

# Toolkit to incorporate intersectionality into local policies

## **Toolkit to incorporate intersectionality into local policies**

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# 1 Introduction

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Intersectionality is a challenge because it questions two habitual dynamics in public policy: addressing “citizens in general” or specific social groups who share one same axis of inequality. These two options entail corresponding problems.

On the one hand, regarding policies that address “citizens in general” we can ask: is there such a concept as a “standard person”? For what type of “person” are policies designed? Or, from the other perspective: the needs and realities of which people are not taken into account? Policies addressing “citizens in general”, on the pretext of neutrality, tend to conceal biases and exclusions.

On the other hand, policies that consider specific social groups (women, migrants, people with disabilities, LGTBI, youths, etc.) focus the attention on specific inequalities, but they have some limits. Firstly, they may also construct a standard subject (*the woman, the elderly person, etc.*) which excludes other parts of the group.

Secondly, sectoral policies may not consider the intersection between different axes of inequality or oppression (such as social class, gender, origin or functional diversity). The idea that the axes of inequality operate independently, in isolation from each other, does not consider the fact that our realities and needs are the result of our position in relation to *all* the axes of inequality, which interact in a complex manner. Because no one is *only* an immigrant, a woman, or deaf: a person can be *at the same time* a woman, from Argentina, bisexual, without a disability, cisgender, etc. And, if we do not consider the complexity of her position, we may offer her a response that does not meet her needs.

In short, both “citizens in general” and the existence of groups defined by one axis of inequality, are simplifications of reality, which lead to biases and exclusions. The intersectional perspective seeks to respond precisely to this. Below, in section 4.3, we present intersectionality in greater detail, but for the moment we shall stay with the idea that it is a tool that serves to highlight, analyse and intervene in situations of inequality from a complex approach, which considers that the axes of oppression do not operate independently, but rather, are interrelated.

## #USEFULNESS

How is the intersectional perspective useful in municipal work? Although we will find answers to this question throughout the text, below are some of the most relevant answers:

- It shows us the limits of those political practices that fragment reality and do not address intersections between axes of inequality.
- It enables us to go beyond the logic of policies addressed to “citizens in general” and to specific groups, which does not effectively explain the nuances and complexity of the lives of real people.
- It provides us with tools to tackle the inequalities that take place in our environment in a more effective, efficient and complex manner.
- It helps us to recognise the diversity of the situations and needs of the citizens in our municipality.
- It warns us of the biases and exclusions generated by public policies, through aspects such as the definition of the people to whom a policy is addressed and the mechanisms of participation.

## #RESISTANCES>SOLUTIONS

The fact that the intersectional perspective proposes a different logic to that which is habitual in public policies means several resistances arise when it is applied. We hereby highlight two which we deem important to mention, because they may appear in the people who are reading this Toolkit.

The first resistance manifests in the belief that it is impossible to apply it, or that it is a complication that is not worth pursuing. In this regard, it is important to acknowledge that the approach has been very developed theoretically but little applied research has been conducted and there is little practical experience of implementation in public policies. However, we believe that intersectionality does not mean complicating our work, but that it provides new ways of observing and intervening in the social reality that we want to transform through public policies, because there are aspects which the logic that has been dominant to date in the Administration has not allowed us to address, gaps that we identify in our action but that we have not managed to fill...and in some cases, intersectionality contributes towards finding the answers. Thus, this Toolkit seeks precisely to contribute towards dismantling this approach and moving on from “we can’t” to “how can we do it” by highlighting experiences and sharing resistance that serve to move forward in the application process.

The second resistance arises from the other extreme: having expectations that are too high. When we only operate in the theoretical debate, there are concepts that shine, that are appealing, and that may even dazzle us. They dazzle us precisely because they are not in contact with the specific reality. When we bring them down, when we dismantle them, they can lose part of this brilliance, but that is when they acquire meaning, when they become tools that enable us to ask questions, guide actions and transform realities.

## **#ADDRESSEES**

This Toolkit is especially designed for people working in different positions in local governments: appointed positions, managerial positions, technical teams in charge of designing public policies and municipal staff working in areas such as direct attention, intervention or community work.

Although it is mainly addressed to people working in the field of public policies, this Toolkit may also be useful for activists or people interested in counteracting the inequalities that exist in their environment.

## **#STRUCTURE**

Below, in section 2, we present the project in the framework in which this Toolkit has been written, because it helps to understand the dialogue process that has fostered this material. Subsequently, the conceptual part of the Toolkit will be outlined.

In section 3, three key concepts are presented: how we understand the axes of inequality, the spheres and the services. In section 4, three ways of addressing inequalities are compared (unitary, multiple discrimination and intersectional), some of the debates related to this latter perspective are discussed and elements that could facilitate their application are considered.

Section 5 is dedicated to applying the concept of intersectionality and presenting proposals for application in everyday practice, organised into three main sections: organisation, project design and cross-cutting aspects.

The content part ends with section 6, which discusses the challenges of this perspective. At the end of the Toolkit there is a glossary and bibliographic references.

# 2 Igualtats Connectades

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## A pilot project to incorporate the intersectional perspective

In this section we present the project *Igualtats Connectades* (Connected Equalities, in Catalan), in the framework of which this Toolkit was created. The project was carried out in the Terrassa City Council with the idea of being replicated in other local administrations, and that is why we deem it relevant to share.

Igualtats Connectades emerged from the Terrassa City Council's need to find new ways of planning and acting, which would provide a more appropriate response to the city's diversity and thereby promote equality and non-discrimination.

Terrassa, like other European cities, is very diverse, and this reality is a source of richness. Nevertheless, aspects such as ethnic and cultural origin, age, functional diversity, as well as sex, identity and gender expression, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic conditions are axes of vulnerability that can result in discrimination, and therefore, inequality.

In this regard, the Terrassa City Council has a historical trajectory of promoting equality and non-discrimination. For many years, the City Council has been structured into different municipal services, some of which directly address the axes of inequality: gender, sexual orientation, origin, age and capabilities, among others.

The aim of these services is to ensure that the specificities of diverse groups are incorporated into public policies, with a view to ensuring that these are inclusive and thereby avoid discrimination.

Through the sectoral work of these services, progress has been made in the promotion of equality and non-discrimination. However, over recent years it has been observed that the sectoral approach presents limitations in certain situations, because reality is very complex and people are defined by multiple factors.

In this context, a commitment was made to develop a European project jointly with a university (University of Vic – Central University of Catalonia) and an organisation that is expert in European projects (CEPS Projectes Socials), to seek new ways of intervening and planning that provide more comprehensive and appropriate answers to the complexity of reality and of people, especially those who belong to groups that are potentially vulnerable to discrimination (women, LGBTIQ people, racial or ethnic and religious minorities, people with disabilities, among others), and also taking into account the stages of the life cycle.



The project seeks to evaluate the possibilities of applying intersectionality, a perspective that has been studied in-depth from a theoretical stance, but not put into practice. The opportunity of a joint project between a university, public administration and civil society facilitates innovative and practical proposals grounded in a real context and from a position of co-responsibility.

Thus, the project consisted of generating a process of training, awareness-raising and mutual learning, and of creating tools that help to transfer the experience to other European administrations and contexts.

The first phase consisted of research to determine what the City Council's situation was in relation to intersectional work, and to seek out experiences in the European context that could be used as a benchmark. This exploration served to establish the staff's potential, reluctance and training needs in relation to intersectionality and to define the training strategy. Moreover, it was observed that there was little experience of the practical application in equality and non-discrimination policies.

The second phase was divided into three training cycles: an internal one for municipal staff, one open to citizens, and one for a smaller group of technical staff to discuss the proposals and ideas discussed in the former.

The cycle addressed to municipal staff responded to the need to train municipal teams to bring about shared learning and to generate synergies and tools for change. All the teams for the axes of inequality, life cycles and representatives of other services were trained, comprising, in total, one hundred professionals. The fact that the entire team was trained was an innovative aspect because often training activities are very compartmentalised and are aimed at specific profiles: administrative, intervention, planning, management. Thus, in these sessions, all types of profiles participated and this meant the message could reach everyone, languages could be shared and different experiences and stances could be highlighted. Moreover, the representatives of services tackling other axes of inequality helped to build a bridge between services with which, in the long term, this perspective and way of working could be shared.

In this regard, it was deemed essential to share the learning process and the debate with civil society. In fact, intersectionality came about through social movements and it was considered that the possible transformations to the administration also had to take place in dialogue with civil society. Therefore, an open meeting was organised with citizens, in which the content worked on with the professional teams was replicated and the implications of this perspective were reflected on. Approximately 250 people participated.

In parallel to the training sessions with municipal staff and with citizens, a small group of technical staff gathered to make specific proposals about how to implement what had been discussed in the training. This job contributed an added value, because it involved going beyond the abstract aspects and making much more specific proposals that are applicable to the organisation and dynamics of the City Council.

During the third phase of the project, a European congress was organised, open to other European administrations, universities and entities, to share learnings and experiences and to generate knowledge about the application of intersectionality in local public policies in the European sphere. More than 300 people from different European town councils, administrations, universities, entities and businesses took part.

This Toolkit was created with a view to creating tools to transfer the experience and results to other national and European contexts. Internally, this collection of proposals and methodologies will be used to apply the learnings and continue the path towards more inclusive policies and, in short, towards a more egalitarian city.

More information about the project can be found at

 [www.igualtatsconnect.cat/en](http://www.igualtatsconnect.cat/en)

 Videos of the training sessions 

 Videos of the European Congress 

# 3 Conceptual tools

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In this section we propose a definition of three key concepts which may be useful to situate the subsequent contributions in relation to the different ways of addressing inequalities in public policies. The three concepts that we will look at are: axes of inequality, spheres of public policy and municipal services.

## 3.1. Axes of inequality

When we talk about axes of inequality we are referring to the divisions according to which socially valued resources are distributed unequally. Thus, people, according to the social groups to which they belong, will have more or less access to specific resources (money, prestige, contacts, information, etc.).

The theorising of intersectionality is closely related to the axes of sex, race and social class, but there is no exhaustive list of axes, nor can we establish a hierarchy among them. Currently, those most worked on in public policies in the European context are the following:

- **Age / Life cycle**
- **Disability / Functional diversity**
- **Ethnicity/racialization**
- **Origin/migration**
- **Sex / Gender**
- **Religion / beliefs**
- **Sexual orientation and gender identity / LGTBI**
- **Social class**

It is important to clarify a few points as regards this demarcation of the axes:

- The order of axes may generate doubts, and this is not a futile topic, because it is related to one of the main debates considered by intersectionality: are all the axes of inequality equally relevant?, are some axes more important because they generate

more injustices? As we will set out in the following epigraph, there is no standard way of prioritising the axes, and that is why we have organised them alphabetically.

