

The background of the entire page is composed of several overlapping, hand-drawn teal brushstrokes. These strokes are thick and expressive, creating a sense of movement and energy. They are arranged in a way that frames the central text, with some strokes curving around the words and others crossing them.

**Youth  
Exchange**

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**Queer  
Health**



**Funded by  
the European Union**

Youth Exchange on queer health

2022



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01.

# Intro

One week,  
37 people,  
one vision:  
to create  
understanding,  
community,  
kinship.

The Summer Youth Exchange on Queer Health was a project organized by the Treat it Queer Foundation, Fuori Orario Femminista, and Associazione Te@, with funding provided by the Erasmus+ KA2 Youth Exchange grant.

The weeklong retreat in beautiful Trentino, Italy, brought together young professionals, activists, and generally passionate individuals under 30 years old to discuss, reflect, exchange knowledge and experience, learn, network, and develop new skills relating to queer health (and, of course, enjoy the summer weather).

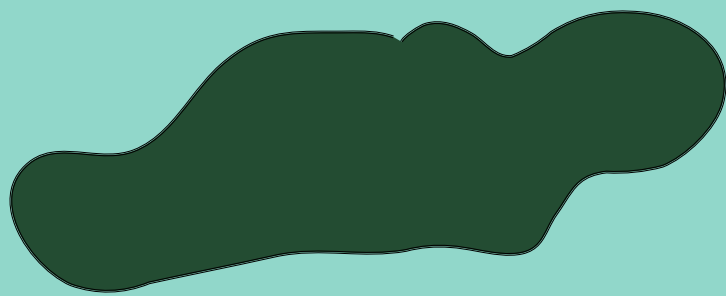
Whether participants worked in the healthcare field or needed to access healthcare as queer people themselves, whether they had participated in education or sensibilization campaigns for better access to gender-inclusive bathrooms or to personal hygiene products or were simply curious about queer health and how it is approached in different national contexts, anyone interested had a place at the Youth Exchange.

Over the course of a week, participants engaged with a wide variety of topics related to queer health, through non-formal education methods, including interactive workshops, and group peer-led activities.

The goal was to allow for an exchange of ideas, and for participants to reflect on the different ways in which queer health is taught, addressed, treated, etc., in different social and national contexts. Some of the workshops and activities were prepared ahead of time by the organizing foundations, while some lectures and workshops were participant-led, on-site.

And, of course, the Youth Exchange wasn't all about academics, and a number of downtime and outdoor activities were held throughout. After all, work is good, but leisure is just as important!

An isle of  
Queer Joy  
between  
August 13



and  
August 20  
2022

The Youth Exchange on Queer Health may now have ended, but its impact will carry on for a long time.



One week, 37 people, one vision: to create understanding, community, kinship. The Youth Exchange on Queer Health may now have ended, but its impact will carry on for a long time. Between August 13-20, 2022, we came together to learn and share, bringing with us diverse experiences and perspectives.

Through seminars and workshops we questioned, we laughed, we cried, and we grew. Now, we are back to our communities and workplaces, stronger with the knowledge we gained, the self-confidence we found, and the support network we built. At the Youth Exchange we showed that it was possible to create the safe and welcoming environments we need within healthcare to properly care for queer people, and now, we are ready to be the care providers we always needed.

02.

The place



OUR HOODDOME















“

The space was lovely...  
I felt at home.  
The mountains around  
the hotel were  
astonishingly beautiful.

- Christian





2018–2020.



Casa dal Trozzo was a wonderful, welcoming and meditative location. We had a great time exploring the woods nearby.

- Lorenzo



“

Absolutely lovely space, both  
as a stay and for walks around.

- Jona











03.

# Building our own space





















IF YOU THINK IT'S NOT HANGING STRAIGHT... IT'S PERFECT



The experience gave me new standards about creating a common space, where lessons and communication happens. The rooms were spacious and we were reminded we could exit the room if we needed every time. Not only that but there was an actual space where we could decompress. I appreciated there was a designated room, I used it once but realized it didn't suit me, while I much more enjoyed the green space outside, so I laid outside when I needed it.

Being there, with queer people, that never questioned my existence is still something I keep in my heart, telling myself that this is the goal for my everyday life.

