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Key words Feminization of poverty,
deprivation, social exclusion, gender**The fight against feminization of poverty and deprivation in the city of Barcelona**

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The gender-based analysis of poverty points, beyond the financial resources available, to dimensions like the lack of time, work overload or state of health as factors influencing on how women suffer from poverty and deprivation. This article presents, firstly, the comprehensive action program launched by Barcelona City Council in the fight against poverty and deprivation from a gender perspective: the Strategy against the feminization of poverty and deprivation 2016-2024. The core interventions are addressed, and some of the actions developed during the first months of execution are outlined, as well as the priority actions for 2017. The article describes the strategies already implemented in order to disseminate the Strategy across the different areas of the city; a geographical dissemination that is crucial and which requires further engagement from districts, departments, local governments and association networks in the city.

Introduction

28.4% of women and 27% of men in Barcelona are at risk of poverty or in a situation of social exclusion¹. Alternative methodologies of measuring poverty highlight, though, that, if the income of each household member was taken into account instead of that of the whole household, the poverty rate for women would double, becoming twice that of men². Aside from this data, a gender analysis of poverty shows that, regardless of the list of resources available, there are dimensions such as lack of time, excessive workloads or health that define to which degree women suffer poverty and insecurity. Henceforth, the struggle against poverty, the factors leading people to poverty situations and the impact of policies aimed at ending it are different for men and women.

Over the last few decades, social movements –including feminism– have acknowledged as deprivation new situations that are not exclusively defined by financial poverty. Although deprivation is strongly linked to labour conditions and their deterioration, nowadays it embraces other aspects of life that are not only associated to the standard labour market. It considers, thus, remunerated and non-remunerated work, the lack of time or the impossibility to lead a full life due

1. Idescat and IERMB, Survey on Living Standards and Habits in Catalonia, 2011.

2. According to Francesc Valls Fonayet's research (2016), from the URV Chair of Social Inclusion about the total population in Catalonia; by using this alternative methodology based on the poverty measurement under the premise of autonomy, in 2015 nearly half of the women in Catalonia (49.3%) would be at risk of poverty living with their own income and living alone, against 24.2% of men. According to this methodology, the proportion of women at risk of poverty doubles, whereas men's reduces.

to the lack of opportunities and the diverse forms of discrimination.

In that sense, political measures fighting against poverty and deprivation must incorporate all these factors in order to provide specific responses. Under that premise, Barcelona City Council has committed to launch a comprehensive program of measures from a gender-based perspective: the Strategy against the feminization of poverty and deprivation 2016–2024 (Catalan initials EFPP).

The strategy is framed within the government's measure *Urgent Actions Towards Ending Poverty: for a balanced and equal Barcelona*³, whose main objective is to execute a roadmap formulated by the City Council which, beyond rapid, care assistance and punctual actions, let us pave the way towards a real and effective equity between women and men, by breaking those barriers accountable for the feminization of poverty and deprivation.

After an overview of the EFPP's core intervention, this article exposes some of the measures developed during the first months of the implementation and the priority measures for 2017. Some of the strategies being developed in order to disseminate the EFPP through the different neighborhoods of the city are detailed next. This is a crucial dissemination that must be promoted throughout all the EFPP's evolution. Finally, some conclusions are addressed.

EFPP's core interventions

The EFPP's diagnosis and design has been possible thanks to the participation of experts, associations, labour unions, representatives from different local institutions and women in situation of social exclusion and deprivation. Several focus groups formed by all the different stakeholders and interviews and discussion groups aimed at collecting women's experiences and views defined the EFPP's core interventions, objectives and action plans.

The EFPP is divided into three core interventions, focused on the main factors identified which cause people to fall into, experience and also exit poverty and deprivation situations. To start, 71 actions have been outlined.

The first EFPP core intervention relies on data and information systems, since a proper intervention on the factors impacting on the feminization of poverty requires a profound knowledge of the phenomenon, providing data to make it visible and quantifiable; data which is currently insufficient. That intervention aims to provide the City Council with a data system that enables, from a gender perspective, to gauge comprehensively and thoroughly the phenomenon of the feminization of poverty. Within this core intervention, several actions are planned, such as disaggregation by gender of data in all surveys, research and data lists carried out by the City Council, and the generation of a local and multidimensional poverty indicator which can incorporate a gender- basis approach.