- Social class is also worth mentioning, since this axis explains many inequalities that occur in our environment but, unlike some of the other axes mentioned, there does not tend to be a municipal department in charge solely and exclusively of social class inequalities. This is due to the fact that this axis, precisely because of its centrality, is addressed directly and indirectly by many departments, such as education, employment and social services.
- It is important to bear in mind that the axes can overlap. For example, in many contexts the position of oppression in relation to the axes of race, ethnicity, origin, religious diversity and social class may arise at the same time when there are groups of migrant individuals who have different cultural and religious customs to the majority, who are racialised and have migrated for financial reasons. It is important to be aware of this overlap, but there is also a risk that we wrongly presume that these axes are automatically associated, since this is not always the case: a *gitano* (gypsy) may present ethnic differences without being a migrant; a woman can be Muslim and autochthonous, that is to say, she might not have family origins in a Muslim-majority country; a man from a Muslim-majority country does not have to necessarily be Muslim; or perhaps a racialised person does not have any ethnic differences, if he/she was adopted by an autochthonous family at birth.

### 3.2. Spheres of public policy

The spheres are the areas or divisions of public policy (education, health, employment, sports, culture...) which the axes of inequality influence. Class position, for example, has an impact on educational possibilities and on health, even generating differences in life expectancy and quality of life. Sex/gender can have an impact on employment, due to sexist discriminations in the labour market. Or, being a trans person can have an impact in sport because this has a binary structure.

### 3.3. Municipal services

We understand as services the departments or offices into which an Administration is organised. We propose considering that there are three types of services according to their relation with the axes and the spheres:

- **Services tackling axes of inequality.** This would be the case of the departments of gender equality, functional diversity, LGTBI, origin, religious diversity or life cycle. When a public policy project seeks to work on the impact of an axis of inequality on the different spheres of action, it is performing mainstreaming. In this regard, gender policies are the ones that have systematically performed this task of working on the impact of gender in all spheres of public policy. Usually, the municipal services or departments dedicated to specific axes of inequality have each tried to carry out this mainstreaming. This logic will be questioned, as we will see in the next section, from an intersectional perspective which considers the need to perform processes of intersectional mainstreaming, which consists of ensuring that all the policies implemented incorporate all the axes of inequality and take into consideration the interactions between them.
- **Services focused on specific spheres.** These services do not revolve around one axis of inequality, but rather they focus on a field, such as sport, citizens' security or culture. These services assume the challenge of considering how the different axes of inequality impact them: for example, how do class inequalities influence cultural consumption, or how does gender affect the perception of risk in the public space and the probability of victimisation.
- **Hybrid services, which combine work according to spheres and according to axes.** There are services that work on one sphere and the endogenous inequalities stemming from this at the same time. This would be the case of the health service, which is in charge of a sphere but at the same time can deal with endogenous axes of inequality stemming from this sphere (such as inequalities stemming from being HIV positive or having a mental health diagnosis) as well as potentially dealing with the impact of other exogenous axes (such as sexual or gender diversity, social class or origin) in the health field.

# 4 Ways of addressing the axes of inequality



Having clarified how we understand the axes, spheres and services, we shall see how these elements combine in the different models of work with inequalities in the Administration. In the table below, we summarise the three models that have been applied in our context (unitary, multiple discrimination and intersectional) and we explain them in the following sections.

	Unitary Approach	Multiple Discrimination Approach	Intersectional Approach
<b>How many axes of inequality are addressed?</b>	One	More than one	More than one
<b>What is the relationship posited between axes?</b>	One axis is considered principal	The axes have the same importance in a predetermined relation between each other	The axes have the same importance; the relation between them is an open question that depends on the context
<b>How are axes conceptualized?</b>	Statically	Statically	Dynamically

Adapted from Hancock (2007: 64)

## 4.1. Unitary logic

The most usual way of working on equality and non-discrimination in public policies follows the unitary logic, also known as sectoral or segmented. Each axis of inequality is worked on independently. In other words, each axis of inequality is addressed by a different service or department in the Administration.

This logic has positive aspects: it highlights the problems arising from one axis of inequality; it can be the foundation from which to implement a mainstreaming strategy... But it also presents inconveniences:

- It does not help to acknowledge the fact that people are simultaneously affected by diverse axes of inequality to be addressed in a complex manner. In an Administration in which each axis is worked on in separate services, for example, we could ask who looks after an elderly lesbian woman with housing problems: which part of her problem stems from being a woman, from being lesbian, and from being elderly?; can her reality and her needs be divided up in such a manner? The intersectional logic considers that her reality is the result, precisely, of the intersection of these axes.
- It may tend to consider that the identity groups are internally homogenous and lead to diverse forms of essentialism, in other words, to considering that their realities are permanent and immutable. Moreover, it can involve the reinforcement of identity categories which, in fact, are constituted in the framework of the same power structures that they want to fight. As we shall explain in greater detail in section 4.4, identity categories (disabled, woman, migrant, black, trans, etc.) are constructed by the power structures that classify us (based on our capabilities, genitals, origins, skin colour, gender identity, etc.). Therefore, although we cannot disregard them because they form a part of the social reality and they help us to detect and transform inequalities, we must reflect on the risks of reinforcing them.
- It may become what Hancock (2007) named the “Oppression Olympics”, in other words, a competition between the services responsible for each axis to achieve more resources, visibility or recognition than the other services.
- Each service responsible for an axis establishes its own strategy to provoke an impact in the spheres, but they do not all have the same ability to mainstream, because they do not have the same resources. Thus, an inequality is established between the different services and axes.
- Focusing on one axis without taking into consideration the others can mean that the effects of the intervention are not taken into account in relation to other axes.



## The risk of *pink washing*

During the development of a sexual and gender diversity plan in a town in Catalonia, one of the problems that arose was that LGBT youths from the area perceived nightclubs as hostile spaces. The team working on the action plan considered the possibility of establishing a campaign to ensure that nightclubs were spaces that were more open to sexual and gender diversity; a campaign that would involve training staff, a protocol in the event of attacks, an emblem, etc.

In the end, however, it was decided not to carry out the action because it was considered that it could lead to *pink washing*. This is understood as the process used to try to clean the image of an entity (in this case a nightclub) by using the fact that it respects LGTB rights, but in the meantime hiding that it violates other rights.

It is important to bear in mind that the area in question has a high percentage of migrants from North Africa, who are subjected to xenophobic attitudes. In fact, the nightclubs often discriminate against young North Africans by refusing them entry. The driving group in charge of designing the LGTB Plan decided not to carry out the campaign for sexual and gender diversity because it was feared that it could serve to hide the xenophobic discrimination.

Having said this, it would have been ideal to address the xenophobia and the LGTBphobia (and other relevant axes of discrimination in these spaces, such as sexism), but the unitary structure of the Administration and the relations between the people in charge of the different services meant that it was not feasible.

## 4.2. Multiple discrimination

Another way of organising the work, in relation to the axes of inequality, is the multiple discrimination model. This model is strongly promoted by the European Union, for example, with the creation of unified equality organisms that look after different types of discrimination, such as the Fundamental Rights Agency. This means that, rather than creating organs and rules for each axis of discrimination, some are created to address different axes at the same time, but this does not mean that the way these intersect is taken into consideration.

The advantages of this model are the use of economies of scale, coherence in the legal interpretation of discrimination and the possibility of addressing the cases of multiple discrimination. As regards the disadvantages, this focus often entails a lack of coordination between the specific agendas that come together; it does not resolve the competition between groups or axes of inequality; it does not work on the intersections between axes; and it understands the discriminations from an additive logic.





### Do 1+1 always equal 2? A critique of the additive logic

It is often deemed that lesbians are subjected to double discrimination: on the grounds of gender and sexual orientation. If we accept the logic of this mathematic operation, we could try to calculate a type of “oppression coefficient”, in which a point is added for each dimension in which someone is oppressed, and subtracted when they are in the position of oppressor. According to this logic, the oppression coefficient of a lesbian woman from the upper class is  $+1+1-1$ , resulting in 1. If we apply this formula again, the woman in question is more oppressed than, for example, an undocumented heterosexual man ( $-1-1+1=-1$ ). And if we go even further, it is important to think about how many dimensions the coefficient has to consider, whether each one should have the same weight in the total calculation and if more complex operations need to be introduced into the formula (from multiplications to the square root). The intersectional perspective proposes a more complex way of understanding the effects of the intersection of axes (Coll-Planas, 2013).

### 4.3. Intersectionality

Although we can find this proposal in other settings, the formulation of intersectionality as we understand it today came about at the end of the 1990s in the United States through the contribution of black feminist activists and academics such as Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), Patricia Hill Collins (2002) and Combahee River Collective (2014). Intersectionality is a criticism of the fact that feminism (which mainly adopted a white perspective) and black activism (which adopted an androcentric perspective) did not manage to highlight the internal heterogeneity of the social groups they claimed to represent. And it was not only that the realities and demands of black feminist activists were not represented, but they did not stem from the simple overlapping of that considered by (white) feminism and by the (androcentric) anti-racism movement. Thus, it did not involve adding (following an additive logic), but understanding that the intersection of the axes of gender and race produce specific realities.

In this regard, the black activist and feminist theorist Patricia Hill Collins (2002) conceptualises the different axes of oppression as interlinked in a matrix in whose framework individuals have different and changing positions of power. This emphasises the interaction and interdependence of categories of oppression, and the possibility that people can find themselves simultaneously in different positions of oppressor and oppressed.

Crenshaw (1989) distinguishes between two concepts which can be used to differentiate between two perspectives in the contributions to this debate: structural intersectionality (which explains how the intersection of the different axes of inequality distributes power

across social groups) and political intersectionality (which shows how, through political action –both institutional and activist–, intersectional inequalities are reproduced or fought against).

