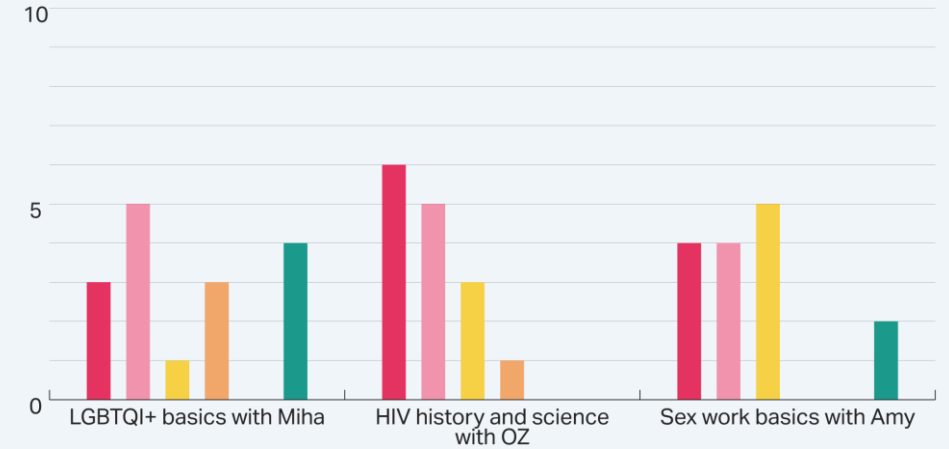
Two main questions:

1. “My level of knowledge on the topic improved after attending the following training sessions in Module #”
2. “As a result of this training module, I feel more confident in my capacity to design and deliver more intersectional sexual health online trainings to my peers”

Most participants gained **new knowledge** and **increased capacity to deliver a future training** on related topics



GRAPH 1.1
My level of knowledge on the topic improved after attending the following training sessions in Module 1



Participant satisfaction

“Overall did the training content in Module # meet your expectations? Please explain.”

Participants indicated **great level of satisfaction** and **increased knowledge** in the different topics.

“It did meet my expectations. I was really happy about the breakout rooms in which we had the chance to share more of our points of view with the others.”
- Training participant (module 2)

“Yes, it really broadened my knowledge on all the topics covered and I found the participation of other course members invaluable.”
- Training participant (module 1)

“It did, I learned quite a bit about the topics that strongly affect my work. In a lot of encounters, I question myself [on] how to react and proceed and this module answered quite a few of them.”
- Training participant (module 3)

Suggestions for improvement

(1/2 – technical suggestions)

- Technical aspects
- Additional resources beyond the training sessions

More signposting to further reading resources. Maybe extra sessions that are like seminars? Where we can discuss what we've learned from the guest speaker, that topic, any further research.
- *Training participant (module 4)*

Suggestions for improvement

(2/2 – group dynamics)

- Levels of interaction in the group
- More time to discuss topics in an informal manner
- More discussions in smaller groups

“ Maybe more time to reflect as a group on what we learned from the guest speaker? But I really felt in a safe space and that was lovely.
- Training participant (module 1)

“ As I said for the other modules, I would suggest improving the activities in small groups. As an introvert I found it sometimes difficult to just join a conversation, maybe having more structured activities would've helped.
- Training participant (module 4)

Recommendations

Collecting peer trainer input

- Following train-the-trainer sessions, provide a brief post-assessment survey to measure **preparedness to carry out the pilot programme**, and provide any support and additional information needed moving forward.
- Allow time for a **mini debrief before and after each training session**, in case peer trainers would like to discuss any concerns or successes.
- Schedule debrief sessions after each module and **make adjustments to the training programme as needed**.