The second core intervention is economy for life, which is the economy tailored to assure an adequate standard of living for the population, attending and considering the essential standards for subsistence, reproduction and wellbeing. That way, this core intervention embraces action plans both in the labour market and in the domestic and care work dimension.

The EFPP recognizes the inequalities women face when accessing and participating in the labour market and the consequences they have on income throughout their lives. In that way, the average income for women generated from work is 18% lower than men's⁴. They also have a higher unemployment rate (14.7% female unemployment against 13.4% male unemployment⁵)

3. Presented before Barcelona City Council's plenary chamber on the 23rd July 2015.

4. Barcelona City Council, *Estrategy against Feminization of Poverty and Deprivation in Barcelona (2016-2020)*, Councillor's Office for Feminisms and LGBT, Department of Gender Mainstreaming –CIRD (2016).

5. Report "Women and Work", CESB, 2016, according to 2015 data.

and they represent 56%⁶ of the population in Barcelona who have been unemployed for more than a year. Moreover, women are also the majority of the population with temporary contracts, working part time or working without a contract⁷. In fact, in view of the current state of the labour market, having a job is no guarantee of avoiding situations of exclusion; the risk of poverty among active women and those with studies rises year after year, being situated at 14% against 11.6% for men⁸. In that sense, accessing the labour market is part of the solution to deal with the feminization elements of poverty, but it also needs to be reformulated to be an efficient solution and not perpetuate precariousness. For women, jobs will be part of the solution as long as these are dignified, without gender discriminations and the rest of factors influencing on their deprivation are taken into account.

For that reason, with this core intervention, the EFPP suggests the development of strategies to tackle the structural gendered inequalities in the labour market that contribute to generate greater vulnerability among women in terms of poverty, through action plans like setting gender clauses for public contracts or creating a quality award designated by Barcelona City Council, on a gender-approach basis, for those companies offering dignified, equal and co-responsible jobs. Other objectives of this first core intervention include the promotion of professional qualifications and certifications, labour access and job retention for women in vulnerable situations, dignifying female-dominated sectors (cleaning services, sales, tourism and support services) and fighting against occupational segregation.

With regards to domestic work and caring tasks, the EFPP takes into account the unequal distribution among women and men when carrying out these tasks, and some objectives are targeted to the co-responsibility of the stakeholders (household members, community, private sector and Public Administration) and the restructuring of time in a municipal context –in order to reduce the importance of productive time and incorporate caring, social and personal time as a political priority– are addressed. In that sense, the broadening of care services provided by the Public Administration has been planned, as well as strengthening the projects devoted to promoting male co-responsibility or the implementation and synchronization of broad public services schedules.

Finally, the third core intervention is the city of rights, understood as the one guaranteeing human rights, also from a gender perspective. Here, the EFPP is focused on the action frameworks considered a priority for a structural fight against feminization of poverty and deprivation: housing, health, basic social conditions, empowerment and socio-political participation of women. The gender diagnosis of female poverty in the city conducted during the elaboration of the EFPP revealed that precarious lives are marked by a lack of decent housing or by the fact they have to work wonders to cope with energy bills. In fact, when housing is given up, other poverty situations have been faced before, such as energy, food or living under insecure cohabitation conditions. In 2015, 61% of housing units supplied due to social emergency were addressed to women⁹. In this framework, the need to broaden the affordable housing stock is addressed; guaranteeing priority access for women in vulnerable or poverty situations and assuring that households meet basic health and comfort conditions, at the same time as fighting energy poverty and improving living standards.

In the health ambit, the EFPP assumes that health, caring (self-care and caring for others), time and work-life balance are factors which directly affect quality of life and, when they are lacking, they contribute to poverty and deprivation. At the same level, women being overworked,

6. Report about unemployment in Barcelona, CESB, 2015, according to 2014 data.

7. Idescat and IERMB. Survey on Living Standards and Habits in Catalonia, 2011.

8. Idescat and IERMB. Survey on Living Standards and Habits in Catalonia, 2011.

9. Census of Social Housing Applicants in Barcelona (2015).

unemployment situations, job insecurity, the fear of being unable to make ends meet or facing the loss of housing have a serious impact on their health. Hence, despite women having a higher life expectancy than men, 26% consider they are in regular or poor health, against 16% of men¹⁰, and this is commonly linked to their work overload (labour market, domestic work and caring tasks). In that framework, the EFPP pursues the fight against malnutrition attached to poverty situations; the guarantee of universal access to health services, putting special emphasis on the sexual and reproductive rights of women and the improvement on their quality of life through the practice of sport.

Finally, with regards to basic social conditions, empowerment and socio-political participation, the EFPP stresses that, very often, precariousness in women's lives is expressed by stressful and submission situations, seeing their decision-making capacities undermined and even facing disempowerment situations. In that sense, the EFPP suggests creating adequate socioeconomic contexts tailored to guarantee full lives, by reviewing the social services model and launching projects and programs aimed at offering women the adequate tools for self-organization, through the supply of economical support of inclusion for the most vulnerable households, the promotion of women networks through community work and the incorporation of the gender approach in social services, among others.

Main actions in 2016 and priority actions for 2017

The launching of an institutionalized action such as the EFPP, as necessary as it is ambitious, is not an easy task. During the first nine months, several actions have started, and some of them already been accomplished. The majority, though, are in a process of execution and will have continuity, at least throughout 2017. That was agreed in the first meeting of the EFPP Technical Team, at the end of November 2016 in accordance with the different departments and municipal bodies involved, in order to track the scheduled action plans for 2016. Some plans of special interest are outlined here:

Core 1: Data and information systems

- *Action 2. Creation of a local and multidimensional indicator of poverty based on a gender approach.* The Department of Knowledge and Research of the Area of Social Rights has designed an Inequality and Vulnerability Index, available for the 73 neighborhoods of the city. Unfortunately, though, it was discarded as a local and gendered poverty indicator after assessing it, since the disposable household income –one of the Index's three indicators– couldn't be disaggregated by gender. As a result, other alternatives were sought. This department started a comprehensive analysis of the EU Gender Equality Index, working on the possibilities of adapting it to a local scale. Although this second indicator displays items relevant to female poverty (unemployment, time or health), it measures the level of inequality and not poverty, which is what the EFPP intends to do. For that reason, and considering all this previous work and other current proposals, it has been decided to keep on working internally in order to set *ad hoc* a system of poverty and deprivation indicators on a gender basis. These actions are planned in coordination with social rights and initiatives based on the fight against inequality and the promotion of inclusion in the city.

- *Action 4. Dissemination of the CESB (Barcelona's Social and Economic Council) annual report, with data on gender and the labour market. Reviewing this report in order to include new indicators. Inputs on the fight against deprivation and wage gap will be outlined and a best practices list will be presented.* Throughout 2016, CESB and QUIT-UAB have worked together in order to open new perspectives, indicators and proposals for improving the analysis of women's situation in different jobs, remunerated and non-remunerated, in Barcelona. The study will be finished before the summer of 2017 and will provide new methodological guidelines and information in order to steer future reports on Women and Work annually conducted by CESB.

10. Idescat and IERMB. Survey on Living Standards and Habits in Catalonia, 2011.

Core 2: Economy for life and management of time

- *Action 12. Setting of gender equality clauses in all the City Council hiring policies. Last October, the Guide on Public Social Hiring was presented.* The Guide sets a battery of gender equity clauses as contract conditions and, in some cases, economic penalties will be executed in case of noncompliance. These clauses include aspects such as the implementation of an Equality Plan or an Equality Measures Record for companies, as well as equality policies for professional profiles and professional groups, inclusive communication and measures against sexual harassment and gendered harassment. The guide has been published as the first step towards the accomplishment of the action plan. During the following months, the implementation of these clauses will be reviewed and monitored, assessing their impact on female poverty and deprivation in the city, and also taking into account the recently published Decree for Sustainable Public Contracts on the 24th April 2017.

- *Action 22. Broadening of SAD services, tele-home care services, Nursery Schools and meal services with priority according to city areas.* During 2016, the core services of the Area of Social Rights –such as SAD– were broadened by improving labour conditions of the community support workers, increasing budget and broadening the attention service. The Home Meals and accompanied Meals services also saw a rise in the number of places offered. Regarding to the tele-home care service, in 2016 there was an automatic broadening of the service. This service is proportional to the number of old-aged people in every district and the level of aging. Likewise, the growth is co-related to the progressive rise of old-aged people in every area. Lastly, regarding to Nursery Schools, during 2016 three State Nursery Schools were administered.

Core 3: City of rights

In 2017, given the importance of a quality attachment to the labour market as a means to leave situations of poverty and deprivation behind, special efforts will be devoted to carrying out actions in this domain, within the EFPP's Economy for life and time management core interventions. Thus, the Board Against the Feminization of Poverty, which will hold a meeting in spring, will be suggested to prioritize the following actions:

- *Action 45. Boosting counseling and awareness actions towards the prevention of unwanted pregnancy, with special focus on teenagers (SIRIAN program).* Within the context of the Healthcare program in every city area, SIRIAN program resources have been broadened and will be running especially in the most vulnerable areas, since this program has been proven to have an efficient impact on the reduction of non-wanted pregnancy cases. Moreover, in the framework of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy, a campaign for the right of abortion has been launched.

- *Action 47. Financial inclusion support for households and people with difficulties in covering basic needs, starting with elderly women with Non-contributory State Pensions, Disability Pensions and single mothers.* Throughout 2016, special benefits on social emergency were approved and formulated into vouchers: on one hand, the Vouchers 0-16, devoted to cover basic needs in food, clothes and school costs for children and young children aged up to 16. On the other hand, vouchers for single parent families, addressed to cover food, clothes and basic needs. Finally, the vouchers provided to women earning Non-Contributory State Pensions, covering all kind of expenses.

Firstly, the action 5, which plans the development of a quality, stable and comprehensive training, accreditation and insertion program for women in vulnerable situations. This action must include a fixed accompaniment service for the female user for, at least, two years.

Secondly, the action 6, which addresses the gender approach in the LABORA program, aimed at promoting occupation for people with difficulties in accessing the labour market. The program

runs and administers a labour market reserved for people attached to any service or program of the Social Rights Area. It is led by the Social Services Municipal Institute of Barcelona City Council, in collaboration with social associations represented by ECAS (Catalan Associations for Social Action), FEICAT (Inclusion Companies in Catalonia) and the Red Cross, as well as the business sector in the city. In order to include the gender approach, greater efforts will be devoted to gather more data segregated by sex (for example, number of incorporations by occupation and gender; incorporations by sector and gender or type and duration of contract according to gender) and being able, thus, to make a diagnosis on women's occupation from LABORA and suggest possible changes.

EFPP geographical dissemination

A few months after the launch of the EFPP throughout the city, in 2017 we are starting to execute it in different areas of Barcelona, especially in those neighborhoods with higher poverty and social exclusion rates. To do this geographical dissemination, three complementary working procedures are being carried out.

On one hand, working alongside the City Council's Neighborhoods Plan in order to accomplish the performance of the EFPP in every area is led by associations and women of the neighborhoods in accordance with the strategic processes linked to this initiative.

On the other hand, through direct contact with the diverse districts of the city represented by the Women Councils or Feminisms and LGBT, and the feminism technical managers of each district. Finally, through the cooperation with new gender mainstreaming representatives in five districts of the city.

Neighborhood Plans

The EFPP is attached to the Neighborhood Plans with the aim of accomplishing and executing EFPP actions in the territory; that is, after a diagnosis of the reality in every neighborhood, generic EFPP actions are adapted to the needs and particularities of each area and the people who live there. To put it into practice, the EFPP Technical Secretary offers support to the Neighborhood Plans through different measures: participation in focus groups during the design phase of the Neighborhoods Plan, document reviews (diagnosis, proposals of focus groups, preliminary papers of Neighborhood Plans, etc.) or monitoring the conciliation between the EFPP and the Neighborhood Plans document.

In this sense, for instance, 2017 has been especially devoted to the Neighborhood Plans of La Marina de Port and Prat Vermell. The EFPP Technical Secretary participated in the financial development focus group, since one of the points included in this area is that of Measures against the feminization of poverty. Other documents have also been reviewed at different stages of the elaboration of Neighborhood Plans, not only to help implement measures against the feminization of poverty, but also to include the gender perspective in more general actions (for example, those addressed to healthy leisure time, to promoting health among young people and teenagers or to fostering social and solidarity economy). That way, companies on industrial estates are to be assessed on gender equality topics and quality measures for female occupation, and a program for pre-entrepreneurship is to be developed, addressed to local citizens interested in creating a social cooperative company with other women.

Districts and Councils

The second guideline for disseminating geographically the EFPP is, as stated before, working in collaboration with the city districts. One of the devices to make it possible is engaging the Women Councils or the Feminism Councils and LGBT in order to detect the needs and set the EFPP measures to tackle the feminization of poverty and deprivation in the city. Since the EFPP's launch last summer, the Technical Secretary has participated in Women Councils in the districts of Gràcia, Nou Barris and Sants-Montjuïc, in order to make it visible and to gather proposals from their own areas. Some of the contributions received were from Nou Barris and were concerned

about the cooperative organization of domestic workers. In Gràcia, women from the Council expressed the importance of taking into account the specific housing needs of women in poverty situations who, furthermore, suffer from some disability.

At the same time, in the district of Sants-Montjuic the Feminism and LGBT Council has created a focus group on the feminization of poverty which has assessed the area's needs and recommended which EFPP actions would be effective in their district.

The Women Council secretary in Barcelona summoned the EFPP Technical Secretary to start defining strategies for policy dissemination across the territory through their focus group. Ministers, technicians and Council representatives from different districts attended this meeting, where some of the current EFPP action plans were discussed. It was considered that some plans could be strengthened across the different districts, while those needs that weren't yet covered by planned EFPP actions were also discussed. The districts committed themselves to keep on thinking about adaptation measures in their area.

In any case, when implementing the EFPP geographical dissemination by districts, it is important to incorporate diagnoses conducted by the Feminism and LGBT Technicians, as well as co-working with women associations in the city areas.

Gender mainstreaming representatives in the districts

Over the next year, the EFPP geographical dissemination will be boosted by the work of the new gender mainstreaming representatives who will start this spring in five districts (Horta-Guinardó, Sant Martí, Ciutat Vella, Sants-Montjuic and Nou Barris).

Their task will be to promote and make effective gender-mainstreaming in the districts, through, among others means, the application of the Justice for Gender Plan (2016-2020) and EFPP execution. That way, they will give the pertinent support to the EFPP actions' development in each district, adapting to the area's reality and needs.

Based on these guidelines and the synergies created with the districts' staff and the Neighborhood Plans, as well as the association networks and women from different areas of the city, we hope to keep on working in order to reduce the feminization of poverty and deprivation in the whole of Barcelona.

Conclusions

A comprehensive and institutionalized action plan such as the EFPP is a great challenge, since it aims to become a driving force for social and structural change, capable of –beyond covering specific needs–, changing the conditions that drive and tie women to poverty and deprivation situations. During the first months of its implementation, progress has been made through several of the actions addressed, but there's still much work to do until 2024.

The current approach is to keep on promoting the initial actions and to make a special effort on the actions attached to the labour market, since they are one of the key ways to overcoming situations of poverty and deprivation.

We are also currently putting special emphasis on EFPP dissemination throughout those neighborhoods which register higher indicators of poverty and deprivation. By working together with the Neighborhoods Plan, collaborating with the city districts and also supported by the new gender mainstreaming representatives in five districts, the specific needs from the different areas will be tackled and, within the EFPP framework, the most efficient actions for overcoming them will be executed.

With the commitment and drive of the different local institutions, districts and association networks of the city to the fight against poverty and deprivation, we are confident that we will be

able to continue working in order to accomplish the EFPP's objective.

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