- Jona



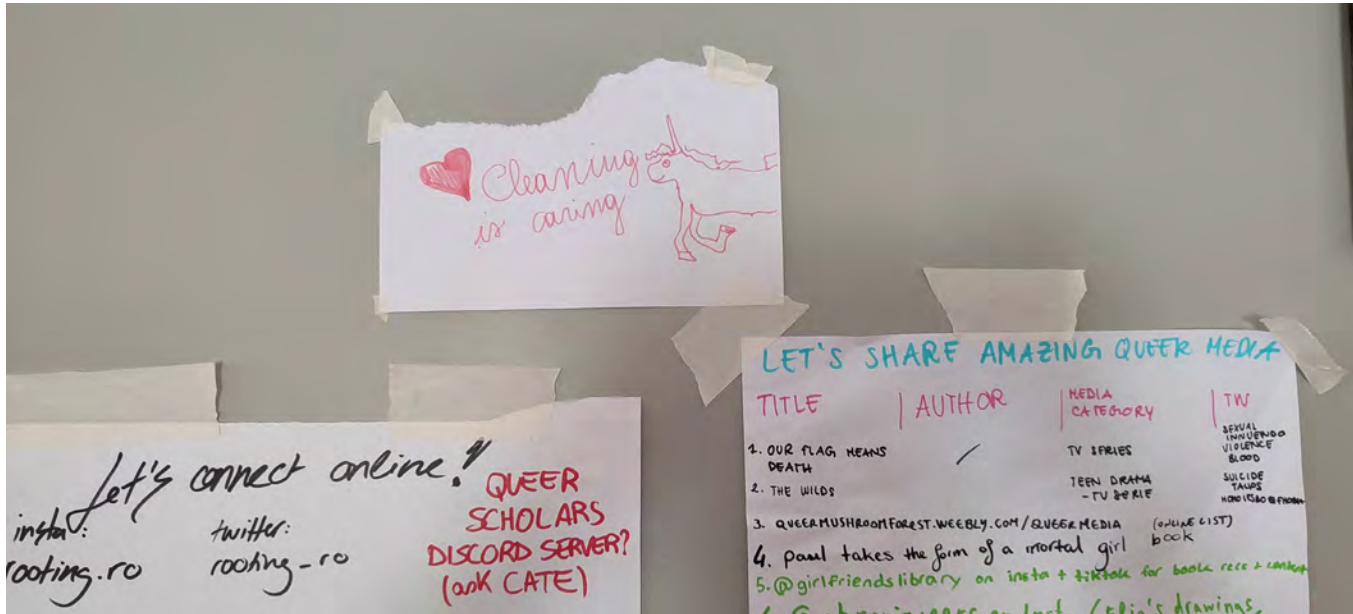


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I loved that we had a decompression room where to go when we were overwhelmed. The entire place was tidy and clean when we arrived, and we worked hard to make it as clean as that the day before our travel back home. The rooms were lovely, and the spaces were comfortable.