First, we summarise the basic premises of structural intersectionality:

- Intersectionality does not only focus on positions of oppression, since the experience of someone in a position of oppression is not more intersectional in relation to other axes: all people are situated in relation to all axes of inequality, whether from a place of privilege or oppression.
- The situation of each person in the social structure does not simply emerge from the sum of positions of oppression that we accumulate (following an additive logic), but it considers that the intersections of axes lead to specific situations. For example, the stigmas and obstacles migrant individuals from Muslim-majority countries encounter are qualitatively different according to gender. In this regard, it is not about establishing whether migrant women are more or less discriminated against than men, but about understanding the differences in the forms of oppression generated in the intersection between gender and origin (and we could even add other axes of inequality, such as age, sexuality or faith).
- We must exercise caution with the concept of ‘position’, for three reasons:
  - It can tend to essentialise the position itself (“all people who share position x in relation to axes y and z are the same”), and lead to stigmatisations, victimisations and stereotypes. In other words, simplifying the idea of position can make us homogenise social groups and deny their diversity.
  - Intersectionality puts emphasis on the context: the concept of position can transmit a vision that is too static, that does not sufficiently consider that power relations are contextual and that one same person can be in a position of more privilege or more oppression depending on the context. In this regard, Nira Yuval Davis (2017) proposes the term “situated intersectionality” to highlight the fact that inequalities are produced in specific contexts.
  - The position in relation to axes of inequality contributes towards explaining and predicting realities and needs, but it does not determine experiences. Although our realities, needs and expectations are to a great extent constrained by our position in the social structure, people are not puppets of these structures, and we have the capacity to act. This explains that the axes of inequality enable us to predict some social realities, but not all of them, due to the fact that people also have the capacity to subvert that which is expected of us.
- Despite the fact that, in our reality, all axes always intervene, it is possible to distinguish between the different power systems from which the axes stem. As shown in the quote below, Marta Jorba and Maria Rodó-de-Zárata (2019) illustrate

this idea through the example of an apple, considering the categories as the characteristics of a person or social group.



### The intersectional (but distinguishable) effects of power systems

“Take an apple. It is sweet, red, hard and cold. The taste, texture, colour and temperature would be the criteria mentioned in this characterisation and they all have an ontological nature –we measure them through diverse elements and we classify them according to different traits, for example. But, if we focus on the apple, these properties are linked to each other, in such a way that they can affect each other profoundly. If we put the apple in the oven, the high temperature will make the apple softer and sweeter. In this regard, we could say that the temperature ‘affects’ and ‘changes the nature’ of the apple’s texture. The colour of the apple is directly linked to its ripeness; the riper the apple becomes, the more its colour changes from green to brown. And all of these characteristics constitute the apple. To draw an analogy, we propose that social categories be conceived as properties of individuals: to be a woman, white and lesbian are three different properties of a person and they have specific effects on the person’s experience, in specific contexts. What ‘changes’ in the diverse situations is a person’s experience in general, in such a way that there are different effects in different situations” (Jorba and Rodó-de-Zárate, 2019).

As regards political intersectionality, which involves both public institutions and activism, we highlight the following premises:

- Despite aspiring to have policies that address citizens in general or a specific axis, in practice, all policies have intersectional effects. In this regard, we could say that all policies are intersectional, since (although they do not want to be or do not express it) they have an impact on citizens who are always affected by all the axes of inequality. The objective would be that policies were consciously intersectional (assuming inclusions and exclusions, establishing priorities...) and that they would seek to fight against these inequalities that occur as a result of the intersection of axes.
- Intersectionality enables us to move away from the competitive logic between axes of inequality, to show that they are all part of one same structure that requires a holistic approach (without losing sight of the specificities of the axes).
- It is important to bear in mind that public policies do not only fight against inequalities, but that sometimes they also contribute towards reproducing them. Thus, it is essential to critically review the practices of the Administration in order to question who we are excluding, to what extent we are recognising the

heterogeneity of groups or which identities we are contributing towards reinforcing (see the reflection on identity politics in the section #Debates).

## #CONTEXTS

The subject of context is fundamental in the theorisation and implementation of intersectionality. Firstly, the social reality that the axes determine is contextual, because in each municipality there are different realities: it is different if we talk about a municipality that has a considerable number of migrants, than another which practically does not receive migrants. Or, for example, the social group 'indigenous people' makes sense in many American countries but not in Europe; or the group 'victim of an armed conflict' is relevant in contexts where there is (or has been) military conflict or where people coming from these contexts have taken refuge, while in other places it may be an irrelevant category.

If we look closer, we will see that the axes do not make up an exhaustive and permanent list and that, in addition, not only do we have to take into account the structural axes (essentially, those listed in section 3.1), but other types of axes may appear that are important to consider in order to understand the inequalities in a specific setting. These could be a native language, health condition, place of residence (rural/urban, or stigmatised neighbourhoods...), etc.

Likewise, when we perform a diagnosis prior to designing an intervention (see section 5.3), the significant axes must be detected. In the case of an intervention in a certain district, being a member or not of the residents' association may be key to getting your voice heard by the Administration, or being a homeowner or a tenant may generate different demands and interests that need to be taken into account. Another example would be that of the research *Mirades polièdriques a la violència de gènere* (see experience E14), which analyses the axes of inequality that are key in secondary education centres. One of the axes that appeared was physical appearance. Although there is no town council that has a service addressed to inequalities on the grounds of physical appearance, it is true that, in general, but especially in this context, one's physical appearance can open or close doors, and can even be the cause of harassment.

In this regard, there is an axis that is very relevant when we talk about public policies and that tends to remain invisible: the axis dividing municipal staff and citizens. This leads us to reflect on the impact the position of power of working in the Administration has on the service users, when we are, for example, providing direct attention or performing community work. Thus, intersectionality highlights how our position as a municipal staff member entails power and also the responsibility of exercising it in such a way that it does not generate more inequalities.

The emphasis on the context provides us with a response to a frequent question in relation to intersectionality: do all the axes always need to be taken into consideration? An affirmative response would lead us to paralysis (since the list of axes is infinite), absurdity

(not all the axes are significant in a specific context) and/or, at least, inefficiency (since not all the axes present in one context have equal priority). Therefore, it is not about always including all the axes, but about prioritising those which are important in the intervention context.

## #DEBATES

In this section we propose giving a response to two questions that tend to emerge in the subject of intersectionality. As we set out at the beginning of the Toolkit, the objective is not to further explore the academic discussion in this regard, but to provide a practical response.

### Does the intersectional logic mean that the specific work according to axes of inequality no longer makes sense?

This is a fundamental question in relation to public policies: does the intersectional perspective entail closing the services that work on specific axes of inequality? Here the positions can vary. From our perspective, it is compatible to have departments working on axes and, at the same time, apply an intersectional approach. For diverse reasons:

- Because removing the specific services could mean there is no organ within the Administration in charge of a specific inequality.
- Because the axes of inequality, although they intersect with each other, also have autonomous effects that must be worked on specifically. In other words, although our position stems from the intersection of all axes, the different systems of oppression (patriarchy, capitalism, ableism, racism...) are distinguishable and have an own logic that must be addressed. For example, although migrant people are diverse according to their position in relation to other axes of inequality (gender, faith, age, sexual diversity, etc.), they can have shared problems (the exercising of certain rights, being subjected to xenophobia, etc.) which have to continue being worked on specifically.
- Because, if each service stops looking after its own axis only, these departments can be a good foundation for the development of projects that follow an intersectional logic.

### Can the application of the intersectional perspective lead to the creation of micro-identities?

Intersectional actions place us at risk of ending up creating policies for micro-identities, of identifying increasingly specific *targets* as the result of the intersection of diverse axes of inequality. In this regard, Fredman (2016) warns us of the danger of the reflection on

intersectionality ending up reduced to a “fascination with the infinity of combinations and implications of superimposed identities” (focusing on increasingly more specific social groups), instead of focusing on the power structures and the processes of exclusion.

The tendency to reproduce micro-identities actually contradicts the majority of the contributions of intersectionality. Although it is not a unitary theoretical perspective, the Afro American authors who triggered the debate were very critical of identity politics, putting forward that they tend to establish homogenous groups that share essential traits. Part of the theory of intersectionality warns us of the use of identities, for these reasons:

- Because identities are the effect of power, in other words, identity categories are socially constructed in the context of power relations. For example, the categories of woman and man are an effect of sexism, and the division into (supposed) races is a product of racism.
- Identity politics can tend to homogenise and essentialise the group, closing the number of possibilities. For example, defining woman as carers may mean not taking into account dependent women (on the grounds of age, illness...), women from upper classes who pay other women to do these tasks, women with disabilities who need care, women who do not have a caring role because they do not look after anybody else, etc.
- Often identity categories are restrictive and have exclusive effects. Therefore, it is important to be critical of how, through public policy, we reproduce identity categories that generate exclusion; when we think about “a woman”, “an immigrant” or “a youth” are we taking into account that no one is exclusively any one of these categories? Are we considering that all of these categories are intersected with each other and with other axes of inequality? This means understanding that the individual is not an “immigrant” but a migrant individual who has a gender, a sexual orientation, a social class, a belief system, etc.

Once these precautions have been made, however, some authors consider that, when the identity categories are constructed in a non-essentialist and fluid manner, they can also be strategically used to contribute to resistance, empowerment and breaking with dominant contexts.

# 5 Intersectionality applied to local policies



How is the intersectional perspective relevant when performing a diagnosis in the health field, a labour market insertion programme for people with diverse capacities or a violence prevention activity in a school setting? As pointed out in the introduction of this Toolkit, the methods to integrate intersectionality in the design, implementation and assessment of policies is in very early stages of development. Despite this, there are several actions in the local sphere that have started to address the reality from a more complex perspective and that provide clues about how to work taking into account the different axes of inequality. In this section we will present questions that help us to look at our everyday practice and some strategies to ground the intersectional perspective in the work of the local administration.

The contributions are structured into three large sections: on the one hand, a first section comprising issues related to organisation: the functional structure or the organigram, the layout of spaces and the training. A second section, in which tools and proposals are presented in relation to their applicability in the different phases of the policy cycle (or phases of creating a project or an action): definition of the problem, diagnosis, design, implementation and evaluation. And, finally, a third section that examines two cross-cutting aspects: participation and communication.

The proposals address different profiles in the local administration: appointed positions, managerial positions, technical teams in charge of designing public policies and municipal staff working in areas such as direct attention, intervention or community work. And, therefore, the different proposals intervene differently according to the profiles.

We present tools that help to rethink the ways of working, analyse the consequences, desired or not, of our interventions and provide guidelines to jointly construct a new work framework that provides answers that are more in harmony with the diversity of people.

## # FACILITATORS

Before presenting the strategies to incorporate intersectionality in the different areas, the elements that facilitate the application of intersectionality in local policy will be presented:

- **Political will.** A transformation to a new way of working affecting an entire organisation cannot take place on a purely technical or administrative level, but it requires political commitment. The intersectional work cannot depend on the good will of one individual or on the motivation of the technical staff; it has to become a main

part of the organisational culture of the City Council. Mandates and directives need to be created to make explicit the commitment, and measures must be formulated to bring these mandates into force.

