

# RESIGNIFYING THE PUNTS LILES

Learning experiences  
and new challenges to  
contribute to the  
elimination of sexist  
violence

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*“If I can’t dance, it’s not my revolution”*

Emma Goldman





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## Introduction to the collection

This is the second publication that the Association has produced as part of the collection that was begun in 2017, in which we sought to compile a record of work carried out within the different fields of activity where we develop our projects. So often, organisations work intensely on the planning and execution of the different activities we are concerned with, but in the majority of cases we do not have time to share the thinking behind our approaches or the results of the interventions we carry out with the public and other professionals. For this reason, we are presenting this collection as a means of transferring our experience to anyone who may be interested.

This collection, therefore, is the product of our desire to write about what we do: about some of the things we think turn out well, but also on everything that we often don't talk of any further other than on our journeys on the underground, in the car or bus. We are referring, on this last point, to some of the problems, conflicts, doubts and uncertainties that emerge during the development of the project. We are referring to the

contradictions that repeatedly surface and challenge us, and which robustly question the objectives of that which we propose or proposed.

Working with these contradictions is not an easy task, but our motivation is that, in doing so, we are always enriched. And thinking of this enrichment, we have decided to share everything we have learned on each journey and on each project and venture that the organisation decides to embark on.

We hope that, in this account of our experiences, some of you may find ideas, concepts and methods that may be of use. This second number in the collection is dedicated to the *Programa Prevenió de les violències masclistes en espais festius* (Programme for the Prevention of Sexual Violence in Festivities and Festive Zones), and in its pages we share with you the results of our work and also some thoughts we have had during the development of the project.

If you would like to make any comments on the publication, to contribute information or your own experiences, or simply to get in touch with us, you can write to us at [coordinacio@lassociacio.org](mailto:coordinacio@lassociacio.org)

## About us

The Associació de Drets Sexuals i Reproductius (Association of Sexual and Reproductive Rights) that was until 2018 the Associació de Planificació Familiar de Catalunya i Balears (Family Planning Association of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands) is an interdisciplinary, non-governmental organisation formed by people interested in the promotion and defence of Sexual and Reproductive Rights. It was established in Barcelona in 1982, following the emergence of Family Planning Centres.

The overriding objective of the Association is the demand for, promotion and defence of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), recognised as Human Rights that contribute to the empowerment, autonomy and life quality of persons. Consequently, the key focus of the Association's activity is the promotion and defence of Human Rights, aid, assistance and social, health and educational inclusion as central pillars that guarantee people's rights and wellbeing. We place particular focus on the empowerment and promotion of social action amongst people who are vulnerabilised owing to the intersection of multiple types of discrimination as a result of their plurality of identities:

gender, class, age, ethnic-racial origin, sexual orientation, functional diversity, etc. and do this through the promotion of democratic principles and tolerance.

The entire intervention carried out by the Association is based on social commitment, the defence of equality and respect for diversity, feminism, transparency, the desire for social transformation and public service.

The Association is registered on the non-profit organisation census of the Generalitat de Catalunya's Direcció General de Dret i Entitats Jurídiques (Directorate General of Law and Legal Entities) and functions on an assembly basis. Since its foundation, it has worked to ensure that the Sexual and Reproductive Rights of the population are realised and effective. To this end, in its early stages it spearheaded a campaign to highlight and raise awareness on the need for family planning centres, finally achieving their integration into the public health network. Similarly, it has played a part in all campaigns demanding these rights, such as the legalisation of abortion, the universalisation of contraceptive methods and sex education, and the improvement of care services for the population in this area, along with many other lines of action.

For more than 30 years and with the new internal and external changes that form part of the reconceptualisation of the shared spaces and campaigns, we have created – and continue to create – channels to call for new demands, for meetings, exchanges and reflection to debate and engage deeper on the issue concerning us from diverse aspects. This work is planned at all times in collaboration and permanent contact with other organisations, institutions and public administrations, etc. The Association's activities over these more than 30 years have progressively adapted to the context and needs of each moment in time and to the demands of the population to achieve its overriding objective: to guarantee and consolidate the exercising of Sexual and Reproductive Rights.

# Preface

In September 2015, the United Nations' General Assembly approved the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** through which the new framework for sustainable development was established that will be in force until 2030.

The 2030 Agenda sets out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 169 targets and a list of global indicators that form the road map that will guide policies over coming years.

Included in the 17 SDGs, aimed amongst other things at eradicating hunger in the world, ending poverty, achieving quality education, gender equality, etc., is SDG 11, that seeks to achieve **“Sustainable cities and communities”**. This Goal was successfully included in the 2030 Agenda thanks many years of lobbying by civil society initiatives seeking the recognition of the **Right to the City**.

One of the targets included in SDG 11 states the following:

**“By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public**

**spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities”.**

And presents its corresponding indicator: **“11.7.2 Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months”.**

By means of this goal and this indicator, that are naturally interconnected with others of the 17 SDGs and their indicators, the signatory States have pledged to work towards the eradication of sexual violence that women are subject to in public spaces and, rolling this out a little more and from a feminist perspective, we would say that the States have also committed themselves or should have committed themselves to the eradication of acts of sexual aggression and harassment that hetero-dissident persons suffer.

Over the coming pages, a work intervention that contributes to the attainment of SDG 11 is presented. This is an intervention that seeks to help deliver the eradication of acts of sexual violence that women and hetero-dissident persons suffer in public leisure zones by means of a collective, community, feminist and transformative response.

How do we women and hetero-dissident persons inhabit the city and our neighbourhood? How do we enjoy them and how do we live in them? How do we insert our bodies into the streets and squares and how do we move around them?

When asked these questions, the majority of women and members of the LGBTI community answer that they inhabit them with limitations, with a lack of tranquillity, with fear and without



freedom, avoiding certain zones at certain times, going round in the company of others and avoiding being alone.

We inhabit and move around our cities and municipalities being citizens without full rights. If to this we add other factors of oppression such as an irregular administrative situation, functional diversity, age, working as sex workers, gender and sexual identity, ethnicity, etc., then the exercising of this right disappears immediately.

The diverse expressions of sexist violence seen in cities highlight the fact that the public space is a political space where people play out hegemonic gender roles and where power relationships are not only present but actually shape these spaces.

Explicit and implicit violence exist together in the public space. The first, in the form of acts of sexual aggression and harassment, ranging from catcalling to sexual abuse, and the second, implicit violence, that takes the shape of a mechanism to control and oppress our bodies. This implicit violence that we learn from when we are young girls through being socialised in fear makes us continue to perceive that our “natural” space is the private space and that public space does not belong to us. Implicit violence converts the exercising of social inequality into something natural as the patriarchal construction manages to turn violence into something natural, thereby suppressing any potential resistance.

What happens in the public space is a reflection of the patriarchal system that has the control of women’s bodies as one of its fundamental pillars. It is a system that establishes unequal gender relationships where men occupy a dominant position and women a subordinate position. It is within this patriarchal

system that discriminates against women in all areas of the social arena where violence against women finds relevance.

It is important to stress and reiterate that, although these forms of aggression are sexual, they are expressions of power and domination by the hegemonic group over women and hetero-dissident persons. That is to say, they are acts of aggression motivated by power that are expressed by means of sexuality. What they are seeking is the control of women's bodies and not the satisfaction of an evil called sexual "desire".

In spite of that fact that male violence, and therefore sexual violence, is of a structural nature and is a social issue, many of the responses offered are individual and not collective.

To change this, over recent years different feminist collectives have been taking a stand against acts of sexual aggression and harassment in festive and leisure zones, offering a collective and a community response.

In addition to these initiatives emerging from civil society and also, owing to the major prominence that some cases of sexual assault have recently had in the media, various councils have joined in with this initiative, defining and implementing action protocols to deal with acts of sexual aggression and harassment in festive zones. Some councils have worked in coordination with feminist organisations and feminist collectives in drawing up these protocols.

The work intervention that is presented here is set within the context of all these experiences.

This is an intervention that is based on the understanding that to eradicate acts of sexual aggression and harassment in public spaces, amongst many other things community and collective and feminist interventions are necessary that have social transformation as their objective: where feminist self-defence and empowerment are two of its key elements with interventions that seek to dismantle patriarchal structures.

Occupying streets and squares and being present in leisure zones, at the festa major (the main local annual festivity) in different neighbourhoods, districts and cities, and enjoying these with freedom, pleasure and fun requires a revolutionary political act in itself that also contributes to destroying the heteropatriarchal system.

We are naturally aware that this intervention contributes a quite specific dimension in the eradication of sexual violence. And that it is located in a specific community and where certain people participate who are precisely those who can access leisure spaces in a more or less free manner. Many people are left out of this intervention.

We cannot fail to mention either that for the total eradication of sexual violence it is essential to identify and denounce the interrelation between violence, heteropatriarchy and neoliberalism, as violence against women is historically one of the mechanisms of social control, discrimination and disintegration of the social fabric used to maintain the political and economic interests of the group that holds power.

To talk about sexual violence is also to talk about capitalism, neoliberalism, racism and the criminalisation of communities and of poverty.

For this reason, we feel that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should include targets and indicators in each and every one of its goals for the eradication of male violence, and commit to a change in the economic model that is an improvement on the current one and that places a life that is worth living at the very centre of the economic analysis. We believe that in this way we will be able to achieve the right that every woman has to live a life free of violence.

## 1. The start of the project.

A stand in the middle of the Plaça Espanya with enormous banners bearing the slogan “La Mercè Antimasclista” (Anti-Sexist Mercè Festival), and boxes with campaign material, badges and leaflets. When we open the stand people start coming up to us, curious to know what we are doing there. The stand is known as a *Punt Lila*. It is a space that is sited in zones where festive events are taking place that provides information for the prevention of acts of sexual violence occurring and attends to any victims. We explain that we will be there for the four nights of the festival celebrations, to prevent acts of sexist aggression, to offer advice and act in the event that any assault occurs. Everyone receives the idea very warmly, with some asking if we will only be doing it there, if it is not being done in other places and for more nights... Others already know about this type of initiative that feminist collectives have been implementing for years in non-institutional environments and alternative spaces. The younger women are very happy with our presence, something that reinforces even more the need to be there and to shine a light on the many acts of male aggression that occur during the night.

As the evening goes on, we note how the atmosphere progressively livens up. There are constantly more people and the Plaça and the surrounding areas look like an ants' nest with so many revellers. We become more vigilant as we know that, as the night goes on, there is more likelihood of acts of aggression occurring. In fact, there are increasingly more people who come to us to report issues: "In the middle of the concert a boy touched my bottom"; "The whole time there was a man looking at us while we were peeing!"; "They hit me and said 'gay faggot'"; "A group of boys came up and surrounded us... They started groping us and didn't stop till we managed to escape running... It was really frightening!"... We listen carefully, see that the faces of these people who come to explain the assaults to us are full of fury and impotence. We want them to feel that this time they have a safe space where they can share all these episodes, where they can ask for help.... That they can be sure that what has happened to them is not in any way ridiculous, nor is the night to blame for it, nor the festival atmosphere... No. These situations occur because in the collective imaginary we women continue to be sexual objects, without agency over our bodies: heteronormativity continues to prevail. We are still



Material Front Marítim 2017 (Imatge extreta de la web de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona)

socialised under the umbrella of traditional gender roles, the model of dominating masculinity needs to continue reaffirming its virility and power... Often, in the contexts of night-time leisure events where these combine with the consumption of alcohol and other drugs, we women are doubly-victimised as this androcentric point of view associates our consumption of alcohol/drugs with greater sexual accessibility: in short, greater impunity for accessing our bodies. By contrast, however, the consumption of alcohol/drugs by men is usually interpreted as being an “exoneration” of responsibility when they perpetrate acts of sexual aggression. This unequal treatment is just one more factor that should be borne in mind in these secure spaces, these Punts Liles.

Therefore, in spite of the fact that at the discourse level it seems that awareness has increased, that we are making progress in overcoming multiple forms of discrimination or that some feminist demands are visibly shifting to political agendas, it is only necessary to spend a few hours in a bar, square or street in the middle of the night to see how sexual violence continues to be viewed as an entitlement.

The **Prevention of Sexual Violence in Festivities and Festive Zones** project began in our organisation through a collaboration with the **Barcelona City Councillor’s Office for Feminism and LGBTI Affairs for the La Mercè Festival in 2016**. For the first time, the inclusion of a *Protocol Against Acts of Sexual Aggression* was agreed within the context of the Catalan capital’s festa major. This new and bold commitment was an initial step in paving the way to one day **making leisure and festive zones free of sexual violence**. We began this venture by siting an information stand amongst the concerts on the Avinguda Maria Cristina, distributing material on the prevention of sexual violence and raising awareness on acts of sexual aggression in the context of night-time leisure zones and venues, within the framework of the *Campanya Barcelona Antimasclista* (Barcelona Anti-Sexist Campaign). It was the first time that in Barcelona an initiative of this type had been launched, and it was the first time that it had the collaboration of an external

body to implement it and carry it out. Our feminist trajectory and with more than 30 years' track record in the field of Sexual Rights and Sexual and Reproductive Health, especially in working with young people, was a determining factor in assigning this opportunity to our organisation. In this fight for the defence of Sexual Rights, work surrounding sexual violence is one of the main themes of focus, at both a local and international level.

