CHAPTER 2

Educational Outreach Work in Nordic Countries: Challenges, Tensions, and Contradictions for Queering Schools and Teaching About Sexual and Gender Diversity

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The Nordic Countries—Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden—have often been depicted as progressive societies regarding the issues of gender equality and sexual diversity. World Economic Forum report (2015) ranks four of the five Nordic countries among the top four gender equality countries. Moreover, with respect to legal frameworks and protection of sexual and gender minorities, the Nordic countries rank among the highest in Europe (ILGA Europe, 2018). All five countries

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have an equal marriage law and legislation to criminalize discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression in the workplace, including educational institutions. Most of them have a rather progressive legislation regarding trans rights and recently the Icelandic parliament passed one of the most progressive laws in Europe regarding trans rights (see for example Fisher, 2019).[1]

In Nordic welfare states, the education system is mainly public and free; public education is secularized and emphasizes democratic thought, human rights and gender equality (Lehtonen, 2012a). Queer issues and non-heterosexuality, however, are typically either hidden in many national curricula (see Lehtonen, 2016; Røthing, 2008; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009), or not enacted at all. Queer students and teachers are not very visible in schools and educational institutions (Kjaran, 2017; Lehtonen, 2004; Lehtonen, Palmu, & Lahelma, 2014). Moreover, some researchers have suggested that institutional processes are widespread in many Nordic educational institutions, which police and silence non-heterosexuality and gender diversity, and sustain a discourse of heteronormativity (see e.g. Alanko, 2013; Ambjörnsson, 2004; Blom & Lange, 2004; Bromseth & Wildow, 2007; Huotari, Törmä, & Tuokkola, 2011; Kjaran, 2017; Kjaran & Jóhannesson, 2013, 2015; Kjaran & Kristinsdóttir, 2015; Lehtonen, 2010, 2012b, 2014, 2016; Røthing, 2007, 2008; Taavetti, 2015).

Thus in order to break the silence around non-heterosexuality and gender diversity and provide education about these issues, many Nordic lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) organizations are doing educational outreach work in schools and other educational settings. They are doing this work in order to advance knowledge on sexuality and gender diversity in both compulsory (7–16 years) and upper secondary (16–20 years) schools. In fact, this kind of outreach work is often the only information students receive about LGBTIQ issues as schools and teachers lack knowledge and training to offer this kind of education.

Bearing in mind the discrepancy in broader social policies that support sexuality and gender equality, and the lack of such policies and education on these issues in formal educational contexts (see e.g., Kjaran, 2017; Kjaran & Kristinsdóttir, 2015; Kjaran & Lehtonen, 2017; Lehtonen, 2016), the main objective of this chapter is to investigate how NGO's that operate outside of the formal educational institutions deliver and organize education on LGBTQ issues and heteronormativity. The investigation will involve a detailed discussion of queer educational outreach work within educational institutions, drawing on examples from Denmark, Finland,

and Iceland. It has two objectives: Firstly, to give an account of educational outreach work within educational institutions in Nordic countries. Secondly, to discuss the potentials of educational outreach work to queer or transform schools and to carve out a space for sexual and gender minorities within education. As will be discussed in the chapter, outreach work is performed differently in the three organizations under investigation, but it can be argued that all of the stakeholders involved draw to some extent on norm-critical pedagogy. It has been developed as the main pedagogical approach in some of the Nordic countries during the past years and entails taking a critical view to outreach work about the other in order to disrupt the workings of heteronormativity within schools (see e.g. Bromseth & Sörensdotter, 2014). As an example of this approach, educational outreach workers who participated in our research emphasized the critical aspect of their educational work and told us that during visits they tried to engage the students in critical thought about privileges and to question heteronormativity within society and in their own school environment.

The chapter is organized by giving first a short introduction to the Nordic context. Then we give an account of queer educational outreach work by focusing on: organization and scope, tensions and challenges, and new approaches in doing outreach work in schools. We will then conclude by summing up our main arguments and findings and discuss the potentials of transforming and queering schools through outreach work. In our analysis and discussion, we draw on queer theory (Jagose, 1996), particularly the work of Judith Butler (1990, 1993), Steven Seidman (2010), Michel Warner (1993, 1999), Wendy Brown (2006), and Deborah Britzman (1995, 1998), who emphasize challenging and transgressing heteronormativity; the binary construction of gender and sexuality; and opposing the hegemonic regimes of gender and sexuality. Butler (1993) refers to this as "the heterosexual matrix." Outreach work and education on LGBTIQ issues also involve engaging in doing justice for all students irrespective of their gender or sexuality identity. Thus, in exploring that aspect of outreach work we are inspired by Nancy Fraser's (2009) writings on justice, and the opposite construct of injustice, particularly her conceptualization of justice and injustice as justice of recognition and injustice as misrecognition.

