



## The first webinar of Digital Autumn: Active Rainbow & DM+ Društvo mladih Slovencev v Italiji

On 12<sup>th</sup> December 2020 YEN hosted its first webinar of the Digital Autumn, aiming to explore the challenges and accomplishments of young people from different minority groups. In the first episode **Lefkothea Rizopoulou** from [Active Rainbow](#) and **Helena Lupinc** from [DM+](#) shared the experiences from their organisations and their ideas on how to empower young people from the communities they work with. The webinar was moderated by YENs Convenor for Communication Anđjelo Pavlovski.

Active Rainbow is an organization committed to strengthen the implementation of Human Rights and improve the quality of LGBT+ spectrum education, by offering learning opportunities for people to grow and thrive". DM+ is a member organization of YEN that cooperates with the Youth of the Slovenian minority that lives in the border area between Italy, Slovenia and Austria.

Both Lefkothea and Helena highlighted the necessity to raise awareness about the intersectionality: in order to understand the concept of discrimination and its complexity there should be an awareness about various minority groups.

Also, some of the challenges were underlined, that both representatives face in their activism. These were illustrated through striking examples: Homosexuality and non-binary are seen as "trends" and their demands to access to rights are scorned. HIV is often affiliated with LGBTQI+ community and people from the community are often denied services in public health systems. There is a widespread belief that bisexual people are "confused" with their sexual identity and are not taken seriously. Children, young people face bullying and expulsion from schools. Many individuals are rejected by their families. All these aspects intensify the opportunity gap. Queer people have statistically fewer opportunities in recruitment rather than straight people. Likewise, the ethnic minority groups are often expected to assimilate and "hide" their identity. As much as they deny their ethnic traits, they are treated as "good citizens". For example, in Italy there is almost no awareness of the Slovene minority and their rights and often people share the homogeneous idea of a nation-state.

**Both guests agreed that it is important and even necessary to take action.** "The first step is to recognize the discrimination" as emphasized by Lefkothea Rizopoulou. There should be more structured work towards including minority groups into the decision making processes. The decisions which are affecting directly the lives of the minorities are given by the people who have no contact to these communities. The states should structurally face their oppressive past and recognize the effects of this heritage on minority groups.

The feedback and comments from the participants underlined the aspect that the webinar helped them to realize the similarities of the structure of the challenges faced by different minority groups and encouraged them to take more joint actions together.

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