

**Epsilon Project Advisory Board
3rd Meeting
09/06/17
16:00-18:00 GMT
Via Skype**

Agenda Item	Who
Welcome & introduction of new members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Members • Organisation Staff 	All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates 	All
Epsilon training for professionals and volunteers working with LGBTI refugees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments & Feedback on the draft document, proposed themes and structure 	All
AOB	All

1. Welcome and Introductions

Moira - Researcher at the university of Sussex working on a similar project, the SOGICA project on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Claims of Asylum.

Hamoud – LGBT refugee from Tanzania, have been living in the Netherlands for 10 months and have just been granted residence permit.

Armin – LGBT refugee from Iran, have been living in the Netherlands for over 4 years, works for LGBT Asylum Support, helping other LGBT refugees.

Rosa – Equalities Projects Coordinator at IARS, coordinates Epsilon in the UK and the board.

2. Updates

Moira – Attended an event last week on refugee issues where there was a focus on the need for organisations specifically working with LGBT refugees as it was acknowledging that there is not much support for them. It was also mentioned that many LGBT refugees end up accessing LGBT organisation that do not have the necessary knowledge of immigration issues and asylum process, which evidences the need for them to get trained and the fitting purpose of Epsilon project.

Armin – He has been busy working with the LGBT Asylum Support organisation on a new campaign and petition: ‘not gay enough’. It tries to make immigration officials change the way that they make decisions given that they don’t know much about LGBT refugees. And make decisions based on stereotypes. See the petition here:

<http://lgbtasylumsupport.nl/en/petitie/>

Armin also talked about the issue of interpretation and the need of LGBT friendly staff.

Hamoud – Agree that there is no reliable way to identify whether someone is gay or not, it is arbitrary. Decision makers often rely on the coherence of your story, how you tell it, and on stereotypes.

Rosa – EpsiLon newsletter to be released soon and information about Refugee International conference in the Netherlands in October

3. Epsilon training for professionals and volunteers working with LGBTI refugees

Armin – traditional LGBT organisations often offer training about asylum procedure to LGBT refugees, however, their ideas are said to be very abstract. LGBT organisations need more training than immigration staff because immigration staff at least are in daily contact with LGBT refugees. LGBT refugees don't feel safe in immigration organisations, they act as refugee camps.

Moira – Recommend that we use consistent terminology throughout the training: LGBTI or LGBTIQA. Also recommends that we explain the difference between asylum seekers, migrants and refugees Vs why politically we may prefer to use 'refugees' instead of making a difference between asylum seekers and refugees. Suggest that the use of the term "newcomers" is confusing, we could change it into "migrants and refugee" to make it clearer.

Armin – One of the most important things would be to work with other migrants and refugees because they are often homophobic and their homophobia can be very violent. Training modules are well structured and cover contents well, it covers the needs of LGBT refugees.

Homoud – Some refugees left their countries because of violence, left their studies in the middle. Sometimes they can't continue. It would be important to make sure they have opportunity to continue their studies without starting from scratch.

Moira - The contents and structure are clear and good.

4. AOB

Moira asked for the a list of member to be shared again since she is new to the group and is not on facebook.

Rosa says she can share who members profile are but given confidentiality issues regarding personal data she would rather not share full details unless permission is requested previously.