- Christian





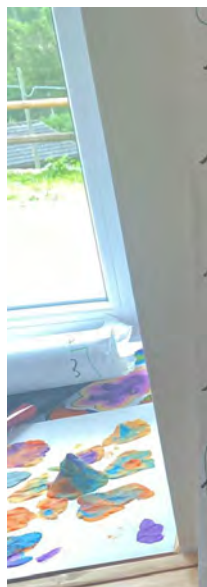
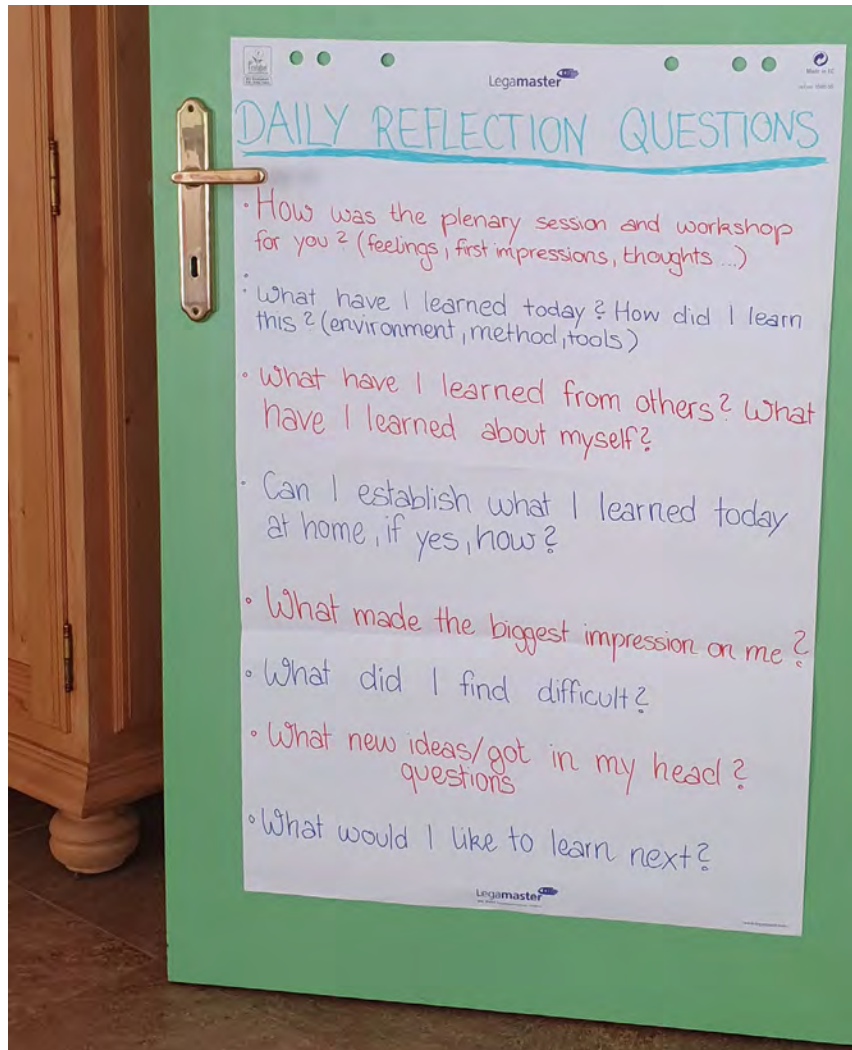
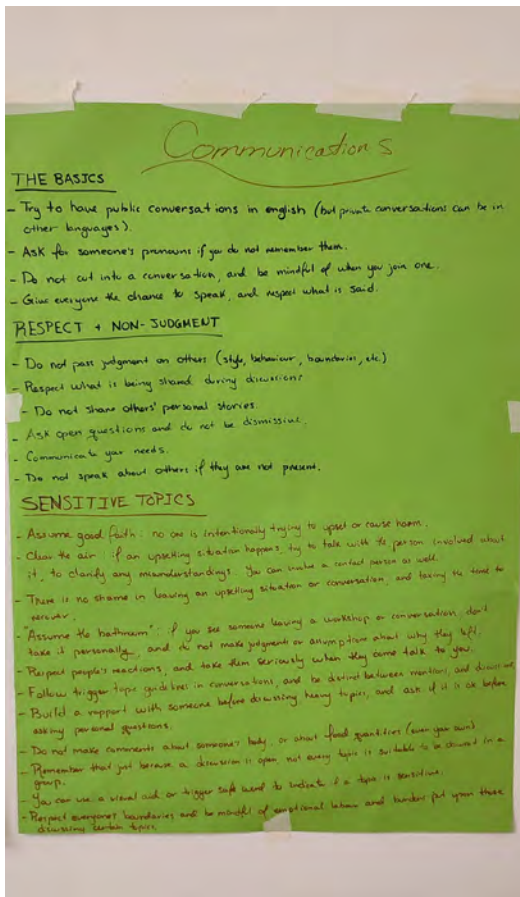
This has been a life changing experience for many I had the pleasure to keep seeing and talking to in the following year, me included.

