

Gender, Care and Labour, Seminar

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FRIDAY 01/10/2021

Iceland
Liechtenstein
Norway grants

ProGender

A Digital Hub on Gender,
the COVID-19 Crisis and its Aftermath

The project is implemented by:



Day three:
Friday, 01/10/2021
18.00-20.00 (Greece)
/ 17.00-19.00 (Norway)
/ 15.00-17.00 (Iceland)

COMMUNAL,
ACTIVIST AND
POLICY RESPONSES
TO THE RISE OF
GENDER
INEQUALITIES OF
GENDER, CARE AND
LABOUR DURING
THE PANDEMIC.

Today's Seminar Program

18.00-18.10: Welcome, Feedback from previous day

18.10-18.40: Interactive session: are the dominant policy responses to the pandemic gender blind?

18.40-19.00: Presentation

19.00-19.15: Break

19.15-19.30: Presentation

19.30-20.00: Closing the seminar: Final Comments, Impressions, Ideas about Improvement.

1. Feedback from previous day's discussion

- Precarity has spread globally during COVID-19, see for example strikes in Amazon or sweatshops fast fashion brands. Women working there got sick and lost their jobs, while women in the global North continued to consume online. Linkages between consumption, production and global productive and reproductive chains.
- Gender equality measures in European welfare states are not radical enough. They push women to work and at the same time take care of their children.

Points raised yesterday relevant to today's discussion

- When we hear about women's vulnerability and victimhood during COVID-19 we should pay attention to **who is speaking**. Women under surveillance. Women as constant and eternal victims. Problematize victimization.
- Connecting **demographic concerns** with gender equality policies is problematic. Women as citizens-Women as mothers.
- Is the **legal and policy framework** for gender equality robust enough. Should gender equality in decision making centres?

2. Are the dominant policy responses to the pandemic gender-blind? (interactive session)

- **Lock downs:** focus on the nuclear family or the community?
- **Closures of schools, day care centres, kindergartens, elderly care centres:** what about gender division of labour and women's work-life balance?
 - **Restrictions of movement:** what about care support?
- **Financial Support for businesses closed and persons out of work:** what about precarious workers ?

Are the dominant policy responses to the pandemic gender-blind? (interactive session)

- **Healthcare system:** Imbalance between private-public healthcare institutions?
- **Healthcare workers :** What are their working conditions? Is their mental and physical health taken into consideration?
 - **Precarious and auxiliary health and care work:** What are their working conditions? Do they have access to health protections?
 - **Vaccinations:** Who has priority?
 - **Decision making centres:** Who makes the decisions?

3. Feminist responses to the COVID-19 pandemic

1. Challenges to the continuation of activist work: meetings, communal work, street protests were prohibited but information, support, resources and services continued online. **Lack of access to the internet became an obstacle to participation so for many feminist groups and NGOs communal approaches were necessary.**
2. Feminist organisations also continued **to mobilise and took the streets** against gender-blind COVID-19 policies and the rise of gender based violence during lock downs. (Green D. , 2020)

Coorinadora Feminista 8M



A feminist emergency plan on “health, life and care above corporate profits” and goes against “precarity, patriarchal and racist violence, as well as a global ecological crisis and crisis of care”. (Coorinadora Feminista 8M, 2020) from translation in Al Ali, 2020

Organised care activities;

protests, emergency GBV networks, online reporting of GBV incidents, calls for free medical care and leaves for people in caring roles (paid or unpaid), campaigns for the legalisation of abortion and in favour of migrants.

Feminist Alliance for Rights (FAR)



The Feminist COVID-19 Policy

Equality and non-discrimination, centering the most marginalized people, including but not limited to women, children, elderly, people with disabilities, people with compromised health, rural people, unhoused people, institutionalized people, LGBT+ people, refugees, migrants, indigenous peoples, stateless people, human rights defenders, and people in conflict and war zones.

http://feministallianceforrights.org/blog/2020/03/20/action-call-for-a-feminist-covid-19-policy/?utm_source=NGO+CSW%2FNY+Constituency&utm_campaign=cb8d7d54ff-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_10_05_02_01_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_67ac6441ff-cb8d7d54ff-411803097&mc_cid=cb8d7d54ff&mc_eid=d8a521eafb

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1. Food security:

Provide food rations and organise food distribution

2. Healthcare

Provide for the continued provision of health care services based on non-biased medical research and tests – unrelated to the virus – for women and girls

3. Education

- Subsidize childcare for families unable to make alternate arrangements for their children
- Expand free internet access to increase access to online educational platforms and material and enable children to participate in virtual and disability-accessible classroom sessions where available
- Provide laptops for children who need them in order to participate in on-line education

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4. **Social Inequality**

- Encourage the equitable sharing of domestic tasks in explicit terms and through allowances for time off and compensation for all workers

5. **Water and sanitation**

- Ensure infrastructure is in place for clean, potable water to be piped into homes and delivered to underserved areas
- Cease all disconnections and waive all reconnection fees to provide everyone with clean, potable water
- Bring immediate remedy to issues of unclean water
- Build public handwashing stations in communities

6.

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6. Economic inequality

- Implement moratoriums on evictions due to rental and mortgage arrears and deferrals of rental and mortgage payments for those affected, directly or indirectly, by the virus and for people belonging to vulnerable groups
- Implement moratoriums on the disconnection of utilities including water, electricity, telephone, and internet services regardless of inability to pay and payment histories
- Provide Universal Basic Income for those with lost income
- Provide financial support to unhoused people, refugees, and women's shelters

7. Violence against women, domestic violence/Intimate partner violence

8. Access to information

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9. Abuse of power

- Monitor restrictions taken in the public interest do not result in any gender-specific harm to women and girls who are already extremely vulnerable and at risk of being denied their basic human rights
- Consult any changes in existing laws with human rights organizations and Ombudsperson/Human Rights Defenders
- Encourage law enforcement officers to focus on increasing safety rather than arrests
- Train law enforcement officers, care workers, and social workers to recognize vulnerabilities and make necessary adjustments in their approach and engagement
- Adopt human rights-oriented protocols to reduce spreading of the virus in detention and confinement facilities

Learning from
communities
who have
experienced
epidemics in
the past



Can the North learn from the Global South?

Can Northern feminists learn from feminists in the South?

How can synergies be created across the world?

Feminist collectives are fighting for a vaccine equity: accessible to all without charge across the world.

4. Learning from LGBTQ responses to the COVID-19 pandemic

LGBTQ communities have experience because of HIV. (see article in the Conversation on “Gayborhoods” in the US)

Can broader communities use this experience to deal with the pandemic? **Can governments learn from LGBTQ+ communities instead of focusing only on vulnerability and stigma.**

-community self-help, dissemination of health information, self-protection

-communal support and networks

-challenge the stigma

-fight against misinformation and fear of the disease and its treatment, medicine or vaccination

5. Challenges for Feminist and LGBTQ responses to the COVID-19 pandemic

There are **tensions between state feminist approaches and activist feminisms** (Al Ali, 2020). The same applies to LGBTQ+ activism. Government priorities, for example in Greece Demographics and Family may clash with feminists goals. In some cases, government or political party members might be overtly anti-feminists, anti-LGBTQ+, for example in Greece the Minister of Health is the lawyer defending those who killed the activist Zack Costopoulos.

4. There are also questions of **co-optation or appropriation of activist struggles by governments.** (συνεπιλογή –οικειοποίηση)