- **Resources.** The political mandates must be accompanied by the resources required to execute these; in other words, the budget, time and staff needed to guarantee that these come into force must be allocated. Shared budgets across different services with common goals dedicated to intersectional projects are a possibility.
- **Alliances.** Collaboration between staff occupying different levels of responsibility within the administration, incorporating both those people who have more of an influence and the staff who are at the front line and who are familiar with the citizens' needs and the impact of the local policies.
- **Community work.** Alliances with citizens must also be woven, taking into account the diversity and plurality of sensitivities. Intersectionality requires knowledge of the territory and the problems and experiences of the population. Therefore, spaces for dialogue and relations between different actors must be facilitated, based on the mutual recognition of the different positions, interests and capacities.
- **The regulatory framework.** Regulations that recognise the intersectional nature of inequalities and that promote work beyond the segmented logic also facilitates this change in perspective in local policies.
- **Discourses.** Social constructs that do not focus on the identity logic, but that reinforce the understanding of the interrelation between axes of inequality, foster a more complex approach to social problems and the way these are dealt with. The existence of actors from civil society who apply intersectionality in their job and demand it from the Administration also helps.
- **Data.** Availing of data and indicators that inform of the intersectional impact of a problem (on the diagnosis) or of a policy (on the evaluation) helps to refine the answers more.

## 5.1. Organisation

All organisations, although they share certain elements, are different and their characteristics vary according to many factors, such as internal structures, the people comprising them, the social, political and economic contexts in which they find themselves, etc. Therefore, there are no prescriptions that can automatically be applied, but each institution must define its strategy taking into account the internal and external elements conditioning its situation and its possibilities of making changes.



## Overview of the organisation: where do we start?

To begin with, we must be very familiar with our starting point. Therefore, a first measure will consist of performing an analysis of the organisation itself and of its context as regards intersectionality, and identifying the factors that can foster or hinder work that considers the different axes of inequality.

It is important that in this initial approach, in addition to the internal work structures and dynamics, the civil society is also taken into consideration, and the levels of support, complicities or resistances of citizens and entities are investigated. The diagnosis can be performed on different levels: of the whole organisation, of an area in the City Council or of a specific service or programme.

Below we present some measures, inspired by the guide *Advancing Equity and Inclusion* (CAWI, 2015), that may facilitate the application of intersectionality in the organisation. They are also reflections that can help to promote initiatives in this direction.



### Recommendations in relation to the organization:

- ✓ Mandates related to equality and inclusion that explain the will to incorporate an intersectional perspective.
- ✓ Shared management or coordination between the different services tackling the axes of inequality.
- ✓ Political decisions that connect the work of different services tackling the axes of inequality.
- ✓ Professional teams that represent diversity.
- ✓ Interests and objectives shared across different services tackling the axes of inequality, which can be used to build joint strategies.
- ✓ Joint work experiences between different services tackling the axes of inequality.
- ✓ Shared work areas for different services tackling inequality and with other services focused on specific fields.
- ✓ Programmes and projects that include the intersection of different axes of inequality.
- ✓ Budgets that help to develop projects between different services tackling the axes of inequality.
- ✓ Synergies with the communities affected by the different axes of inequality.



## E1. Previous diagnosis, Terrassa City Council (Spain)

In the framework of the first phase of the project “Igualtats Connectades. Intersectionality in local public policies”, an internal diagnosis was conducted to determine the Terrassa City Council’s starting point in the application of the intersectional perspective and to establish the relation between the different axes of inequality being worked on in the organisation. The research methodology was essentially qualitative: firstly, a documentary analysis was conducted to determine whether the plans and programmes of the different services referred to the intersectional perspective or the different axes of inequality in any of their sections (whether in the diagnosis, objectives, actions, etc.). Secondly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the management, area heads and the technical team.

The objective of the interviews was two-fold: on the one hand, it detected previous experiences of working between axes of inequality, it observed if the intersectional perspective was being introduced into the actions and programmes of the City Council and how the problems were being formulated (the target group of the service, the profile of the people attended to, who does not access the service and why). And, on the other hand, it identified obstacles and opportunities in the application of the intersectional perspective and detected which conditions fostered or hindered its incorporation into the diverse services (taking into account factors such as structure, dynamics and personal relationships). This initial diagnosis served to finish the design of the subsequent training and shared work activities.

### The structure. How can segmentation be overcome?

The city councils are organised into areas and services that focus on axes of inequality or on spheres of action. This segmentation, defined by state policies and programmes, and which exists at all levels (structural, budget, etc.), has appeared as one of the main obstacles to intersectional work. How can we move beyond this compartmentalisation of the administration?

- Some of the formulae to overcome segmentation involve bringing about changes at a structural level, such as, for example, uniting Departments or offices that are focused on different axes of inequality (see experience E2). In administrations of small areas, these fusions occur out of necessity, because they have a lower budget and the staff numbers are lower: Departments and offices combine services that work on different axes of inequality, while the technical teams are trained by professionals with very versatile profiles. This can be an opportunity to develop interventions with a more complex perspective.

There are also mixed solutions that only combine some levels of organisation and not others such as, for example, uniting Departments on a political level but keeping the offices separate. Moreover, the axes of inequality may share management or manager, without there having been an integration process of the two axes.

Addressing intersectionality does not necessarily have to entail the fusion of structures. There are other formulae to overcome segmentation that are related to introducing new methodologies without affecting the structures, such as the creation of ad hoc spaces for specific problems that are difficult to solve and that affect more than one service. An example of this is the creation of work commissions or boards to address subjects such as a problem in the public space, school segregation or access to housing.

In any case, in each specific situation, it is important to analyse what is the best formula to avoid working with the axes in parallel, not taking into account the interactions between them. The solutions that have worked in a specific context may not suit others.



## **E2. Uniting departments, Barcelona City Council (Spain)**

In the 2010-2015 political mandate, the public policies for male-female equality depended on the Department for Women, while the LGBTBI policies were addressed by the Department for Civil Rights and were implemented from different administrative structures, with little relation between them. During the 2015-2019 mandate, the municipal structure was modified on a political and administrative level, with the creation of the Department of Feminism and LGBTBI, with the aim of working in a more intersectional manner on male-female equality policies and the equality policies of sexual diversity and gender identity. This change is not simply nominal, but it was driven by the City Council's desire to work on the implementation of these two policies in a more intertwined way, because it is considered that the two inequalities and oppressions are part of one same sex/gender system and have one same source of oppression.

The change has led to smoother communication and has facilitated the work on certain subjects such as male violence against women: on the one hand, a sexism prevention strategy has been defined in the city, where the different axes of inequality are worked on simultaneously; on the other hand, questions related to care services have been worked on, for example a care service for emotional violence in same-sex relationships. The fusion has also triggered debates between feminist and LGBTBI movements, and has been an opportunity to set out new joint challenges and to work on resistance from the staff directly involved in the change.

## The layout of the spaces: does it facilitate relations?

The way the work spaces are laid out also affects everyday practice and can contribute towards perpetuating inequalities or reducing them. The layout of a space is never neutral; it responds to a certain cultural context and has an impact on the way we relate to each other, to other professionals and to service users.

- If we think about programme planning or design, we shall see that the location of diverse services in separate offices or even buildings, without meeting points between the teams apart from occasional meetings, hinders work from an intersectional perspective. On the contrary, a work place where the diverse services cohabit the same space, facilitates the exchange and construction of shared perspectives that incorporate the different axes of inequality. Similarly, the comfort and layout of the work spaces (well-lit, spacious, etc.), as well as the existence of more informal meeting areas for professionals (coffee room, kitchen, etc.), also facilitates interaction and the generation of complicities. Thus, bringing a halt to division on a spatial level serves to also bring a halt to the logic of working on each axis in parallel.
- Furthermore, when services are planned on a city level, facilities that promote the intersection of different axes of inequality can be considered. This coexistence can lead to collaborative synergies or actions between the different groups (see experience E3).
- As regards citizen attention services, it is also important to focus on the layout of the physical spaces and on how the furniture, lighting, etc. conditions communication and relations with the participating people or users. In this way, we can see how the space defines hierarchies and contributes towards reinforcing the difference between municipal staff and service users. The situation of the spaces (if they are compartmentalised or open plan, dark or bright, with tables or physical barriers) can also contribute to increasing this hierarchy. Elements such as, for example, queue management, organise the service and optimise time, but they can generate a sense of distance and lack of personalisation.
- In this regard, Marisela Montenegro (in Nayak, Montenegro & Pujol, 2018) proposes an observation guideline to examine the everyday practice of people who work in social intervention from an intersectional perspective in relation to: the appearance of the spaces, the interactions between professionals and citizens, the cultural constructs and contexts of the technical teams, etc. This analysis highlights that the organisation of the space is not harmless or neutral, but that it reproduces social and culturally localised practices, and this does not always help to achieve the goals of the service. At times, intervention in the physical space can lead to positive changes in the work dynamics. In this regard, Montenegro highlights an example in which the facilitator of a work group with Moroccan men replaced the tables and chairs in the space for a rug, seeking a transformation in the functioning of the group.



### E3. Transformation of residences for the elderly into intergenerational spaces, Catalonia (Spain)

From 2017 to 2019, the Department of Labour, Social Affairs and Families of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia has been transforming residences for the elderly all across the territory into cultural associations, with a view to affording these spaces a more intergenerational perspective and welcoming new groups.

This measure seeks to convert the residences into meeting places for people of diverse ages and profiles, and into a place of support for entities and initiatives in the town or district. The coexistence of different social groups will foster the exchange of knowledge and resources, thereby creating the opportunity for mutual enrichment and new ways of socialising.

#### Training: how can we raise awareness?

As occurs with the spaces, the way of acting is also rooted in a historically and geographically located cultural context. Constructs and beliefs, the way people understand each other and think, also condition our interventions. We must perform a constant exercise of questioning and checking prejudices and stereotypes to avoid standardising and generalising and to avoid automatic assumptions.

Training is a key activity for intersectional work: it helps to improve staff's knowledge of intersectionality and systems of oppression, it contributes to raising awareness and questioning constructs, and it provides tools to construct a critical perspective that helps to rethink everyday practices.

Specific training on intersectionality can be carried out, such as the case of the Igualtats Connectades project in Terrassa (see experience E4), and the intersectional perspective can be incorporated into training in a more cross-cutting way, regardless of the subject being addressed. In other words, training situated in a certain axis or sphere (for example, sexual and gender diversity or health), can be conducted from an intersectional perspective. This would be the case of the sexual and gender diversity training conducted by the local police in Turin, which dealt with the diversity of LGBTIQ individuals (see experience E5) or the information and awareness-raising project of health workers in Madrid (see experience E6). Both experiences highlight that having people or social groups with direct knowledge of the reality helps to contradict stereotyped and homogenising stances.