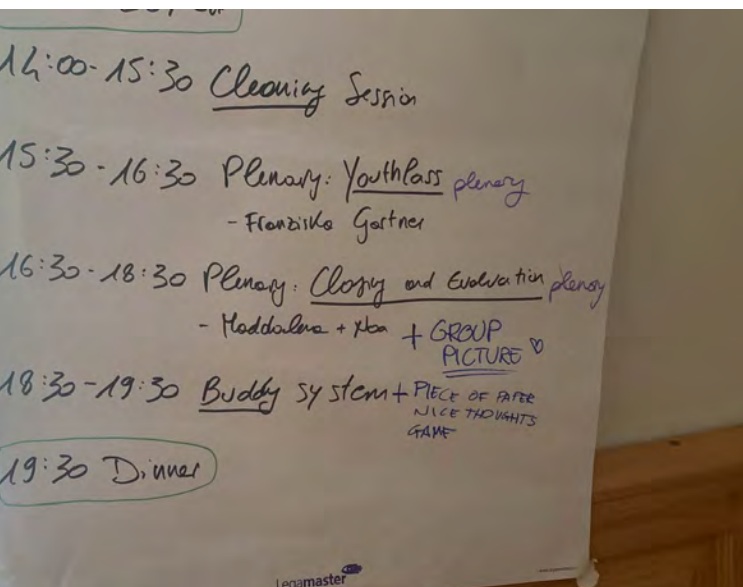
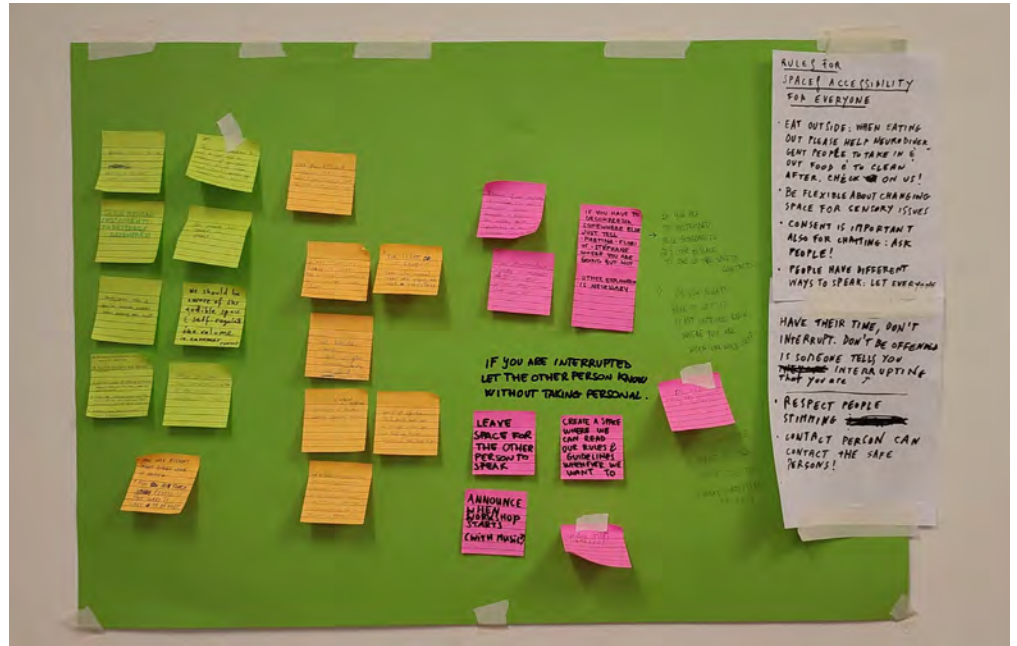
**In a world that doesn't value queer joy, we could be together. Be free for a week. I want to help make queer joy keep happening.**