In this chapter, the data consists of interviews with key practitioners and organizers of educational outreach work in the respective countries

as well as policy documents and educational material. We draw on ethnographic data on queer youth and schools in the respective countries, with a particular focus on outreach work of LGBTI human rights organizations Seta in Finland, Samtökin 78 in Iceland, and LGBT Danmark in Denmark.[2] The data consist of interviews with stakeholders, volunteers, and educational workers, as well as documents, and digital material collected in the field. Moreover, in the case of Finland, Jukka Lehtonen[3] (2017), conducted extensive fieldwork at Seta in 2013–2014, generating data which consist of observation in several educational settings.

The data were analyzed by using critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001). According to Van Dijk (2001), critical discourse analysis "primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). Accordingly, critical discourse analysis draws attention to the different modalities of power. One of its main objectives is to disclose hidden power relations both within the discourse and the social actions of dominant group(s); secondly, to transform prevailing social practices, by disturbing the dominant discourse (Collins, 2000; Van Dijk, 2001). We achieved this by identifying recurring themes in the documents: how they intertwined and how arguments were presented, and by paying particular attention to any processes of normalizations and silences.

Nordic Countries and LGBTIQ Issues in Education

We will first give an overview of the Nordic context and analyze the current situation concerning the sexual and gender diversity issues in education in the three Nordic countries. Within the Nordic context, LGBTIQ rights have evolved progressively in the latter part of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century. Today, the Nordic countries are among the most progressive states in the global north with respect to sexual diversity and gender equality. These changes have been gradual during the past decades in which new laws have been passed, thus incorporating improved rights for LGBTIQ subjects. Furthermore, progressive laws and rights for LGBTIQ subjects, particularly for gays and lesbians, have been accompanied by the gradual recognition of this particular group in society (Rydström, 2011). Within the three Nordic countries under investigation educational practices in relation to sexuality

and gender diversity have progressed slowly and not kept pace with the legislative developments in society in general.

In Denmark, the official narratives on LGBTIQ issues in education seem to be submerged in silence, at least in terms of the overall legislation (Education Act) for compulsory schools, which does not mention sexuality and gender diversity in its text (LBK No. 823). Although this is absent from the Danish Educational Act, the curriculum contains a topic called, Health, Sex, and Family Education, which includes education about sexuality and gender, and is mandatory for all students in compulsory schools from grade 0–9. This mandatory topic is supposed to be interdisciplinary and has no set timeframe within the school schedule. It is, therefore, up to individual teachers to integrate it into all other subjects. In other words, the enactment of this policy and the choice of issues or topics discussed and included in the classroom curriculum depends on the individual teacher. However, as it is not stated clearly in the curriculum nor in the legislation, these issues are in praxis rarely addressed within the classroom space and often left out of the classroom curriculum, rendering LGBTIQ students and teachers invisible within schools.

For the first time in 2014, sexual orientation was included in the Finnish national core curriculum for compulsory education (children aged 7–16). This was an important step toward increasing queer visibility in educational settings. The introduction of the core curricula document only mentions the word "sexual orientation" once, as part of a listing of the prohibited reasons to discriminate against people on various grounds in the Finnish Constitution or anti-discrimination law (POPS, 2014, p. 14). That does not provide adequate information on how to deal with issues of sexual orientation in education. It also refers to the anti-discrimination law as something that should be considered when planning education in schools. Gender diversity is handled more concretely, as the curricula document states "basic education adds knowledge and understanding on gender diversity" (POPS, 2014, p. 18), which is understood to mean that there should be some education on gender diversity issues in basic education. The document also mentions that during compulsory education "students' understanding of their gender identity and sexuality develops, and along with its values and practices, the learning community advances gender equality, and supports students in constructing their identities" (POPS, 2014, p. 28). In addition to recent curriculum changes, the Equality and Non-Discrimination Act was renewed in 2014