## Fostering training with an intersectional approach

Another question that needs to be considered is how we can foster the intersectional approach in the trainings organised by the City Council. In this regard, each organisation could develop a guideline that establishes minimum criteria that must be considered when organising or performing training actions. The University of York published a guide about how to incorporate intersectionality into training on sexual violence and hate crimes. This guide is the result of diverse focus groups with key informants (university staff and students) who discussed how the differences between individuals and their risk of experiencing violence could affect their response or their ability to intervene in certain situations. For example, it was observed how a racialised person could have more difficulties challenging a racist act because he/she is also vulnerable to this type of violence or, a cisgender person might feel more confident about stopping a transphobic act than a trans or non-binary person.

[➤ Download guide here](#)

Below, some measures are presented which could be considered when developing, organising or carrying out training in the Administration, aimed at municipal staff or other agents. The measures are inspired by the guide *Advancing Equity and Inclusion* (CAWI, 2015):



### Recommendations in relation to training:

- ✓ The consultants or trainers should be sensitive to questions of diversity with an intersectional perspective.
- ✓ The training teams should be diverse.
- ✓ The objectives of learning should include equality and non-discrimination with an intersectional perspective.
- ✓ The language, images and examples used should be inclusive and non-discriminatory, referring to different axes of inequality (sexism, racism, ableism, etc.).
- ✓ Diverse realities and examples should be highlighted to broaden perspectives, break with clichés and spread diverse voices.
- ✓ It should be a space that promotes the exchange of experiences (taking into account the axes of inequality and the different power relations between the individuals participating);
- ✓ The evaluations of the training should include a question about the use of the intersectional approach.



#### E4. Training in the framework of the Connect Equalities project, Terrassa (Spain)

As we have already explained in point 2 of the Toolkit, one of the main pillars of the Connecting Equalities project was the training, notable both for the intensity and the scope of the training: almost 300 people participated, between technical staff and civil society. The project started from the premise that to apply intersectionality to the teams' everyday practice, they had to be provided with tools. The aim of this training was to explore the concept of intersectionality, present application strategies and create spaces for debate and reflection, both with technical staff and civil society.

The training activities were structured into three different spaces: the first consisted of five training workshops aimed at all the members of the municipal professional teams (from administration to management), in which 80 people from the City Council participated. All the staff from the services tackling the axes of inequality (Citizenry, Gender, LGTBIQ, Diverse capacities) and life cycles (Youth and the Elderly) attended. Furthermore, representatives from other departments were also trained as observer services (Social Services, Education, Health, Employment, Communication, Local Inclusion Plan, Housing, Land and Sustainability, Mobility, Urban Planning and Support Service for Residents' Communities). The second training activity which was conducted in parallel to the first, consisted of five awareness-raising workshops aimed at the civil society, which created high expectations and in which more than 180 people participated. The same subjects as in the training workshops were addressed, but adapting the format and content to the profile of the individuals who participated. And, lastly, as a culmination of the training process, mutual learning workshops were conducted, comprising technical staff and the management of different City Council services. In these spaces, the knowledge from the training workshops was implemented and a pilot test of intersectional work in the public space was carried out.

➤ [The training videos can be watched here](#)



### **E5. *The Rainbow in the Neighbourhood*. LGBT training for local police, Turin (Italy)**

In 2017, 56 police officers from the Neighbourhood Watch Department of the Local Police Service in Turin, in charge of monitoring public spaces and improving coexistence, received training on how to deal with situations of homo-transphobic harassment in schools and public spaces. An intersectional approach was applied in the training, through cooperation with diverse local associations.

Part of the training focused on stories of people who had been subjected to different types of discrimination (on the grounds of gender, LGBT, ethnic origin, religious beliefs). Transsexual individuals who were part of associations and NGOs in the town participated in the trainings, explaining their experience. A special session was dedicated to tackling the subject of “coming out” in families with different cultural traditions and two life experiences were compared: that of a bisexual girl with Moroccan and Muslim roots, and that of a young gay man who had grown up in a rural area in Southern Italy.

The experiences were particularly effective at building awareness, changing the perspective on transsexuality and overcoming stereotypes of LGBT people who grow up in Muslim settings.

[➤ For more information](#)



### **E6. *Training community workers in the promotion of the health of TLGBTQI individuals*, Madrid (Spain)**

The training project consisted of structuring actions aimed at facilitating the access of TLGBTQI individuals to health promotion, through a participative process of identification, information and awareness-raising with health workers. A team made up of key figures in the fields of health promotion and of the sexual and gender diversity was created, which was in charge of designing, implementing and transmitting both the self-training contents and methodology. The training activities were conducted through Community Health Centres in Madrid.

The mixed makeup of the network of agents helped to construct shared codes and collective knowledge. Likewise, it became a work space that facilitated the rapprochement of two realities, professional and activist, the overcoming of prejudices by both parties, the direct knowledge of the needs of the population and the participation of the TLGBTQI community in its definition.



## 5.2. Project design

In this second section, the proposals are presented according to the different stages of design of a project or policy, taking into account that this division concerns a theoretical model that serves to analyse how the plans and programmes are defined, but in practice, the way administrations respond to social problems does not always follow such a defined process with such clear and sequentially organised phases. At times, phases overlap (a diagnosis is conducted while a programme or action is being implemented), some stages are forgotten or avoided (a programme or service is started without a diagnosis) or processes take place in an unconscious or unclear way (for example, the definition of a problem).

For each of the phases, we present examples of experiences, and questions inspired by the guide that Palència, Malmusi and Borrell (2014) wrote to assess the impact of health policies from an intersectional perspective.

### Defining the problem: when, how and why does it occur?

The first step in any policy or programme is the configuration of the agenda, in other words, how the problem that needs intervention is constructed and what implications it has with relation to the different axes of inequality and their intersections. It is essential to understand when, where, why and who decides that certain social aspects become relevant and others do not.

As has already been mentioned, the way problems are constructed is not always clear. Often the processes capable of making certain subjects emerge are complex and multiple factors are at play (pressure groups, legislation, personal sensitivities, etc.). We frequently find that what emerges as a problem is that which has been decided by the majority or by people with more influence.

It is thus important to have tools to identify all the voices and sensitivities surrounding a certain subject and to ask ourselves questions in order to not assume the problem as it is presented a priori, because its definition is not universal but responds to interests, points of view, etc. In the public space, where groups and individuals with diverse interests meet, we find examples that illustrate different conceptions that are concealed behind a supposed problem. In this regard, among the causes of the problematisation of the use of the public space by youths, for example, there are often matters such as an adult-focused conception of the space, xenophobia or a lack of non-privatised leisure options. The public intervention will be different according to the conceptualization.

Another example that illustrates the importance of the definition of the problem can be found in the subject of arranged marriages, about which the Barcelona City Council conducted a study to obtain information about the characteristics of the phenomenon and the public administration and civil society's knowledge of this. The study showed

that, depending on the perspective from which the problem was addressed -either as an essentially migratory matter, an essentially cultural or religious phenomenon, or as another form of gender violence-, the responses from the public powers and the civil society were fundamentally different.

Discovering what each problem definition conceals is essential to become aware of what we are dealing with in each subject and to decide how we want to become involved in the intervention.



### Questions we can ask to define the problem

- ✓ What is the problem to be addressed? Why is it considered a problem?
- ✓ Who expresses the problem? Who does it affect and who are the agents involved?
- ✓ What inequalities does the problem to be addressed conceal?
- ✓ Is the problem defined from different perspectives in order to determine how it affects diverse groups in relation to the axes of inequality (technical staff from the services tackling axes of inequality, diversity of people and groups affected, other agents involved, etc.)?
- ✓ Bearing in mind the context (historical, social, territorial, etc.), which axes of inequality are more important?
- ✓ Are there important intersections between the axes of inequality (for example, gender and social class, etc.)?
- ✓ Which services are needed in the management of the problem (both related to axes of inequality and specific spheres?)
- ✓ Are there non-structural axes of inequality that should be taken into account (for example, physical appearance, being a mother, etc.)?
- ✓ Which privileges, prejudices and/or stereotypes may be affecting the definition of the problem or the affected groups (by the technical teams, the affected groups and other agents involved)?



### **E7. *Nocturnas*: the everyday life of women who work at night, Barcelona (Spain)**

*Nocturnas* (2017) is a feminist participative research-action project coordinated by Col·lectiu Punt 6, which analyses and highlights the way urban planning and gender affect the everyday life of women who work at night. It discusses subjects such as night transport, the perception of fear and safety, the impact on health, and gender inequalities in the labour market.

One of the aspects the study highlighted is how the majority of protocols against attacks and sexual harassment in nightlife spaces do not consider a key group that is invisible: female street cleaners. The workers interviewed declare feeling scared, feeling unsafe and having been subjected to harassment and attacks on the transport they have to take to go to work between 5 and 6 am. The protocols, however, do not tend to consider this and focus on young women who go out partying.

[➤ The report is available here](#)

### **Diagnosis: are we taking into consideration the heterogeneity of the group?**

In local administrations, which tend to operate from a unitary logic, diagnoses have the risk of only focusing on the problem created by an axis, which means fuelling the fiction that axes act alone.

When conducting an intersectional diagnosis, it is essential to bear in mind the heterogeneity of the group from the outset. Much more careful diagnoses are required, even though it is often difficult to collect complex information, because all the intersections do not always occur and it is not possible to obtain certain data, for example, about ethnicity or sexual orientation. One way of solving this lack of data consists of analysing what people's life experiences tell us. Another measure that can foster the intersectional approach when conducting the diagnosis is the creation of problem-focused work boards, with the participation of technical staff from different services.

We can also address the heterogeneity of the group through researching reference documentation (studies, academic works, journalistic reports...) which serves as a foundation to address it with a broader knowledge of its realities. And, in some cases, it can be useful to interview key informants.

This approach can be the first step towards creating a participative diagnosis, which includes and shows the maximum plurality of perspectives. And, to do it, we must be

familiar with the territory and voices of the people living there, both those who are part of associations and those who are not, bearing in mind the criterion of diversity. It is not so much about turning to speakers who talk to us as representatives of a certain group; rather, it is about seeking specific and unique contributions that afford a more careful approach towards the complexity and plurality of society.

In this regard, the municipality of Cascais (Portugal) performed a **Social Diagnosis** through the Cascais Social Network, a platform comprising one hundred public and private networks. The research analysed social cohesion in relation to diverse spheres (employment, health, education, culture, etc.) and the situation of people, in particular that of more vulnerable groups, in relation to different axes of inequality. To perform this study a variety of sources and information collection techniques were used, both qualitative and quantitative, and 1,700 residents, 80 professionals, 14 local representatives and 200 organisations took part.

We must be aware of the fact that all the information collection tools are biased and that, therefore, the gaps and absences must be filled using different techniques.



### Questions we can ask about the diagnosis

- ✓ Is the diagnosis shared by the services tackling the different axes of inequality relevant to the problem?
- ✓ How is information obtained about how the problem affects the different axes of inequality and the relevant intersections?
- ✓ Do the affected individuals and groups actively participate in the diagnosis?
- ✓ Are the life experiences and emotional elements of the affected individuals and groups assessed?
- ✓ Is the heterogeneity and diversity of the groups affected by the problem considered?
- ✓ Which individuals or groups affected by the problem are we excluding?
- ✓ What can be done to reach these groups or individuals who have become invisible?
- ✓ With the information resulting from the diagnosis, which inequalities are detected?
- ✓ Which need to be addressed first? Why (political, regulatory, budget-related reasons, etc.)?



### **E8. Do all trans people have labour market insertion difficulties? Barcelona (Spain)**

With a view to obtaining a diagnosis on the situation of trans people in the labour market and assessing the effectiveness of the measures being developed, the Barcelona City Council conducted a study on the subject (Coll-Planas and Missé, 2018). One of the conclusions of the study was that it could not be confirmed that the trans collective, as a whole, had labour market insertion problems and that an intersectional perspective needed to be adopted to understand that being trans in itself did not explain the diversity of situations, but it must include other factors such as gender, origin, age and health status.



### **E9. Participative diagnosis in the health field, Madrid (Spain)**

In order to determine and act on the main barriers in access to sexual and reproductive health and the Madrid TLGBQI population's right to exercise their identity, the Madrid City Council conducted an exploratory study through the autonomous organisation Madrid Salud. The research was conducted using a participative tool that served to involve the TLGBQI population in the definition of the problems and the recommendations required to deal with these. A group made up of independent activists and organisations was created, which actively participated in the research design.


The study sought to show some of the places or "enclaves" in which individuals' experience is strongly marked by the intersection of diverse social factors. Thus, for example, it collects some of the obstacles of migrant trans people and of female trans sex workers (many of whom are migrants); cis lesbian women of gypsy origin or cis gay and bisexual men aged over 55 and cis gay men with bodily mobility that differs from the standard, who use wheelchairs. In all of these, reference is made to precariousness and socioeconomic class as core issues defining the LGBTphobic experience.

[➤ The study is available here](#)



## E10. Application of the Relief Maps technique in the diagnosis of the LGTBI Plan, Bages (Spain)

The diagnosis of Regional plan to guarantee the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Trans, Bisexual and Intersexual people (2018-2021) serves to illustrate the diversity of techniques used to obtain a perspective of a specific reality. The research was structured into different phases: the first consisted of collecting information about the actions previously carried out in the territory (both institutional and by associations) and interviews with key informants; the second, consisted of collecting information based on secondary sources; and finally, the third focused on collecting information about the experiences of people from the group, an aspect that was prioritised on account of the lack of studies conducted and the little data available in the territory.

For the third phase, three different methods were used: in-depth interviews, focal groups and a technique known as **e-Relief Maps**  which was used to collect, analyse and observe data about the perception of inequality from an approach that was intersectional (taking into account different axes of inequality, such as gender, sexual orientation and age), emotional (gathers information about the level of wellbeing and discomfort caused by certain situations or places) and geographic (professional sphere, domestic sphere, public space, etc.). This technique helps to determine which are the most problematic spheres and to avoid generalisations or victimisations, because it shows how it can occur that, due to our gender, we experience a specific setting as a place of oppression (the public space, for example) and, others, such as the professional or domestic sphere, as spaces of wellbeing or neutral spaces.

### Design: how can we foresee the consequences of the actions?

Once we have defined the problem and performed the intersectional diagnosis, it is time to establish which actions or measures we will promote to address the situation and provide an answer to the specific situations that we detected in the diagnosis phase (see experience E11). It is important that in this phase we maintain the involvement of the diversity of individuals when deciding the priority actions and setting the goals, through the creation of implementation and supervision boards and occasional work groups. It may be good practice to combine social movements from different axes so that they jointly construct a certain action, like in the case of the experience in Turin (see experience E12).

In the design phase, we can explore the undesired consequences that the political solutions we have proposed may have, by putting ourselves in the shoes of people from different social groups and analysing which effects the measure would have on each of these individuals (see experience E13).



## Questions we can ask about the design

- ✓ Will work spaces be created between the different services tackling the axes of inequality relevant to the problem?
- ✓ Will the data collected be broken down according to the axes of inequality relevant to each problem?
- ✓ Will the actions take into account the heterogeneity of the groups?
- ✓ How do the actions respond to the needs stemming from this diversity?
- ✓ What impact are the actions expected to have, bearing in mind the axes of inequality? Has a negative impact been detected that should be avoided?
- ✓ Will the design proposal be shared with and assessed by the people or groups affected by the problem?
- ✓ How can it be ensured that the actions will not produce more inequalities in other groups?
- ✓ What will be done so that the actions do not reproduce existing stereotypes and prejudices?



## E11. Strategy against the feminisation of poverty, Barcelona (Spain)

With a view to reducing female poverty in the city, the Barcelona City Council designed and implemented a Strategy Against the Feminisation of Poverty and Precariousness (2016-2024). The document was written by the Department of Feminism and LGTBI and the Board against the feminisation of poverty, which comprises associations, entities, NGOs, syndicates and institutions.

The municipal action highlights both the roots of the process behind the feminisation of poverty and precariousness, and the instruments and measures to combat the most structural aspects. It includes two cross-cutting principles: on the one hand, the intersectionality of gender with other categories of inequality and, on the other hand, the empowerment and socio-political participation of women.

Data on poverty in Barcelona show, for example, that the poverty risk of women, compared to men, varies when they are more than 65 years of age, have a functional diversity, are a single parent or are migrant women. Therefore, the strategy seeks to address the specific situations that determine the poverty risk of these diverse women, without stigmatising or excluding possible situations that have not been considered.

➔ [The document can be downloaded here](#)



### **E12. Intersections of gender violence, Turin (Italy)**

To celebrate the Transgender Day of Remembrance (20/11) and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (25/11), an open meeting was organised in Turin in 2017 to address the causes of violence against women and violence against individuals stigmatised on the grounds of their gender identity. The aim of the meeting was to analyse how heterosexist stereotypes aimed at women, transgender people and, in more general terms, all individuals who fall outside the cis/heterosexual norm, are the base of the pyramid of hatred. The challenge was to overcome one's own specific identity based on one axis and to adopt an intersectional perspective.

The initiative was promoted by the Turin City Council, with the collaboration of the coordinating board of the Turin Gay Pride and the associations in the city fighting against violence against women. The actors involved considered it very useful to initiate a reflection on the common causes of violence against women, and homophobic and transphobic violence, because there was very little relation between the associations from the two spheres.



### **E13. The application of intersectionality in care policies, Wales (United Kingdom)**

A. Parken and H. Young (Hankvisty 2011) analyse an example of the application of intersectionality in public policies, in the context of social care in Wales, and more specifically, in unpaid and informal care work. It is an attempt at implementing a method through its application in a specific policy.

Among the measures designed to implement the project, a Board was created, composed of experts from key organisations and individuals with interests in one or more axes, and training on the mainstreaming of equality was carried out. The Board was in charge of implementing the work.

In the design phase, what is known as "road testing" was applied: this consisted of exploring the undesired consequences of the proposed solutions. The process consisted of asking the Board to put themselves in the shoes of the different people to see what impact the measure would have on each person. They were asked, for example, how the measure would affect "a divorced man, with a disability, who speaks Welsh and lives in a rural part of Wales with two children", or "an older single woman living in Cardiff, working part-time and



dedicating 30 hours per week to caring”, or “a Muslim Student living in Bangor who is looking after his father” (Parken & Young, 2008). The examples served to illustrate the complexity and multiple facets of the life of carers and to analyse the accessibility and inclusion problems from each of the axes.

### Implementation: how to put actions into practice?

In order to implement the action or measure, the mechanisms and criteria that serve to execute it must be established, such as scheduling, the appointment of responsible individuals and the establishment of material and personal resources. In this regard, the division of the governments into self-contained Departments (with their separate budgets) is an obstacle to the development of intersectional policies and actions.

One option to overcome these structural limitations could be to create mixed ad hoc teams (which in some cases may have already been created in the diagnosis or design phase), with staff from the diverse services or departments, and also obtain financial resources from the budgets of the departments involved. In short, combining perspectives, efforts and resources to implement an action that brings a halt to the logic of working on axes in parallel.

The incorporation of directly involved entities or individuals can help to enrich the perspective in the implementation of the planned measures. They can be incorporated into the work and supervision boards, or participate in the team executing the actions. This is the case of the **Aracné** project, which had seven female mediators of gypsy origin to work on diverse aspects related to education, health, work, participation, citizens’ rights and gender, in neighbourhoods of Madrid where the gypsy population is concentrated.

As regards implementation, we must once again think about the effects and consequences of specific actions, because inequality can be created intentionally or through omission. For example, language can be an obstacle to access a support service for women who have been victims of violence, in the case of foreign women.

It is important to promote a reflective attitude at all times and to create tools that facilitate the revision of our work. It may be useful to write records or field journals, to record undesired sensations, inconveniences and effects, and to create spaces of exchange between colleagues to share concerns about everyday practice.




### Questions we can ask about implementation

- ✓ Is the team that is carrying out the actions trained in intersectionality?
- ✓ Are the actions being developed in a coordinated manner between the different services tackling the axes of inequality relevant to the problem?
- ✓ How is it ensured that, during the implementation of the actions, existing stereotypes and prejudices are not reinforced?
- ✓ How is the diversity of the groups highlighted and recognised?
- ✓ How do the actions facilitate or promote solidarity and complicity between different interests and groups?



### E14. *Polyhedric perspectives in the prevention of discrimination, Barcelona (Spain)*

Often, school harassment prevention actions in educational centres are carried out from a unitary logic: each department organises and finances the workshops from “its” axis. This means that each department acts as if “its” axis were acting alone, while in practice, in harassment and discrimination dynamics, the different axes mix and create a more complex scenario. If we address the axes separately, we can make the mistake of victimising certain groups, stigmatising others as aggressors, and not understanding how the map of interconnected violence works.

The project *Polyhedric perspectives of violence against women*  seeks to explore ways of preventing harassment which adopt an intersectional approach: understanding the relation between the axes of inequality, which dismantles the idea of victim groups and harassing groups, and provide tools to empower and to combat stereotypes.



### **E15. School Programme for Equality and Diversity, Barcelona (Spain)**

The Barcelona City Council promoted a pilot project (2014-2018) in six early childhood and primary education centres and five secondary education centres, to prevent violence and discrimination based on emotional, sexual and gender diversity, functional diversity, diversity of origin and culture and the inequalities between men and women.

The development of the pilot project involved students, families and education professionals. The centres were provided with advice about making organisational and curricular changes, sessions were held with groups of students' families in strategic core themes of the programme, teaching staff and specialised entities helped students, and didactic resources, accompaniment and personalised support were provided.

The evaluation of the results and of the process highlighted attitude changes in the students and reinforced the need to continue working on different types of violence and power relations from an intersectional approach. For this reason, when the pilot project ended in 2018, the initiative was transferred to the Education Consortium, to gradually broaden the programme's scope to include all the centres in the city.

[➤ For more information](#)



### **E16. Opening the Museum to different agents, Cerdanyola (Spain)**

Coinciding with the exhibition that the National Museum of Catalan Art (MNAC) dedicated to Ismael Smith, the Cerdanyola Art Museum presented a complimentary perspective, focused on the more "marginal" aspects that contributed to the stigmatisation and obscurity to which, for decades, the versatile and personal artist was subjected: homosexuality, Jewish ancestry and a mental health diagnosis.

The actions organised included research and an exhibition by Ismael Smith on nudity, an installation by young artists from the city, and workshops about mental illness. To carry out these activities, the museum had the support and collaboration of diverse institutions (MNAC, Autonomous Government of Catalonia, Barcelona Council), a primary health centre, the Sant Joan de Déu Hospital and young artists and groups (for example El Palomar, a group that carries out a series of projects from a queer perspective that questions gender roles and identities).

## Evaluation: has our action reduced inequalities?

The evaluation of the policies serves to determine if we have achieved the goals we had set ourselves, if the policy or programme has generated the desired effects and to establish which areas need to improve for future actions. Moreover, from an intersectional perspective, the evaluation has two dimensions. The first studies the impact of the policy evaluated in relation to overcoming or maintaining the inequalities; in other words, what impact the action has had on the diverse axes. The second dimension does not refer to the evaluation of the results, but to the transformation of the people and the organisation in the process. In this regard, we can consider to what extent the development of the action has transformed our perspective or the work dynamics.

In order for the evaluation to be intersectional, the affected communities may need to participate in the evaluation. In this regard, the criteria of heterogeneity need to be considered so that the individuals from the community who participate in the evaluation can identify blind spots in our intervention.



### Questions we can ask about the evaluation

- ✓ Do the collected data allow taking into consideration the different axes of inequality affecting the problem?
- ✓ Do the affected individuals or groups participate in the evaluation?
- ✓ What impact have the actions had on the different axes of inequality?
- ✓ Have the inequalities detected in the diagnosis reduced, stayed the same or increased?
- ✓ Considering the diversity of the affected groups, what has not been achieved? Why?
- ✓ What can be done in future actions to reach those individuals who have not benefitted from the actions?
- ✓ Has the action had an unpredicted or undesired negative impact on other axes of inequality?
- ✓ What can be done in future actions to adjust possible undesired effects?
- ✓ To what extent have the actions changed the way relations and structures of inequality are seen (in technical teams, involved agents and beneficiary groups)?
- ✓ Have the results of the joint work between different axes of inequality improved the capacity to respond to the problem?
- ✓ Have the constructs of the technical team, the affected groups and other involved agents changed?



### **E17. Evaluation of projects from an intersectional approach, Berlin (Germany)**

The LGBTI division of the Berlin Senate created a tool to monitor allocated public funds, based on an intersectional approach to guarantee that the funded projects incorporate new axes of inequality. Every year, when grants are allocated, a subject is introduced (intercultural skills, functional diversity, etc.) which the organisations must incorporate into all the phases of the project, from design to implementation and evaluation.

The tool is a way of ensuring that organisations incorporate actions with a view to achieving equality and, at the same time, raising entities' awareness of diversity and the different factors of discrimination. In the justification of the projects, the specific measures carried out to achieve equality and the results are explained. Furthermore, to facilitate this change in perspective, the Senate provides advice and training to associations so that they incorporate these aspects into their projects and foster an exchange of experiences between the entities that have received funds.

## **5.3. Cross-cutting aspects**

### **Participation: who has a voice, and who does not?**

There can be no changes towards an intersectional approach if it is only fostered from the Administration, behind citizens' backs. As pointed out in section 4.3, intersectionality is rooted in social movements, and these can promote intersectionality in agendas and political practice.

It is important that the Administration recognises the experience of the entities and groups coming together to demand rights and working for social inclusion, and that they are involved in solving the collective problems. Local governments must promote open dialogue with these social agents, providing them with clear and transparent information, and facilitating spaces for mutual coordination and collaboration, which can come in many forms.

The majority of city councils have stable sectoral participatory bodies which discuss, inform and assess municipal initiatives, detect needs, prioritise actions that need to be implemented and make proposals. It is important to ask who is part of these spaces and who is not and, therefore, which problems are visible and which are excluded.

To detect this, there must be contact with the territory and the reality of the municipality's residents must be known. Often, if we want to include the voices that are not heard, we are forced to rethink the functioning of the spaces to remove the obstacles hindering inclusion: correcting power dynamics between groups which do not facilitate horizontal

dialogue (such as gender or language factors which establish different participation opportunities), changing a language that is too technical and impedes comprehension, or adapting spaces so that the functional diversity of the participants is recognised. For example, if we establish that in order to participate one has to be member of a legally established association, we will block the participation of undocumented migrants, or of groups at risk of social exclusion such as, in many cases, trans women.

Furthermore, in addition to sectoral councils focused on groups and axes, to promote intersectional work we could consider the creation of other bodies or spaces that foster dialogue between the variety of organisations and movements (feminist, antiracist, LGBTBI, unions, etc.), that are more focused on problems, objectives and values, than on group or identity categories. An example, in this regard, is the Local Co-existence Network of Huesca (see experience E18). There are also experiences that maintain identities, constructed in a non-essentialist form, as spaces for empowerment and resistance (Cruells, 2015). This would be the case of the Migrantas project (see experience E19).

Lastly, we must bear in mind that often, aside from formal participatory bodies, alternative channels are essential to include the voices of unrepresented social groups. In this regard, as we have already pointed out, community work and knowledge of the territory is very important; identifying the different voices by visiting squares and informal meeting points, bars and markets, for example. We must bear in mind that the communicative and relation strategies need to be segmented and focused on specific problems (discussion groups, online surveys, discussion fora...) to encourage participation or spread information. In any case, it is important to think about how each technique brings us closer to certain groups but more distant from others. Thus, a variety of channels needs to be used and the tools facilitating participation in equality must be made available.



### Questions we can ask about the participation spaces

- ✓ Do the existing participation spaces represent the different axes of inequality?
- ✓ What can be done to include the voices that are usually not represented in the participation spaces?
- ✓ Are strategies or initiatives carried out to intentionally reach the groups that are usually not represented?
- ✓ What aspects facilitate or hinder the involvement of different groups in the participation spaces (for example, formal requirements, meetings schedule, space where meetings are held, accessibility, etc.)?
- ✓ What can be done to reduce these obstacles and facilitate the involvement of groups?

- ✓ Of the individuals or groups represented, does everyone feel that they have the same legitimacy and recognition? If not, how can this be balanced out?
- ✓ Would it be possible to create a participatory space focused on problems or goals shared by different groups?



### E18. Local Co-existence Network, Huesca (Spain)

The Local Co-existence Network is a collaborative work experience promoted by the Huesca City Council open to different entities that want to work on diversity. The Network has three main pillars: 1. Support for the proposals from a member entity by the network or some of the entities comprising it; 2. Collaboration between entities; 3. Shared scheduling.

This network emerged from the need to create a shared discourse that highlights the added value of actions that consider diversity. The entities unite to foster their associations through shared interests in co-existence.

The network has organised diverse intersectional actions and, during this trajectory, discourses and ways of acting have changed, increasing the programme's coherence. Furthermore, the impact between associations has also proved to be very important, because they have turned collaborative work and coordination into a work habit. It has ensured that the intersectionality discourse is increasingly more present in public events and spaces.



### E19. *Migrantas*: incorporating the perspective of migrant women into the urban space, Berlin (Germany)

*Migrantas* is a group of migrant artists based in Berlin, formed in 2004, which focuses its work on subjects such as immigration, identity and intercultural communication. *Migrantas* organises workshops with groups and associations, especially women, so that they can explain their experiences and perspectives as people who have experienced a migratory process and who live in a foreign culture. With the workshop participants, they design pictographs which are later exhibited in public spaces to highlight experiences and give a voice to migrant women. The aim of the use of pictographs in the public space –whether via ads, digital animations, postcards or prints on bags– is to incorporate the subjectivity of the female migrant, often rendered invisible, into the urban landscape.

➔ For more information see

## Communication: who does it represent?

It is important to consider how we communicate and to ensure that the information is inclusive and reflects the diversity of the population. We can perform an initial reflection: when we think about women, the LGTBI group or the citizens from our town, in general: what type of people are we thinking of? How do we imagine them and how do we represent them in communication materials? What positions are excluded from this representation?

Through texts and images we can contribute towards the inclusion of individuals and groups, or towards exclusion and invisibilisation. Furthermore, we are at risk of falling into stereotypes when, for example, only trans or LGTB people are used for topics related to sexual and gender diversity, or only racialised individuals in relation to poverty or migration. It is important to dismantle these associations. Inclusive communication uses language and images that reflect diversity and avoid prejudices and stereotypes. This is the first step towards ensuring equal participation and access to public services. In this regard, for their campaign in March 2017, the Rivas Town Council used the slogan **“Diverse women, working together”**,<sup>1</sup> to reflect the diversity of ways of being a woman and the fact that ‘the woman’ does not exist, but different women, affected by many axes (ethnicity, social class, age, sexual orientation and functional diversity). Likewise, all the activities scheduled were carried out with this idea at the fore. Similarly, the London experience *Women we see* is aimed at promoting a more diverse and real image of women (see experience E20).

When communicating, we must not convert the application of intersectionality into a representation of identities, in which each person that we decide to draw represents a specific group or axis. When developing a campaign or dissemination material, we can look for elements shared by different social groups or individuals and raise awareness through shared goals or values, rather than focusing on identities. An example of this strategy can be found in a campaign carried out in Martorell in the context of the PAS Festival (Pont de les Arts Sonores) (see experience E21).

It is also important to be familiar with the point of view and experiences of the directly affected citizens and social movements, when designing the communication. This affords richness and helps us not to fall into stereotypes, as demonstrated by the campaign *Toronto for all* (see experience E22).



### What questions can we ask about communication?

- ✓ Is the communication inclusive and does it consider the diversity of the population?
- ✓ Do the materials represent the diversity of citizens?
- ✓ Who can identify with the people appearing?