- Jona





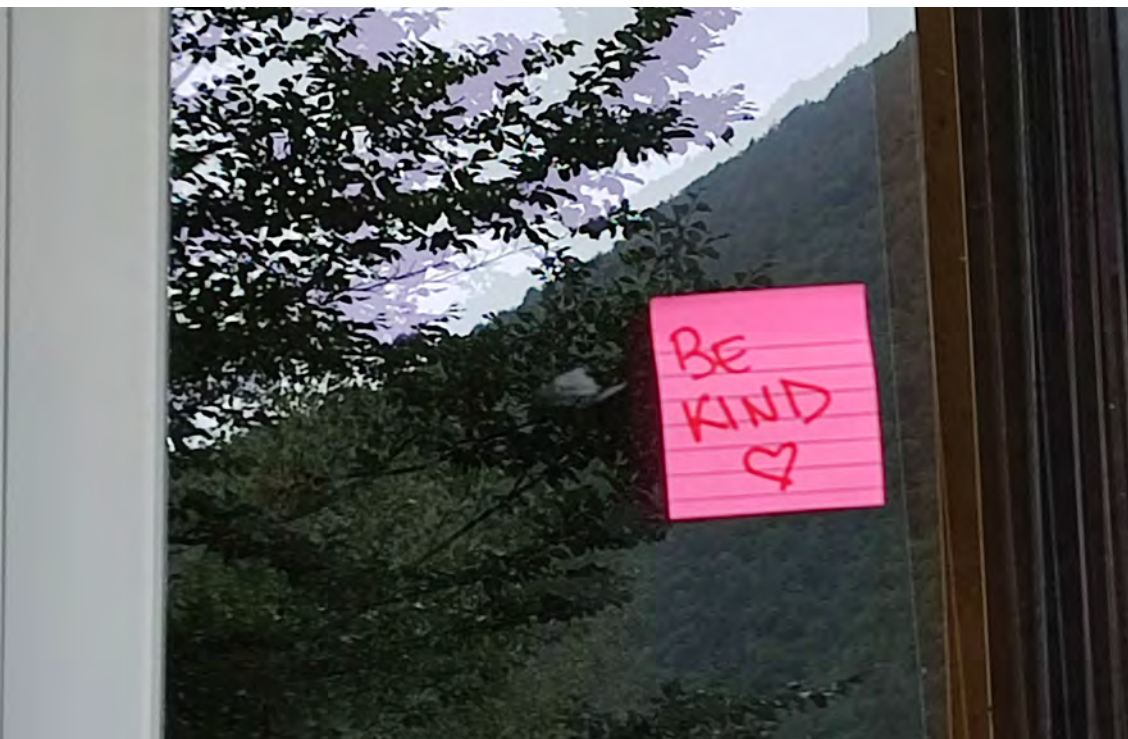






















# 04.



# Plenary sessions & workshops

























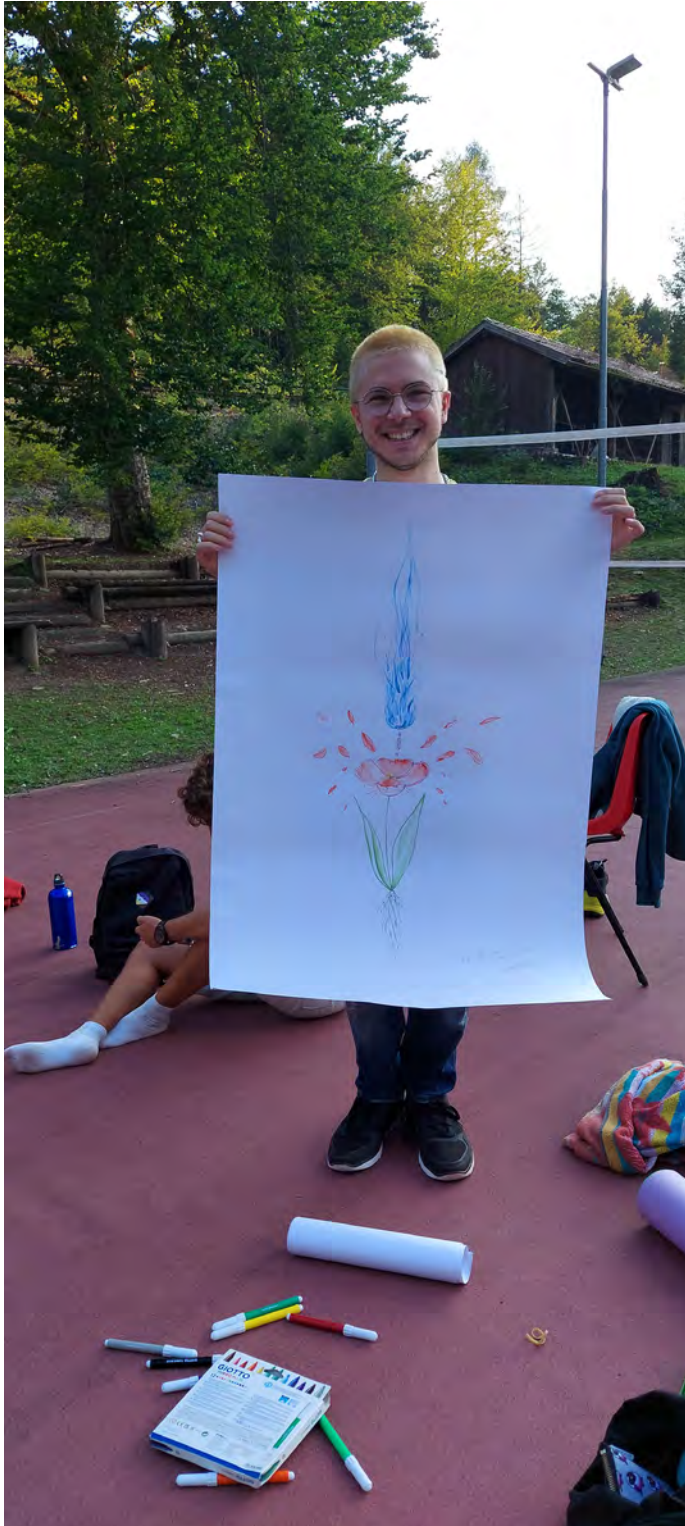
I found this time well constructed, where we had moments to team up with different people, define how the session would work, respecting both the time and wellbeing of the people running the workshops and participants. I had fun myself running one and I'm grateful I was trusted to do so on a "new" topic (intimate wellness) that I rarely manage to bring up.