Recommendations


Training programme design and logistics

- Provide an **email reminder**.
- **Vary activity formats** to maintain an active participation.
- Include **peer trainers and guest speakers** who are representative of **diverse and intersecting communities** to present training content.
- Leave **time after the guest speaker** presentation to allow for group discussion.
- Remain **flexible** and ask that participants notify you of their absence in advance so you can plan session activities accordingly. Consider suggesting a minimum amount of training session attendance needed in order to receive a **certificate of completion**.
- When sending module assessment surveys, include attachments of the session **slide decks** from the module. Consider including links to relevant **online resources** for further **optional reading**.
- Consider using an **online platform** for discussion and networking between participants and peer trainers outside of training sessions.


Recommendations

M&E survey design and delivery


- 
- Make sure **survey questions** are:
- Brief
 - Clearly written
 - Linked to project objectives or stakeholders' expectations
 - Balanced in number to ensure quality but also high response rates
 - Easy to complete (e.g. use Likert-scale ratings)
 - An opportunity for more detailed respondent feedback (e.g. include at least one open-ended question)



Send surveys to participants in a **timely manner** following the training module to increase response rates and capture real-time feedback.



Monitor participant responses to evaluation forms and consider **adapting the training session content and/or structure accordingly**.



Consider setting **time aside** at the end of each module's last session for participants **to complete an online assessment**. This may increase the rate and quality of responses.

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**Lessons learnt:
assessing psychosocial
*well-being***



Assessing the Well-being of Participants

Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire at the beginning and end of every session. This was to compare the participants' subjective well-being before and after each session to find any possible effects the session might have on how they felt. The data was collected using an online survey tool.

- The PANAS questionnaire was used, which measures general negative and positive affect, constructs that are shown to be universal across cultures
- Participants were provided space to write additional general comments on both the pre- and post-session questionnaires
- Throughout the training, we received 167 valid responses to the pre-session questionnaires and 126 responses to the post-session questionnaires

Assessing the Well-being of Trainers

The four peer trainers delivering the training were also asked to fill out a questionnaire after each of the four modules. Besides the PANAS questionnaire, the survey for the trainers also included statements that were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. In addition, they were also asked to write 5 words that would best describe what they think is important for their mental well-being as a trainer. The questionnaire also included the two open-ended questions.



We received complete answers from two out of the four peer trainers solely for the first, second, and last module

Results & Findings

PARTICIPANTS

AFFECT	BEFORE SESSION		AFTER SESSION	
	<i>M</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>D</i>
Determined	3,31	1,07	3,43	1,17
Attentive	3,24	0,96	3,40	1,09
Active	3,07	1,15	3,17	1,19
Inspired	2,96	1,00	3,44	1,17
Alert	2,61	1,07	2,69	1,22
Nervous	1,63	0,93	1,57	0,86
Afraid	1,34	0,72	1,37	0,72
Upset	1,43	0,77	1,46	0,81
Hostile	1,19	0,50	1,26	0,58
Ashamed	1,18	0,48	1,18	0,40
<i>Positive affect</i>	15,20	4,05	16,18	4,48
<i>Negative affect</i>	6,73	2,44	6,80	2,51

Findings

On average participants' negative affect did not change when we compared their answers before (M = 6.73, SD = 2.44) and after (M = 6.80, SD = 2.51) the sessions, however this finding was not statistically significant.. Participants' positive affect was slightly higher after the sessions (M = 16.18, SD = 4.48) when compared to before the sessions (M = 15.20, SD = 4.05), although this change was not statistically significant.

“ [...] Will there also be black folx or people of colour presenting the classes?

“ [...] first half was a bit difficult to engage due to the format of reading slides aloud, second half was interesting to hear about experiences

“ [...] sometimes it gets heated but it feels like it happens in a safe and respectful way, which I\'m not usually used to

Results & Findings

TRAINERS

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
There was a feeling of trust, honesty and fairness	4,4	0,5
Everyone was respectful and considerate of each other	4,0	1,0
There was a sense of acknowledgement and appreciation	4,2	0,4
Responsibilities could be accomplished successfully within the time available	3,8	1,1
Appropriate action was taken to protect the psychological safety of participants	4,4	0,9
There was encouragement and support of interpersonal, emotional and professional skills	4,4	0,9
I felt like I had enough support before the session	4,4	0,9
I felt like I had enough support during the session	4,4	0,9
There were enough breaks	4,6	0,5

