

NEWS



Looking at the pandemic from an intersectional perspective

Sunday 05/07/2020

To mark the LGBTI+ Pride Month, on June 30th, policy-makers and representatives from local governments gathered in our webinar "Intersectional responses for the LGBTI+ community facing COVID-19". The online event was organized in collaboration with the Spanish Cooperation Training Centre (AECID) in Montevideo and financed by the Barcelona City Council. Experts from Latin America and Europe gave insights on the intersectional approach in public policies, framing it into the current context of the pandemic.

*"The COVID-19 represents a major opportunity because it forces us to look at a population with a deep structural inequality in a comprehensive way, which implies having an **intersectional perspective in public policies**"* said **Pamela Malewicz**, Undersecretary of Human Rights and Cultural Pluralism of the Autonomous City of **Buenos Aires**.

The confinement and post-confinement have made inequalities more visible and even exacerbated them

in certain LGBTBI+ groups, especially when their situation intersects with other axes of discrimination. In this line, **Meritxell Sàez** from the **Barcelona City Council**'s Department of Feminisms and LGBTBI affirmed: "**the democratisation of the COVID-19 is highly questionable as it excludes other realities**".

This webinar was the occasion to bring together most of the members participating in the **pilot project "Intersectionality in metropolitan LGBTBI policies"** that was developed between 2017 and 2019. Based on those reflections, the conference highlighted specific initiatives approached from an intersectional point of view, to face the social crisis caused by the pandemic. The speakers presented different proposals as good practices that allow no one to be left behind even in times of post-pandemic.

Here some of the initiatives presented:

- In **Barcelona**, the **LGBTI Centre and the LGBTI Municipal Council** did not stop their activity during the confinement and served as the main channel to attend to the different LGBTBI groups by providing advice or organising activities online.
- **Rosario** created the "**Cuarentena Trans**" (literally "Trans Quarantine") program which brings together the various initiatives to provide services to the trans community during confinement. "**Peer support turned out to be one of the most interesting strategies**" stated **Martin Clapié**, Director of the Sexual Diversity Office. **Sabrina Crespo**, also from the Municipality of Rosario, confirmed that the creation of a Facebook group to **share concerns and experiences** generated great solidarity within the community.
- The experience brought by **Buenos Aires** highlighted the necessity of a **redesign of the governmental bodies working with LGBTBI+ people**, aiming at the implementation of comprehensive assistance plans that take into consideration the different intersections among the axes of inequalities.
- **Geraldina González de la Vega**, President of **COPRED** told about the 12 talks initiated in **Mexico City** with different groups. Their results, she said, "*are giving us an overview of how **the effects of the disease have been precisely intersectional**. [...] These conversations helped us to understand where to put the focus*".
- Regarding the current situation in **Bogotá**, **David Alonzo**, Director of Sexual Diversity reported that two large donations have been launched: one, where the private sector and citizens offered food baskets and cash transfers; the second, currently underway, aimed at **children in a vulnerable situation**. More specifically on this topic, some forums on domestic violence that were set up during the forced isolation confirmed that **violence against LGBTBI+ children has increased** in this period.
- **Luz Ángela Álvarez** from the **Medellín** Mayor's Office of the Secretariat of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights presented "**Medellín takes care of me**", a digital platform where all individuals and families could register and record any level of violation they suffered, without being mutually exclusive. The census was completed with interviews in the streets, to **reach people without access to digital tools**. This strategy helped to prioritize the measures to be taken.
- The **Municipality of Montevideo** prioritized assistance to **trans people and LGBTBI+ migrants**, especially those who had recently migrated and had not had time to build social support networks, explained **Andrés Scagliola**, Executive Coordinator of the Secretariat of Diversity. Thus, **dialogue with these groups** was encouraged as an emergency line and measures were promoted not only from the institutional point of view but also by supporting community experiences.

Intersectionality reveals the structural inequalities that underlie our societies. With the pandemic, the urgent need to implement a profound change in public policy decision-making from an intersectional perspective has become more evident.

The webinar, developed entirely in Spanish, brought together more than 50 people, including representatives from **13 of our members: Barcelona (City Council), Barcelona (Metropolitan Area), Bogotá, Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Guadalajara, Madrid, Medellín, México City, Montevideo, Quito, Rosario and Valle de Aburrá.**

You can retrieve the session by watching the video here: