



The collective response is the best remedy against coronavirus

In **Ca la Dona**, a space for feminist action in Barcelona that brings together a diversity of feminist projects and groups, in this most critical phase of the coronavirus health emergency, we would like to share some thoughts. We do so, driven by a sense of responsibility and because we care about life, and the quality and dignity of all lives.

We trust that this crisis will be as mild and short as possible, but as a society, as individuals and as communities, we must manage to take out of this painful experience all that is good and can be better for now and for the future.

This emergency generates mixed feelings: on the one hand, we are called to show discipline and on the other hand, we, as feminists, also feel the rebellion of critical awareness. We are in an exceptional situation that puts to the test how the different components of society react, both at the level of the State and among citizens. **It is a good opportunity to value care, solidarity, mutual support and coexistence. Now more than ever, lives must take center stage, above individualism and the culture of fear. These feminist values are the best remedy against coronavirus.**

The state of alarm has been declared, and a call to lockdown and confinement was launched. However, the government has not given any indication for a collective response. Although we are confined to our homes, the organization must be collective and, in fact, there are already many community initiatives in this regard.

For years, we have been warning of the care-giving crisis and we are now seeing it with the COVID 19 pandemic. This is not an illusion, but an actual state of affairs, since the crisis has caused care to collapse. This is not a circumstantial event, but rather a structural crisis. We live under a patriarchal regime and discourse that imposes individualism. Therefore, it is clear that we need to change the paradigm, to change the neoliberal model based on the belief of individual self-reliance, and to firmly position care-giving at the core. Feminists will repeat it tirelessly.

We want to warn once again about what is happening with care. In this extreme situation, we do not wish to create further obstacles, but we cannot fail to express our concern about some of the measures that are being taken, as we believe they may further aggravate the crisis.

- We are staying at home with no knowledge of the financial compensation measures (if there are any planned).
- Residential care facilities do not accept new admissions, but no one explains to us how to care for dependent persons.
- We do not know what will happen to those migrants without access to health services, nor to minors without referents who survive on the streets.
- The domestic care workers continue to work in other people's houses, at the risk of being infected.
- Families who face situations of male violence are exposed to the risk of the continued presence of the aggressor.
- Victims of violence are isolated and unable to flee from their attackers.
- The situation in prisons and in immigration detention centers are inhumane and we are not aware of measures being taken to sustain a confinement situation aggravated by health issues.
- We do not know what treatment refugees and homeless people will have.

We could continue listing all the aspects that concern us, but we want to go beyond warning about the risks. We want to make proposals.

We believe that it is necessary to count on civil society, on the different social movements, on the feminist movements that are transforming society, on the associations of domestic and care workers (mostly migrants and often without papers), on the organizations of the so-called third sector, and on all the social stakeholders (trade unions, neighborhood organizations, etc.), to coordinate and give an effective and efficient response to the situation we are experiencing.

Until now, our society has focused on neoliberal markets and logic, and we can see now that we are not prepared to protect life, to protect people's lives. The latest crises have mostly affected the population, especially the most vulnerable people, due to budget cuts in health and public services. The situation of care workers in residential care facilities is abusive, due to the absence of public services at home.

The most impoverished social groups, especially older women, who have worked so hard in giving care to others, now have to face a social collapse because we are not prepared to respond to these crises of dependency and eco-dependency. We need to change the social paradigm, because only then can we live with dignity. The world is crying out for this change. We will only be able to get out of the crisis if we are able to change the capitalist and patriarchal logics, and place life and care at the center. They might call it a pandemic, but it is a crisis of care!

We will only get out of this together. The reality in this crisis is going at high speed and we cannot waste any more time. We are concerned because we know that sexist violence, unfortunately, will not rest, nor will it be quarantined; actually, it may even worsen.

We are imposed authoritarian, hierarchical and centralized answers in the name of health. The state of alarm involves putting public order ahead of people's needs and leaves control of the situation at the discretion of security forces, with measures governed by the citizen security law (the "Gag Law") and the criminal code. Instead of mobilizing a collective response, the army is out in the streets to control citizenship and, if the situation worsens, repression against possible protest actions cannot be ruled out.

We gather below some demands that we share with other social and neighborhood movements:

- We defend our public health and social protection systems for all, after so many decades of neoliberal single thought.
- We defend that the universal and unconditional Basic Income is essential to ensure citizen dignity above misery, with adequate fiscal policies.
- We want benefits for working people in the general scheme of Social Security to be extended to domestic and care workers in the special system.
- Adequate protective equipment for the development of care work will be provided to workers, whether internal or home care workers, in a variety of modalities, because they are exposed to contagion like other health personnel.
- We demand that all private health resources intervene and be put at the service of the general interest. There is an injection of money and means to prevent the collapse of the health system.
- We demand the opening of public hospital plants closed by budget cuts and that are essential today, with the commitment of subsequent maintenance to recover the quality levels prior to the financial crisis.
- A moratorium on rent payment is required.
- A moratorium on mortgage payments is required.
- We demand that evictions cease.
- We demand a 100%-coverage of the salary, including the supplements of the workers affected by the virus or in preventive confinement, under the same treatment as an occupational accident and that the health insurance companies bear the economic cost, not the Social Security system.
- We demand economic coverage of care and 100% salary coverage as an exceptional measure for workers who are unable to attend their job, having to take care of third parties affected by the virus, convalescent or affected by the closure of educational centers, nursing homes and day centers.
- All employment and temporary employment regulation plans (EREs and ERTes in Spanish, which are procedures of economic lay-off, employment restructuring and temporary contract suspension) that the employers have started or intend to start during this emergency period must be stopped.
- A support plan for self-employed workers is needed, including an exemption from paying the self-employed fee and economic coverage for all those people who cannot carry out their work tasks due to confinement, illness or care of third parties affected directly or indirectly by the virus.
- We also demand that sex workers have access to all available public resources to cover their basic needs.
- We need a program of public information, including daily, educational, clear and rigorous information on the real situation, which would be mandatory for all mass media, in order to calm the population and counter fake news and confusing, alarmist information.



We will remain vigilant as to how these measures we demand will be implemented by the national government, as well as the Catalan government and the municipality government.

We recall that feminist movements have a capacity of mobilization and organization at the grass root of society and therefore, it is imperative that the feminist voice and demands are part of all spaces for dialogue between public authorities and social stakeholders.

We call for participation in the mutual support initiatives that are being articulated in neighborhoods and towns.

Together, we will get out of this situation!