and came into force in 2016 to strengthen equality and nondiscrimination in education, workplaces, and elsewhere. Accordingly, all schools and educational institutions must have a plan to address gender equality and advance anti-discrimination measures. The framework of this renewed legislation covers trans and intersex people, illustrating innovation and progression, as well as groups under a greater threat of discrimination, such as sexual minorities. Equality and nondiscriminatory measures, based on either gender or sexuality, should therefore be advanced at both compulsory and upper secondary educational levels. The National Board of Education published a guidebook (NBE, 2015) on how schools can advance gender equality, and include gender diversity in compulsory education. In school practices, heteronormativity is still widespread and young people can experience bullying based on their gender or sexuality nonconfirming behavior. LGBTIQ issues are dealt to some extent within Health Education and in some other subjects, but usually focus is on heterosexuality and cis- and gender-normative people (Lehtonen, 2016).

In Iceland, a new Education Act has been in implementation from 2008 for both the compulsory school and the upper secondary school (The Compulsory School Act, No. 91/2008; The Upper Secondary Education Act, No. 92/2008). It is silent about discrimination on the basis of sexuality and gender and does not stipulate any measures, special needs, or protection for this vulnerable group. Moreover, neither the concept of sexuality nor gender is mentioned at all in the legislation. This, however, is given considerable space in the new national curriculum guide, which was released in 2011 in accordance with the 2008 legislation. In this regard, there is a gap between the Education Act itself and the national curriculum based on that very legislation. The new national curriculum guide consists of three books, one for each school level; i.e., preschool, compulsory school, and upper secondary school. Each book contains about a 10-page section explaining the so-called fundamental pillars of education. These cross-curricular pillars are literacy, sustainability, democracy and human rights, equality, health and welfare, and creativity. The text about each of the pillars is about one-page long; for instance, the equality pillar is explained in 560 words. The equality pillar is broadly defined as “an umbrella concept” to include any possible dimension of inequality. It lists 13 such dimensions in alphabetical order: “age, class, culture, descent, gender, disability, language, nationality, outlook on life, race, religion, residence, sexual orientation” (Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture, 2011, p. 20). The Ministry further argues that a goal of

equality education is to be a "critical examination of the established ideas in society and its institutions in order to teach children and youth to analyze the circumstances that lead to discrimination of some and privileges for others" (Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture, 2011, p. 20). This is a radical notion of equality education and fulfills, up to a certain degree, the three first approaches to anti-oppressive education, introduced by Kevin Kumashiro (2002).[4]

Outreach Work in Schools: Organization and Scope

In Iceland and Finland, the outreach work is mostly undertaken by LGBTI organizations Samtökin 78 and Seta. In Denmark, there are mainly two nongovernmental organizations that are responsible for this kind of educational outreach work: Sex and samfund and LGBT Danmark. For the Danish context this chapter will solely focus on LGBT Danmark. There are also some variations of the scope and nature of the outreach work in these three countries. However, all of these organizations are funded, either fully or partly, by the public sector such as the state and the municipalities.

LGBT Denmark has been operating since 1948 when it was called Organization 1948 or Group 1948. This makes it one of the oldest operating LGBT organization in the world. Today it is the largest LGBT organization in Denmark with sections in most towns and provinces across the country. Its activity focuses on three issues: political activism, counseling, and networking, although reaching out to young people through education and talks is an important aspect of their work. As an indicator of the importance of educational and outreach work, the homepage of LGBT Danmark emphasizes education and schools, by having a special link to educational material under the "For skoler" button. However, outreach work and school visits, have been limited, mainly because of financial restrictions and lack of governmental support. Thus, sex and sexuality education in schools is mostly conducted by an NGO called Sex and samfund (translated into English as Sex and Society), which according to educational secretary of LGBT Danmark, "is a very big organization, working all over the country." LGBT Danmark is smaller and it is mainly active in Copenhagen and Aarhus. Outreach work in schools is mostly conducted by the youth group of the organization. They do approximately 20 visits a year and have during the last two years employed norm-critical pedagogy

in their outreach work. In fact, the youth group is more radical and more inclusive than for example the other fractions of LGBT Danmark, adding the + symbol in the LGBT acronym. Moreover, their strategic aim is to destabilize norms related to gender, sexuality, body, and any other limits.

Seta, which is a national LGBTI umbrella organization for 24 member organizations, is training voluntary educational activists of the local member organizations, which are mainly responsible for organizing the educational outreach work in schools and other educational institutions in their area. There are around 200 more or less active voluntary educational activists in Seta and its member organizations, and 150–250 visits in schools and other educational settings are made yearly. This means that yearly thousands of people have a chance to hear an activist or an employee from Seta talk about LGBTI issues to them. In every age cohort in Finland there are about 60,000 young people, which means that Seta trains on LGBTI issues around 5–10% of each age cohort. There are bigger figures in larger towns in which Seta has an active member organization, and smaller ones in the countryside and small towns. While most of the visits are done in schools (basic education or upper secondary educational institutions) and in youth centers or youth camps, the recipients of the training are mostly young people. Also the so-called professional training is organized mostly for young people, such as students in universities of applied sciences (specifically youth, social, and health care workers) and in universities (e.g., teacher trainees). Voluntary educational activists are also mainly young people. The educational secretary stated that about 90% of the school visits were done by young voluntary educational activists. Most of the voluntary activists are non-heterosexual (with various identifications) and there are also some trans people. It is recommended that there should be two educators with different backgrounds in relation to gender and sexual identity taking part in school visits.

Samtökin 78 has ever since it was established in 1978 focused on education about gay and lesbian issues. This emphasis on education is reflected on their homepage, which features three main aims of Samtökin: education, counseling, and events. During the last decade, Samtökin has incorporated other issues connected to queer reality, such as education on, for example, trans and intersex subjectivities and reality. The educational aspect of Samtökin has grown gradually and in 2015 its educational volunteers held lectures in 20 primary schools and 9 upper secondary schools, mostly in and around Reykjavík (Samtökin '78 2016). As the total number of primary schools in Reykjavík is 45, this is quite a

small proportion, also considering a formal agreement made at this time between the city of Reykjavík and Samtökin 78. The educational manager of Samtökin 78 expressed her views:

> It is dependent upon individual teachers and schools whether they include this kind of education in the classroom or school curriculum. A coherent policy is lacking on this matter, and schools, for example, rarely request education on these issues for teachers and educational workers.

Tensions and Challenges in Nordic Educational Outreach Work

In all the three organizations presented in this study, educational outreach work on sexuality and gender diversity is rather well established and has been part of the organizational aims and work for the past four decades. For example, on the homepage of Samtökin 78, under the category of "service," queer education or education about queer issues is among the services offered. Seta and LGBT Danmark also highlight education and outreach work on their websites as a part of the services provided. The emphasis is on increasing the visibility of queer people, educating about sexuality and gender diversity, and giving basic information about LGBTIQ issues to young people and schools. However, there are some differences between the organizations on how these aims are achieved in terms of pedagogy, approaches, content, and emphasis of the outreach work. There are also ideological tensions within and between these organizations which mainly revolve around whether the outreach work should focus on giving information on LGBTIQ lives and reality in a more "neutral" way, defined here as the informative learning or education, or whether the education should be more orientated toward norm-critical pedagogy. LGBT Danmark, and particularly the youth group, LGBT + Ungdom, has adopted the norm-critical pedagogy in their outreach work. This new emphasis in the outreach work is rather recent according to the educational secretary of LGBT Danmark and was a necessary move forward as it was felt among educational outreach workers that the previous methods and approaches were neither having an impact on the students nor challenging heteronormativity:

> It was not an education. It was like being in a zoo, being looked at from the other pupils, and it might help those LGBT + pupils that might be there, but it could also go the other way [around] actually.

In the quote, the educational secretary of LGBT Danmark uses the metaphor of being in a "zoo," when describing previous pedagogical approaches during outreach work which focused on telling a personal "coming out" story. By doing that she is emphasizing that previous approaches focused solely on the queer other, who was looked at and epistemologically objectified, by a presumably straight audience, just as one would do when visiting the zoo. Thus, in order to engage the "spectators" and move away from an education about the queer other, approaches such as norm-critical pedagogy were introduced.

The story-telling approach can be defined as experience-based or narrative-based education or learning which is still being used in both Finland and Iceland (Lehtonen, 2017). The educational secretary of Seta emphasized the importance of this approach in order to increase the visible LGBTQ people in schools. Thus, in combination with telling their "story," outreach workers from Seta and Samtökin 78 are mostly engaged with educating about LGBTQ issues. This is what can be defined as *peer-to-peer education* as the outreach worker are themselves young people, most often under the age of 25 years and work at the organization as volunteers. This was emphasized by the educational secretary of Samtökin 78: "[The volunteers are] supposed to be young people talking to other young people so that they can relate and give some kind of personal examples, and … be a role model." Furthermore, she pointed out that it is "important to share personal information, to have connection. There's an added element in this peer connection." The notion of "added element" of sharing personal information is also to convey to the students that it is "okay to be a little different from the mainstream [and] that is something you can't just get from a book or from someone who reads from a slide." Thus, "personal connection" and the aspect of being a queer "role model" intersects with the informative approach, both in Iceland and Finland. These approaches were however criticized by the Danish volunteers interviewed as can be seen in the following quote:

> What if the person speaking is not sympathetic enough? What are the troubles being an ambassador of an entire group of people that you might not

> be able to speak about if you're, if you mainly have experienced homophobia or discrimination regarding sexuality, what about gender, can you even, are you qualified to talk about that, and stuff like this?

The educational volunteer draws attention to some of the "pitfalls" related to the "role model" approach as it cannot represent the wide spectrum of LGBTIQ realities and lives. This approach might have worked in the past when the focus was mostly on sexual diversity, meaning homosexuality, but today all the three national organizations need to focus on and cover in their visits a variety of identities in terms of gender and sexual diversity. Thus, it can be a challenge to fit all this into a talk which only lasts from 45 to 80 minutes, depending on the national context. For Seta and Samtökin 78 lack of time does therefore not give much possibilities to discuss gendered norms and practices in schools as the volunteers need to cover so many other topics. This was expressed for example by the Seta educational secretary, as can be seen in the following quote:

> Well, time-wise, for example school visit is about 45 minutes, that will make a limitation on, like we have certain basic things we should go through within the training.

Moreover, not all topics could be addressed during the outreach visits, and some were regarded as "taboos" as can be seen in the following quote from an interview with the educational secretary of Samtökin 78:

> We are very explicit about this not being sex education. I would love to do queer sex education, absolutely. So, we are very explicit that we are not here to talk about sex. Of course, where the sex ends and begins is a very fuzzy thing. A lot of times, we do get questions about sex, and it's usually "how do lesbians have sex?" and there really are in a bind, because maybe this person is actually curious, maybe they are actually a lesbian and they don't have this information.

So, when the educational workers get questions about sex, they often have to avoid that topic or refer to some websites or tell the students to contact the counselor's office of Samtökin 78. The same applies to Seta, and its educational volunteers are trained not to discuss sex (Lehtonen, 2017). This topic did however not come up in the interviews with the Danish educational volunteers as their approach is mostly focused on norm-critical pedagogy, instead of informative education or learning. Thus, in

terms of outreach work, at least in Finland and Iceland, there is a "fine line" to walk as giving out the wrong messages or information can lead to some reaction from the more conservative part of the society as mentioned by the educational secretary of Samtökin 78:

> [Today] there is backlash in society about us talking about queer issues to teenagers, especially to children, where people connect discussions about gender identity and sexual orientation to sex. Because our access to schools is not guaranteed. It is sensitive [matter] and it's important that we do it well. At the same time, I really don't like that we have to sanitize ourselves. So, it is a fine line to walk.

To sum up, the main challenges and tensions that need to be considered when doing outreach work in the Nordic countries mostly concern pedagogical approaches, possible backlash from the conservative arms of the society, and whether and what kind of outreach work can really transform schools and society. In other words, how can we move from informative to transformative education, and thus in line with Nancy Fraser (2009) create queer counter-spaces. All the organizations tried to address the issue of transforming or changing society. The LGBT Danmark did so by developing new pedagogy in line with norm-critical approach. Seta and Samtökin 78 focused more on a mixture of informative and experienced-based education, keeping in mind that some topics were off-limits. Thus, in that sense, they all tried to incorporate some aspects of the anti-oppressive education framework developed by Kumashiro, consisting of education for the other (role model approach), education about the other (disseminating information about LGBTQ lives and reality), education that is critical of privileging and othering (norm-critical pedagogy). However, despite their efforts in trying to transform schools and society through their outreach work and activism, most of our interviewees were rather pessimistic about whether that would ever be possible. For example, in the case of Seta, the educational outreach visits were often done year after year in the same schools with not much being changed in terms of teaching practices or dominant ideology. In reflecting on this the educational secretary therefore saw the Seta's educational outreach work more like "a first aid." In order for real changes to take place they needed to be through the state and municipalities as can be seen in the following quote in which the educational secretary of Seta expresses her views:

> I think it cannot continue like this. It should be done through school, state, training of the municipalities. Kindergartens should have the knowledge on gender, girl can be boy, boy can be girl, girl can be tomboy, you can have two mums, this kind of, and that should continue through out the education system, and especially in the vocational sector.

From Tolerance Learning to Norm Criticisms

As mentioned in the previous section, educational outreach work in Denmark, Finland and Iceland, is understood on the one hand to help people to learn about LGBTI people and accept them, and on the other hand to support people in questioning heteronormativity and changing their principle ways of understanding gender and sexuality. Because tolerance or acceptance as an aim and norm-critical understanding as an aim are rather far from each other, this can create both tensions and contradictions within the organizations and in their outreach work. LGBTIQ organizations doing educational outreach work are still balancing between the general societal acceptance or tolerance policy of LGBTI identities and the critical questioning of heteronormativity and related norms. In Nordic countries the legislation and school core curricula incorporate gender and sexual diversity at least to a certain extent, and it is argued that minorities should not be discriminated against and there should be information given on these minority groups. However, the aim seems not to be to disturb or dismantle heteronormative practices and understandings. This message might have an influence on the discussion in the organizations.

The political philosopher Wendy Brown (2006) has argued that the discourse of tolerance in the West is embedded in power relations and involves neither neutrality nor respect toward the object of tolerance. In fact, tolerance marks boundaries between what is considered to be the norm and thus accepted, and what is outside of the norm, on the margins, something that is considered to be "undesirable," of which one would prefer that it did not exist. However, in societies that considered themselves to be "civilized" the "undesirable" somehow needs to be tolerated, although not fully included, in order to accommodate difference in society and reduce conflicts (Brown, 2006). Thus, today, in Western democracies, such as the Nordic countries, the discourse of tolerance has mostly revolved around identities or human differences based on culture, ethnicity, race, or other identity categories. Accordingly, we as ethically moral beings, should therefore tolerate and respect different subject positions

and identities, even though we view those depicted as the Other as "undesirable," perhaps as someone of which we would prefer that would not exist at all. However, we need to overcome our discomfort and through toleration we achieve that state of mind or being. We feel that we are morally good in our act of tolerance, even though we neither accept nor respect those human differences that are objects of our tolerance. Thus, in line with Brown, tolerance is something that "one permits or licenses, a posture that softens or cloaks the power, authority, and normativity in the act of tolerance" (Brown, 2006, p. 25). The discourse on tolerance produces and constructs those subject positions that need to be tolerated and, in that sense, it operates as a mode of governmentality.

An educational outreach worker of LGBT Danmark referred in an interview to the narrative approach in educational outreach work, consisting of telling a personal or coming out story, as the "tolerance" policy or approach toward outreach work. For example, this can be seen in the following quote, this kind of approach did not enhance criticism but drew instead on the discourse of tolerance:

> The tolerance policy is like, that … one person usually, a LGBT person, goes to a school and tells them their entire life story and says: "It was tough and I met this kind of discrimination, and I had this kind of feelings about it and I felt bad." And it's all about getting the students to tolerate or accept the person. And that's something a lot of people felt a resistance against, you know, because there's a lot of pitfalls here. You're not even sure if the room is going to tolerate you. And the thing about tolerance is that you can decide to tolerate one person, but that doesn't mean you might accept the gay community or the LGBT community [as a whole]. You can also withdraw your tolerance towards this person if [s/he] does not seem like a charismatic person or something like that.

He told us that his perspectives changed after taking part in a course on norm-critical pedagogy two years ago, as it was all about "norm criticism, about being killjoy, and about privileges." In fact, being a "killjoy," as argued by Sara Ahmed (2017), is often a necessary subject position in working against heteronorm and heteropartriarchy. It entails asking questions about what normally is taken as granted and criticizing established views. In other words, being a norm-critical pedagogue entails becoming a "killjoy." Thus today, educational outreach workers of LGBT Danmark discuss norms and privileges during their school visits: how are some individuals privileged and how do norms operate in terms of sexuality and

gender? They emphasize that during school visits educators always go in pairs: "We need to protect each other, there has to be another person who can stand up for you, maybe switch roles or something like that." So, before the session starts, they explain that it is important to set out some rules in the beginning, for example that they are not here to address or talk about their personal life. It is necessary to create a safe space within the classroom and encourage all the students to participate in the discussion. By laying down these ground rules, the educational workers are trying to reduce their vulnerability, and focus on the essence of their educational work, which does not entail talking about themselves and their lives but to enhance critical thinking about the heterogendernorms and how they restrict some but privilege others.

As discussed in the previous section, time for outreach work is limited in all three national contexts. Thus, not much time is left for norm criticism according to the educational manager at Samtökin 78. The main aim of their work is therefore, as previously mentioned, "just to try to combat prejudice by normalizing these things." By "normalization" she is referring to LGBTQ identities. She however has some doubts whether this kind of approach is working and if other ones would be better: "I do have doubts about the normalizing aspect of an outsider coming and speaking for an hour and then leaving. That does reinforce that being queer is something outside." Thus, she is aware of the need to take a norm-critical approach toward these issues but so far it has not been the main part of the educational outreach work of Samtökin. She adds that if teachers and educational workers could be trained to give basic information on these issues, it would enable the educational workers of Samtökin to focus more on norm-critical pedagogy. Thus, today educational workers of Samtökin only work with norm-critical pedagogy indirectly, by for example talking with the students about the social construction of norms, and how normative ideas on gender and sexuality change over time. In that respect, students are confronted with the idea that gender and sexuality identities are fluid and can change over time. In that sense, the educational outreach work of Samtökin is gradually adopting more of a norm-critical approach, although the main focus is still to give basic information on LGBTQ issues.

In Finland, diversity understanding and LGBTI-based identity descriptions were still very much in focus during the outreach visits in schools, but recently there were more aims to adopt norm-critical perspectives to

these visits (Lehtonen, 2017). This approach was influenced by the work done in Sweden according to the educational secretary of Seta.

> We are going more and more to the direction, or I don't know if more and more, or if we have already reached it, but in Sweden there is this norm critical pedagogy. Our educator is not talking about gays to gays or about gays to straights, but tries to raise up discussion on the strict gender norms, how they limit everyone. But sometimes, I feel about this Swedish norm critical pedagogy, or the RFSL [Swedish LGBTI organization] thing, and I don't speak based on knowledge but feeling, that they have gone a bit too far, or not maybe too far, but at least I want that our educators say that there are transvestites and what that means, and other things, while I think that, if the educator of Seta does not say that, who then. So that you don't base everything on the norms, or norm criticism, but also the LGBTIQ is brought up. If we don't do it, then who will.

Norm-critical pedagogy became more popular in Seta during the last few years. That was partly because of the youth work coordinator of Seta, who is Swedish-speaking and had close contacts to Swedish LGBTI organizations. The youth coordinator told about the cooperation and differences between the organizations in the area of educational outreach work.

> In Sweden very much people are into norm critical pedagogy. Often, I have this feeling that in Sweden they have so much more resources, and more advanced in many issues. But then after all, I felt that it does not differ that much from our trainings. This norm critical approach is still more in the beginning phase in our educational work. But then in the end, their set does not differ so much from ours. We are doing a lot of rehearsals, and we have brought some from Sweden. Certain rehearsals, which we use, they don't use anymore, while they see them as being against the norm critical pedagogy. They think that if you will express the issues by having an experiential educator, this person is like personal identification target, which makes people react as tolerating this person. This focus the issue on the norm breaking person, and this activate the identification experience and feelings of tolerance. This is how I understand that. And then the focus is moved away from the difficult norm.

The youth coordinator, even if being otherwise a strong supporter of main Swedish arguments, did not fully agree with them about the experiential educator:

> In the classroom there are people, who might need that experience of identification in that person, and through that might get encouragement for breaking the norms in their own lives.