- ✓ Do people from social groups appear? How are they represented?
- ✓ Are images of people from social groups in normalised contexts used? (For example, in a communication for a health activity is there an image of a racialised person? Or, in a communication for a facility, is there a person with reduced mobility)?
- ✓ Are the representations of the groups reinforcing or dismantling stereotypes?
- ✓ Is the language used inclusive and appropriate and will it reach as many people as possible?
- ✓ Is a precise language being used that avoids stereotypes and sexist, racist or homophobic images or expressions?
- ✓ Are messages that promote and defend diversity included?
- ✓ In addition to graphic representations, are there other elements that facilitate or hinder inclusion? (For example, materials in different languages, different formats such as Braille, DAISY or Easy Read, etc.).
- ✓ Are different distribution channels used, which take into account the needs and preferences of different profiles?



### E20. *Women we see*, London (United Kingdom)

At the beginning of 2018, the London City Council commissioned a study to explore the experiences of women in relation to the advertising that appeared in public spaces in London. The research collected the stories of 38 women and adolescents, and 2,012 women and men were surveyed. This research revealed that Londoners do not feel represented by the adverts in the city.

With a view to changing this trend, the London City Council and transport network launched an advertising competition in which creative agencies and brands were asked to question gender stereotypes, increase diversity and create more positive and inclusive campaigns. The prize for the winning campaign was 500,000 pounds in advertising spaces on the London transport network.

[➤ More information here](#)



### E21. *Un PAS transcendental (A transcendental step)*, Martorell (Spain)

The Department of Culture of the Martorell City Council organises Festival PAS, Pont de les Arts Sonores every summer. In 2016, under the slogan “*Un PAS transcendental*” (A transcendental step), the programme played on the meaning of ‘*pas*’ (step in Catalan) to show residents of the town who were going through a moment of great importance in their life. Within the festival programme different people at moments of change appear: Neus is 87 years old and goes to university; Carla is 13 and has started secondary school; Pol is a feminist and trans activist; Chukwunonso left Biafra to live in Catalonia.

The communicative action is innovative in terms of the channel because it incorporates the message into a musical programme, thereby reaching a wider public, and in terms of content, because it does not construct the message based on identities or axes (elderly, young, trans, immigrant), but based on what they share: the fact that they have taken an important step in life.



### E22. *Toronto for all*, Toronto (Canada)

It is a public awareness-raising initiative promoted by the Toronto City Council to foster dialogue between people living in the city, with a view to combatting any type of discrimination. Every year awareness-raising campaigns are created, focusing on four groups or problems affected by different axes of inequality: islamophobia, black trans youths, homeless people, racism and indigenous issues.

The City Council funds the creation of an advisory board, made up of people from civil society, and provides the necessary resources to bring the proposals to fruition. The end product is disseminated all across the city at bus shelters, generating a large impact and interest in participation by other groups. The initiative has a web page with more information and diverse resources.

 [www.torontoforall.ca](http://www.torontoforall.ca)

## 5.4. Summarising: strategies for the application of intersectionality

Based on the methodologies and experiences presented in this more applied chapter, we highlight the key strategies that have been followed to apply intersectionality in public policies:

- **Address intra-categorical complexity**, in other words, start with one axis of inequality but highlight the way the social group in question (women, migrants, youths or individuals with a disability, etc.) experiences other axes of inequality. This serves to show the internal diversity of the groups and to highlight parts of the group that up to this point had been concealed.
- **Progress in the creation of shared frameworks**, based on the establishment of shared regulations, trainings uniting diverse areas, spaces to unite information or share processes across different services (diagnosis, participative processes, strategic plans, services...).
- **Work on problems**, rather than focusing on identities. This strategy can be useful when addressing complex cases such as the mistreatment of the elderly, female genital mutilation or the situation of internal home-workers. Working on the problems can be a good method for the staff of different services to start rowing in one same direction, without one axis predominating over another.
- **Promote the creation of coalitions in civil society**. In order to change the dynamic in which each association works around one axis, spaces (occasional or more stable) can be promoted where groups other than the usual ones come together, to address problems that affect diverse social groups such as, for example, the prevention of school harassment or care work.
- **Apply intersectional mainstreaming**, in other words, following gender mainstreaming, develop joint strategies between the different equality policies so that all the fields of public policy consider all the axes and intersections.

# 6 Final reflections

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To conclude the trajectory that we have set out in this Toolkit, we would like to go over some of the challenges the application of intersectionality entails.

It is a framework that has been more developed in theory than in practice; therefore, the first challenge that we must face is to progress without having references or pre-established formulae; and considering that the intersectional logic is profoundly contextual and goes against the standardising nature of public policies.

The second challenge is linked to the fact that a proposal such as that of intersectionality invites us to rethink work dynamics, and this can create resistance on a technical, political and activist level. Among these resistances, there may be a fear of losing what has been achieved through the work carried out according to axes. In this regard, it is important to define how we can move towards an intersectional logic and make it compatible with addressing the specific aspects of the axes of inequality. There may also be resistance in thinking that we need a level of resources that we do not have. While it is true that at times the application needs more resources or more time to address this complexity and seek new ways of addressing it, it is important to bear in mind that the application of intersectionality can also save resources, because it allows us to combine processes that beforehand were performed for each axis (for example, in the case of performing diagnoses, collecting data or planning processes). However, we need to detect and combat the more or less explicit desire to unite the different services to reduce costs and the lack of genuine interest in addressing inequality in greater complexity, through the application of the intersectional logic.

The third challenge lies in the fact that intersectionality entails a more complex perspective, which, in addition to the lack of references, can result in paralysis. In this regard, we must not forget that the objective of equality policies is to transform reality and, along this path, intersectionality must be a tool and not an obstacle. We hope that this Toolkit is another step on this path: that it helps us to question ourselves, imagine, rethink and continue looking for ways of understanding how we can continue towards the construction of more inclusive societies, which consider the diverse realities of the people who live in them.

# 7 Glossary

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**Ableism:** a type of discrimination and social prejudice against people with functional diversity.

**Cis (or cisgender or cis-sexual):** a prefix that refers to a person who is not trans, in other words, who identifies with the gender identity assigned at birth.

**Axes of inequality:** factors that lead to structural divisions, based on which social resources are distributed in an unequal manner. Social class, sexual and gender diversity, and origin are some examples.

**Intersectionality:** perspective that considers that the social position of individuals is the result of the interaction between the diverse axes of inequality, which on a public policy level demands abandoning the unitary logic and seeking more complex ways of addressing inequalities (see section 4).

**Unitary:** policy focused on one axis of inequality, without considering interactions between this and others.

**Gender mainstreaming:** strategy that ensures that the diverse actors involved incorporate the perspective of gender equality into all their policies, on all levels and in all phases (European Council, 1998).

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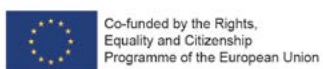
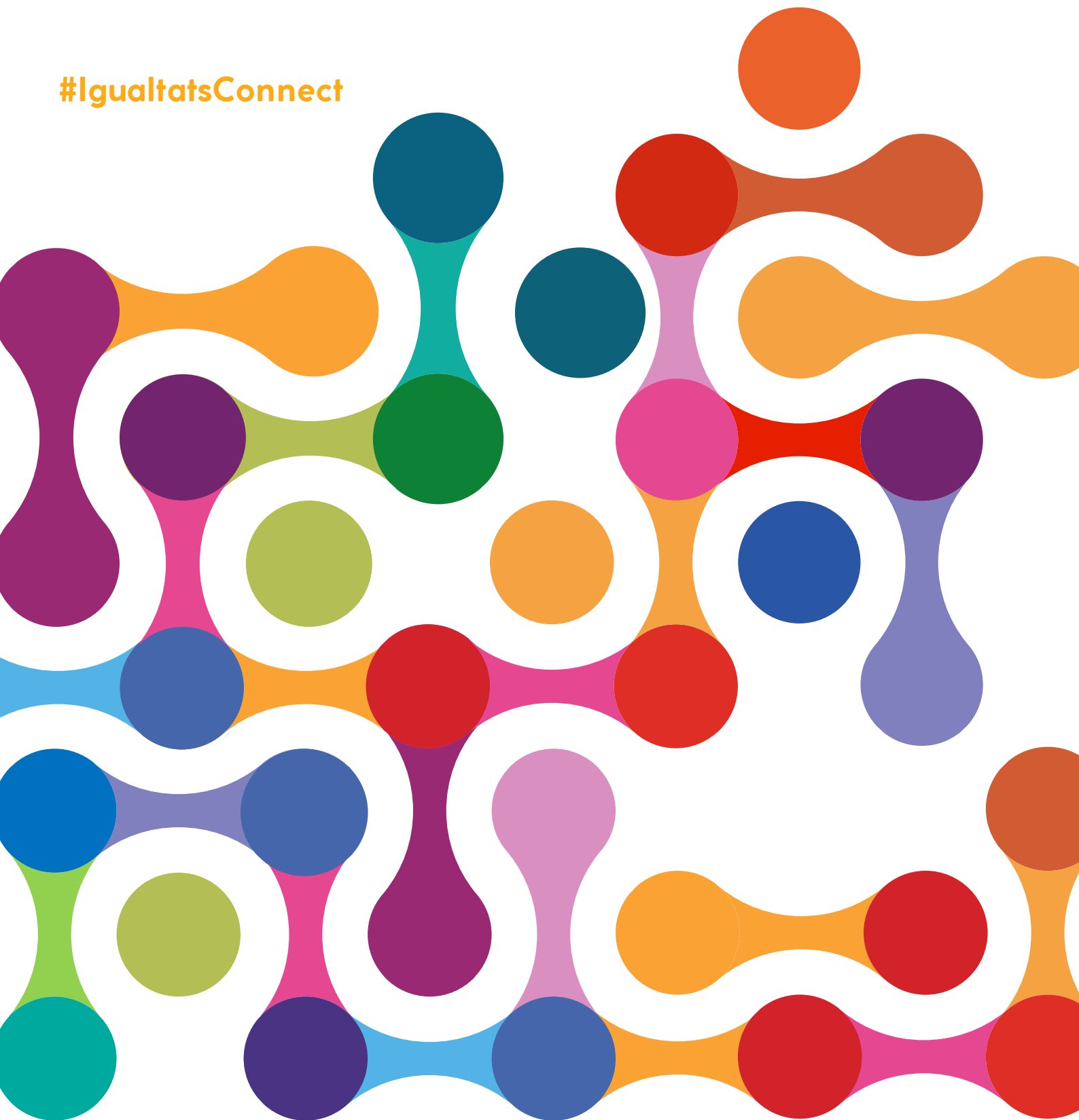
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