I bet you understand what I mean when I say:

**"I'm the token trans person, I have to explain the trans existence to "well-meaning" cis people.**

- Jona











“

I can't describe how everything came together so perfectly, we felt like a big family. Sharing so much with people like me has been a life-changing experience: we discovered that a world where we fit in could exist. And we lived that. I could write an entire book on that experience and how it affected me positively. I would love to experience something like that again, but I think that I already lived a magic moment that nobody expected.

- Christian Luigi Russo









“

It was cool to learn about queer health with the awareness that we were receiving useful information that was reliable and free from stigmatizing bias. Queer peer educators can provide vital information that non-queer ones might overlook.

- Lorenzo Giordano











The Queer Health camp has been a life-changing experience for me. I spent the most incredible days of my life during it. It was so good that I had a hard time coming back home. I met incredible people and learnt a lot, both from the spare time we had - that I spent in the company of those newly discovered friends - and from the plenary sessions, during which I understood more about queer health. In particular, I learnt new things about intersex health and aro-ace discrimination.

- Christian





05.

# Food







I loved that most of the food was vegan, I had plenty of delicious options, maybe even too many. I realized soon I wasn't eating enough proteins in favour of vegetables, but I can't blame the kitchen for that, the proteins were there.

I had good experiences with all the staff.

- Jona













The food was incredible: I never ate so many good dishes, even the ones I don't like to eat commonly were so good to make me change my mind. The cook and the kitchen staff worked hard and their work totally paid off.

