



PROJECT REPORT

WARSAW | 3 JULY 2018

#SEXISEQUAL

LARYSA | KENNY | KAMIL

Homophobia haunts Poland with a vengeance, even as the burgeoning LGBTQI movement continues to gain strength. According to Kampania Przeciw Homofobii (Campaign Against Homophobia, Polish abbr. KPH), “nearly 70% of LGBT persons experienced violence in the last 2 years,” and “almost 70% of LGBTQI youth” have suicidal thoughts. Considering the urgent need for innovative and inclusive educational models, especially among Poland’s youth, we are partnering with KPH to produce an educational social campaign. We seek to unite queer and non-queer teens—and thus bridge the divides created by unfamiliarity and homophobia—through the hashtag #SexIsEqual. To this end, we will produce a chat-bot which will provide inclusive sexual education and affirming information about the LGBTQ community. We will also produce a product and design package, to be used in schools in October 2018 on Rainbow Friday. The campaign, if successful, will spread the message that we are all more alike than we are different, and that everyone deserves respect, dignity, and equal rights under the law.

Photo source: <https://queerup.ch> (Accessed: 3rd July 2018).

>> WHY DO WE DO IT?

"What is straight? A line can be straight, or a street, but the human heart, oh, no, it's curved like a road through mountains." - T. Williams



LARYSA PANASYUK

Mental health issues that LGBTQ+ people face, especially queer youth, are very close to me. Difficulties that young, queer people have to deal with and the consequences of it are one of the most pressing issues in Polish society. I would like to see the change in how we provide the help to those who often are most vulnerable group in my country.



KENNY MARTIN

As a native Texan, I've seen the impact of negligent and inaccurate sexual education firsthand. I'm also keenly aware of the consequences of a widespread lack of awareness of LGBTQI communities, to say nothing of outright homo- and transphobia. I'm convinced that inclusive sexual education can be an effective means of bringing all of us, queer or non-queer, together—and that through this work we have a chance to craft a more accepting and loving world.



KAMIL KUHR

I was speaking with my sister, who was 12 at that time, about same sex marriages. Her honest astonishment with the fact that those are not legal in Poland made me think: what to do to make this society more equal? I hope that our project is a step towards a safer environment for all of us regardless of our sexual orientation and gender identity.



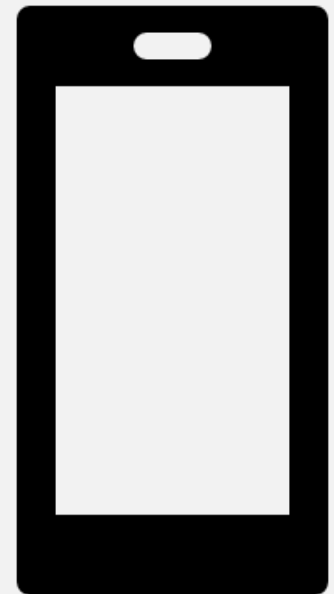
>> BRINGING QUEER AND NON-QUEER TEENS TOGETHER

Sexual education as a means of bringing together queer and non-queer teenagers raises many questions. How can we talk about sex in an approachable and inclusive manner? How can we ensure that we provide teens with information they will actually find useful? Last but not least, how can we make sexual education fun, and not embarrassing?

SEX ED ON A SMARTPHONE?

Combining technology and education has been widely used to engage youth in educational campaigns. A very recent study found that on average, teenagers “spent 2 hours 39 minutes on their smartphone and made 101 app switches per day” (Deng et al., 2018). The study goes so far as to suggest that teenagers are more easily reached online than offline.

Considering the effectiveness of technological educational means, we have decided to create a chatbot about sexual education and inclusiveness. The chatbot is a relatively new technology that is easy to use and simple to access. Chatbots are not widely regarded as traditional sources of internet information, like Wikipedia or Google. However, navigating search engines and web pages can be challenging, especially when it comes to a complex issue like sexual education.



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>> A FRANK CONVERSATION WITH A BOT?

There is a staggering and often conflicting amount of information available related to sexual education and sexual and gender diversity. This information can be confusing, and finding a reliable internet source that presents accurate information in a concise and accessible manner is difficult. Our chatbot aims to address those problems—and reduce the awkwardness and embarrassment that often accompanies talking and learning about sex—through its simplicity, approachability, and humor. Here are some scheme examples:

Let's get to know each other. I say LGBT, you say: Hell yea! / Hell no! / What the hell is that? / Not sure yet.

Sex. Most of us have it (but not everyone! Where're my asexuals in the house?!). Most of us, especially when we're growing up, are unsure about sex.

A, B, C, L, G, B, T, Q... All these letters can be very confusing, indeed! This video will help you get your head around it.

Chatbot users will not have to talk to an adult; instead, they can have a frank and open conversation with a bot. Best of all, the chatbot will be available in 3 languages—English, Polish, and Ukrainian—in order to successfully reach foreigners in Poland. We will also thus be able to extend the chatbot's reach to countries other than Poland

LESS AWKWARD, MORE INFORMATIVE!

>> IS SEX EQUAL?

In addition to the chatbot, we have created a hashtag to unify and promote the campaign as a whole: #SexIsEqual. This hashtag will be used across a wide range of digital and physical promotional materials, and extensively shared with the help of a central Facebook fan page dedicated to the chatbot.

It will be present across various social media platforms, both as a catchphrase to promote the chatbot, and as a spark to a larger movement promoting inclusivity, awareness, diversity, and equality. Moreover, because it is universal, the hashtag can be used by all groups of people, regardless of age, sexuality, gender identity, or other factors.



In order to reach as many young people as possible, we will organize promotional events at schools and universities, starting with SWPS in Warsaw in Fall 2018. During these events, we will focus on safer sex, as well as education about different sexual orientations and gender identities. As well as generally promoting the hashtag and chatbot, we will also distribute #SexIsEqual “goodie bags” with educational materials, condoms, and other giveaways. Through this aspect of the campaign, we hope to ensure access to contraception and educate about safer sex for all teenagers, regardless of their social background, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

>> COMMON GROUNDS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

By creating a novel sex education chatbot and a social initiative centered on the hashtag #SexIsEqual, we hope to create common ground for all teenagers to have a safe, inclusive, and uninhibited dialogue about sex. We especially hope to challenge the development and growth of homophobia in teenagers and young adults, which is often rooted in the lack of open communication and accurate information about queer sex. Importantly, talking about sex does not equate to having it—we seek to educate young people so that they can have safe and consensual sex when they are ready to do so. We seek to remind people that no matter our sexuality, gender identity, sexual status, or anything else, we are united in sex, and we ought to treat each other with that truth always in mind.



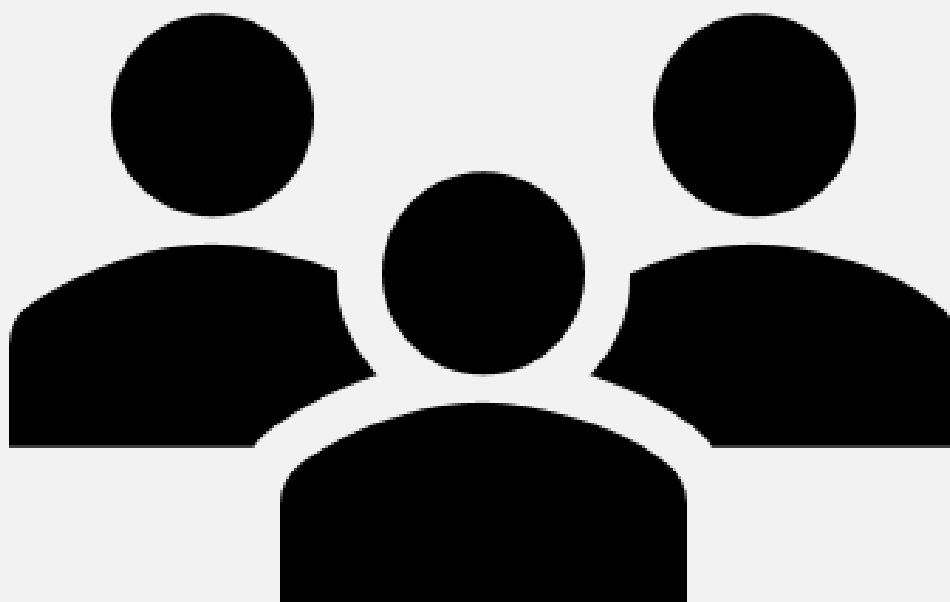
Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/> (Accessed: 3rd July 2018).

>> OUR IMPRESSIONS

Our main concern during the designing process was that the issues we wanted to tackle wouldn't align with the issues teenagers actually want to talk about. We tried to constantly be aware of the need to make our language relatable, and decided to consult the chatbot scheme with a group of queer high schoolers who have worked with KPH in the past. The feedback we received on our draft was positive. The teens liked the idea and enjoyed the format, though they expressed a consistent concern that the chatbot include and address as many sexualities and gender identities as possible. Taking this into consideration, we plan to develop the chatbot scheme further, and enrich it with content specifically exploring transsexuality, transgenderism, and the increasingly diverse and colorful ways in which queer people, especially youth, are choosing to call themselves. In the future, we also hope to involve more teenagers in the creation and evaluation of the bot and the larger campaign.

The implementation of the project will not be immediate. Conversations with KPH and HiA Poland, as well as our other organizational partners, are ongoing, and will continue throughout the coming year as we work toward the official launch of the chatbot, and full implementation of the broader campaign.

As a team, we worked very well together. The spirit of cooperation was present from the beginning to the end of the project. Tasks were divided evenly, and responsibilities were fulfilled by everyone. The teamwork was a success, we're proud of the work we've done, and we're excited to continue this work going forward.



>> PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS



>> T-shirt designed for the promotional events (Designer: Aleksandra Sobczyk).

>> BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Deng T. et al. (2018). Measuring smartphone usage and task switching with log tracking and self-reports. "Mobile Media & Communication", 25 April.
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