Conclusion

- 1** We found that participants consistently experienced more positive than negative feelings throughout the course of the training. In response to the open-ended questions, participants indicated they felt safe and enjoyed the interactive elements of the sessions (breakout room discussions).
- 2** As with participants, the trainers experienced more positive than negative feelings throughout the training. They believed that support, boundaries, safe space, flexibility, structure, timeliness, receiving feedback, having good communication, and being listened to were important for their well-being.
- 3** The participants were content with one 10-minute break in the middle of sessions and felt that the 90-minute long sessions were not too long or tiring.
- 4** They believed that short meetings that took place 15–30 minutes before the beginning of each session were very helpful and contributed to their well-being.

Recommendations

Technical Aspects

1. Ensure a stable internet connection.
2. Ensure a working camera and microphone.
3. Try to speak slowly and clearly
4. Include graphics on your slides and restrain from including too much text

Designing the Training

1. Establish a safer space
2. Set the ground rules
3. Incorporate interactivity into your presentation
4. Form smaller groups for discussions/teamwork
5. Invite guest speakers
6. Use content warnings when needed
7. Inform the participants about the content of the upcoming session
8. Ensure everyone has time and space to speak

Well-being

1. Connect: Set up a platform where participants can discuss and connect with each other and/or with trainers
2. Notice what is happening within yourself and check in with others
3. Appoint a 'safe person'
4. Take breaks & be active
5. Reflection



e-MPOWER youth activist *toolbox*



Aims of the e-MPOWER toolbox

A handy and educative tool

One of the main goals is that the e-MPOWER online toolbox is publicly available, easily accessible and contains materials related to the mental health, sexual health, and rights of people living with HIV, LGBTQI+ communities, and sex workers.


Support with online training materials


The toolbox also aims to support youth activists by giving them reliable resources that will aid in their ability to deliver online peer training sessions with confidence. They will be provided with diverse multimedia and credible information that was thoroughly investigated by a team of professionals.


Recommendations


It includes e-MPOWER specific reports with recommendations for delivering online sexual health training, monitoring and evaluating of training content, and assessing the personal impact of such a training on participants and trainers in a way that is mindful of participant psychological well-being and digital safety.


How did we create it?

 It was a collaborative effort between project partners

 The project "Partnership to overcome challenges of online learning and to empower youth actors in the field of sexual health promotion in the COVID-19 era" (e-MPOWER) was an Erasmus+ funded collaboration between the European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG), European Sex Workers rights Alliance (ESWA), and Legebitra.

 We investigated relevant and accurate information on each of the themes and made many drafts to the toolbox. We collaboratively decided on which resources were well suited for each category.

 We also took time to create a summary of the resource so you can look over it quickly to decide if it sounds relevant for your project/workshop/talk/etc.

 We also took into consideration keeping things relevant, and using mixed media. You will find free online courses, zines, guides, briefings, toolkits and frameworks all within the toolbox.

Themes of the toolbox

- 1** Mental health is a main category because it is one of the main factors that crosses all identities, groups and cultures.
- 2** *2SLGBTQIA+ rights (* acronym for two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual, the + stands for other ways individuals express their gender and sexuality outside the white cis heteronormativity). In this category we explore gender identity, a toolkit, and also a free online course.
- 3** HIV is also a category in the toolbox that dives into important misinformation that affects many different groups of people, as well as sharing important information about prevention and medications that are preventative.
- 4** Sex work is another vital category in the toolbox meant to tackle misconceptions, cliches and prejudice towards people who do sex work

Who is this toolbox for?

- Youth advocates
- Volunteers
- Trainers
- Activists
- People who work closely with youth
- People who deliver an online sexual health and rights training programme



The e-MPOWER youth activist toolbox is ***now live*** and ***available*** for ***public access***. Share with your friends and communities!