- Christian

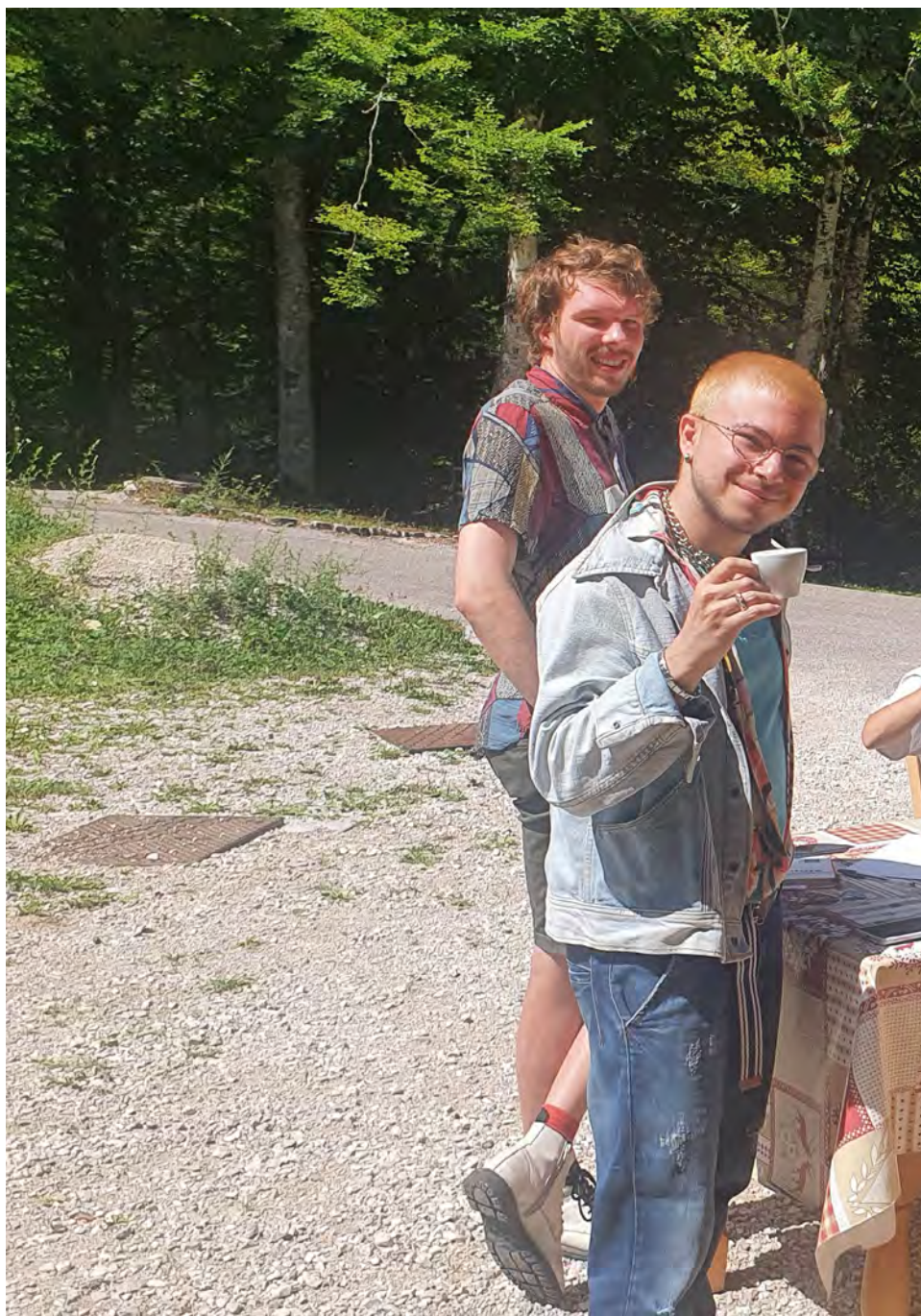


Helping in the kitchen was a great bonding opportunity. It was also nice to be able to partly give something back after all we had received.

- Lorenzo













06.

# Organizers











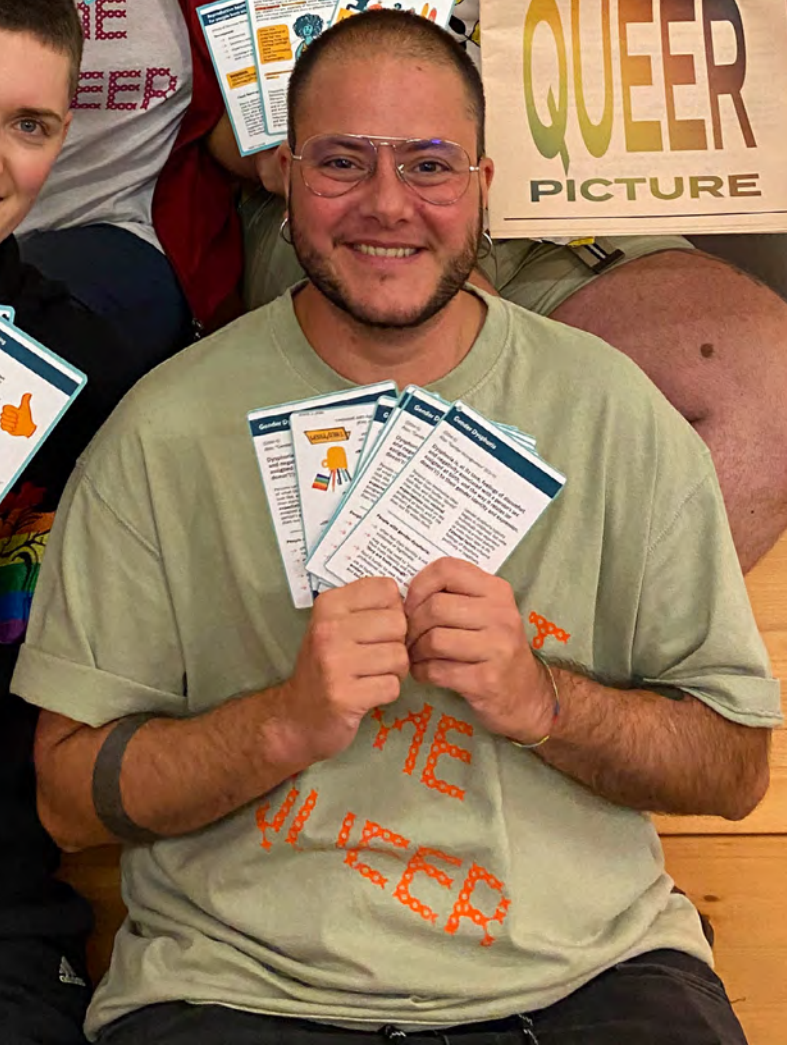






Treat it Queer PHOTO VOICE

**THE QUEER PICTURE**



Sexual language

Physical examination (PE)