There was also a project in Seta titled "From tolerance to equality," in which norm-critical pedagogy was a key focus point. The project, later called "Against the norms," was a cooperation project with Seta and three student organizations. The youth coordinator said that "Against the norms" book and project was not planned to be so progressive. It became more so because the employee of the project was so active in the direction of the norm criticism: "this project is more norm critical than in the original plan and application it was." He said that the representative of the state funding organization was hoping that the project would have focused mainly on the area of gender and sexual diversity issues, not so much on other differences. Within the new project, norm-critical approach with the emphasis on intersectional feminist perspectives was advanced more than typically within the educational outreach work of Seta (see Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013). When asked about the discussion with the official of the state funding organization representative the youth coordinator said: "Yes, we will focus while that is our specialist area, but can we also talk same time about the other aspects, while they link together and are all equality issues." He also mentioned that sometimes he has used a more moderate sounding term: "I might sometimes talk on norm awareness, somehow soften it (laughing), when I try to explain for people who, I presume, would [react negatively]." This project was a good example of the balancing act between norm-critical queer activism and state-funded LGBTI-identity political activism. State funded and Seta applied a project to take a distance from tolerance policy but not really focusing on norm criticism either, but the queer activist who worked as the project manager turned it into a norm-critical project.

The balance between informing on sexual and gender diversities and questioning the basic heteronormative practices in schools seem to be difficult to find in all Nordic countries. With the limited time and resources of the educational outreach work, the questions are raised on, should the efforts be targeted on changing the structures of education or on helping students to get models for being LGBTI, does norm-critical approach mean the erasure of LGBTI visibility, and does the focus on identities mean that the queering of schools is not done.

Conclusions

In the chapter, we have analyzed the educational outreach work on sexuality and gender diversity done by three Nordic LGBTIQ organizations. The aim of these organizations is to both give information on sexuality and gender diversity for students and pupils, but also to question heteronormative practices and knowledge in the schools and in this way queer education. Nordic welfare states fund this work and have changed legislation and core curricula documents to reflect the need to include diversity aspects in teaching. However, in most schools, heteronormative practices are typical and widespread, and teachers do not have abilities and know-how on challenging heteronormativity and to give adequate information on LGBTIQ issues. LGBTIQ organizations are only reaching a small portion of schools and students with their educational outreach work. Thus, some of the educational workers interviewed saw this work as being only "a first aid." Much more has to be done. The main responsibility is on the state, municipalities who are responsible for organizing the education, and teachers and principals in school. It is great that LGBTIQ organizations can give the expertise on sexuality and gender diversity issues in developing new methods and practices, but often in practice they fill in the gaps of the official education by adding extra information on LGBTIQ issues in heteronormative schools.

We focused on several tensions, challenges, and contradictions within the educational outreach work. The organizations are all keeping in mind the overall situation in society and in the schools. They might need to think about how the funding bodies, such as the state and the municipalities, of their outreach work are reacting, as well as ponder upon how they face the reactions of teachers, parents, and students within the educational outreach work. Can they be critical, or do they have to find language to make the message more acceptable and understandable for all? What subjects and viewpoints to choose? Is it alright to talk about sex, and how to construct gender and sexuality? Key discussion in the Nordic educational outreach work is on whether to demand acceptance of LGBTIQ people and their needs, or to focus on queering the heteronormative principals in the minds of people and the practices of schools. Recent trend supports the norm-critical pedagogy but there are still several hindrances in achieving the aim of queering schools and education in the Nordic countries. However, as this chapter has demonstrated, there are both possibilities and opportunities to transform schools and make them more inclusive in

terms of gender and sexual diversity, both through outreach activities but also by incorporating this kind of diversity education into the curriculum of schools.

Notes

1. "When feminism supports trans rights, everybody wins – just like in Iceland", *Guardian*, September 9, 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/sep/09/feminism-trans-rights-iceland-uk-movements.
2. Seta (https://seta.fi/), LGBT Danmark (http://lgbt.dk/), Samtökin 78 (https://samtokin78.is/en/). We are thankful for these organizations for their help as well as for the interviewees we cite in the text. We would like to thank Dennis Francis for the valuable comments for our chapter.
3. Lehtonen currently works on workplace diversity and equality issues in WeAll project (weallfinland.fi) funded by the Academy of Finland (Strategic Research Council) [Grant number 292883].
4. The four approaches to anti-oppressive education are the following according to Kevin Kumashiro: education for the other, education about the other, education that is critical of privileging and othering, and education that changes students and society.

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