STI testing

Gender expression

Gender identity

Gender dysphoria





You all were the people I could bring questions too, while at the same time keep an horizontal... space? I don't know how to explain this, but I am not used to feel on the same page with people that in some ways are figures of authority. That's the thing, you had the responsibility and organized, but never I sensed you were imposing. It made me reflect a lot, how I am used to seeing authority and responsibility, and realize that there is no need for that.

- Jona



07.

# Participants













We had enough time to connect and strengthen those connections with all people participating, come up with ideas/ things/ services to share, or just relax by ourselves or prepare our work. It's something I greatly appreciated, being a person that gets usually overwhelmed by social settings.

- Jona



**Forever grateful for this special week.**

- Alicia









LINE UP -

1. Luke - from [illegible]
2. Steve - [illegible]
3. Chelsea - [illegible]
4. Mark - [illegible]
5. Emily - [illegible]
6. Charlie - [illegible]







**Out of all the places and people  
I wished and tried so hard to make  
me feel like home**

**I would have not expected that within  
one week in northern Italy**

**37 strangers made me feel more at  
home than I ever felt before <3**

- Ro (exerpt from a poem)





I believe that the Youth Exchange has been a life-changing experience because it gave each of us the chance to stop, take a deep breath, look inside ourselves and listen to ourselves, but most importantly it allowed us to go through this process not alone, but surrounded by a solid and understanding support system. The collective embrace in the rain on the last day was one of the most cathartic moments of my life, and for me it is the perfect representation of how I have experienced the whole week.

- Lorenzo



“

**[...] I had one of the most transformative weeks of my life.**

- Astrid





























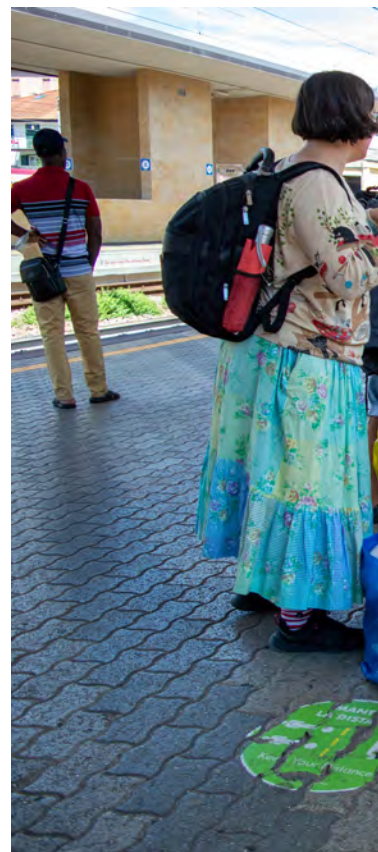


I miss you all, so so much.  
I am incredibly thankful that I got to meet  
everyone there and that we were able to  
share so many experiences.

**It felt like home.**

- Hugo













Welcome to the queerest house of all. The safest bubble that I've ever been into.

I can't stress enough that health, and above all mental health, need to be improved through community, bonding and relationships. And we made that. Our smiles from the beginning to the end were the proof of how extremely necessary and positive this was for all of us, with the only fear of not being able to live again in a perfect space like this, to come back to deadnaming, misgendering, staring, and neurotypical centrism.

I will bring all of you with me, in my personal life and in my professional life, where I hope that I can be the psychologist that we never had and always needed through our journey. You taught me a lot and I am gonna take care of all the queers I will encounter in my future, exactly as you took care of me during this week.

"We are gonna build a planet that... is authentically, unapologetically like us. Looking at each other as people before any construction, above any construction".

I have never breathed so freely. I love you all beautiful souls immensely.

- Elisa



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**Youth  
Exchange**

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**Queer  
Health**