We immediately saw that the function of the stand would not be limited solely to providing information and raising awareness. With our experience of more than 25 years' working with a young public in the area of the prevention of sexual violence, we know that when you open up opportunities and spaces to talk, when you listen properly, people (young and not so young) explain things to you... Intimate matters, silenced experiences, episodes impregnated with fear, anger, shame, injustice, frustration and guilt.

These are some of the observations we have accumulated over time and which in part led us to realise that this stand offering information should **also become a space for prevention, awareness-raising and advice-giving in matters concerning male violence; a place of safety and comfort** where people could turn to in the event of experiencing an act of sexual aggression during the La Mercè concerts, and where they would be offered not only information and advice but above all support and a focus on the issue from a feminist perspective: to be listened to without prejudice, blame-laying or questioning. The message "you're not alone" was what we most wanted to convey.

We also thought it was important to incorporate **pairs of circulating professionals** to wander round the festive zone and its surroundings acting as agents to help raise awareness on sexual violence, who would be able to get information on the campaign and the location of the stand to the maximum number of people possible. The message to be transmitted was clear: we want to achieve leisure zones where we can relate to one another in a consensual manner, that are spaces free of acts of sexual ag-



gression, placing emphasis on the fact that the responsibility belongs to everyone, both to the perpetrator and to the bystander who observes but does nothing. We need to destroy the individualism that exists in this society with “it’s nothing to do with me”, “it’s not my business”, “it’s a private matter”, calling for a collective response and informing the victims that should they need support we are here. Sexual violence is not an individual problem nor has it anything to do with being something private, but rather we are dealing with a social and structural problem that requires effective and efficient public policies.



Material Festa Major de Sant Boi 2017

After this, we had the opportunity of collaborating with and supporting different districts in Barcelona and other municipalities in the province in the prevention of acts of sexual aggression in their festes majors and other festive zones, and also at major festivals such as Primavera Sound. To give the reader a general idea, everything we talk about in this publication refers to our experience during our **participation in 51 festive events, where we spent 178 days, dedicated 1,071.5 hours of direct intervention, and contributed to the prevention of sexist violence, with 90 hours of training on the awareness and prevention of sexual violence, with 39 Punts Liles and 41 pairs of circulating professionals.** These figures, as can be seen in the following table, correspond to festive events in both Barcelona city as well as other municipalities in the province, during the period comprising September 2016 to December 2018.

## DIRECT INTERVENTIONS IN FESTIVE ACTS

Location	Type of festive act
Barcelona city	La Mercè 2016 and 2017 La Lali Jove 2017 Front Marítim 2017 Telecogresca 2018 Primavera Sound 2018 National Day of Catalonia, 11th September 2018
Ciutat Vella district	Festa Major Raval neighbourhood 2017 Festa Major Barceloneta neighbourhood 2017 and 2018 Coros de la Barceloneta 2018 Festa Major Gothic Quarter 2018 Festa Major Old Quarter 2018 Revetlla de Sant Joan Old Quarter 2018
Les Corts district	Festa Major Les Corts 2018
Gràcia district	Festa Major Vila de Gràcia 2017 and 2018 Bonfires Vila de Gràcia 2018
Horta-Guinardó district	Espai Jove Boca Nord-Festa Swagger 2017
Sant Andreu district	Festa Major Sant Andreu Palomar 2016, 2017 and 2018 Festa Major Sagrera 2017, 2018
Sant Martí district	Festa Major Poble Nou neighbourhood 2017 Festa Major Verneda-Sant Martí 2017 Mostra d'Entitats de Sant Martí 2017 Fira Boja del Clot 2017
Sants-Montjuïc district	Festa Major Sants 2017 and 2018 Festa Major Hostafrancs 2018
Sarrià-Sant Gervasi district	Festa Major Sarrià 2017 and 2018 Mostra Comerç Sarrià 2017 Festa Major Vallvidrera 2018
Barberà del Vallès	Festa Major Barberà del Vallès 2018
Berga	La Patum 2018

Caldes de Montbui	Festa Major Caldes 2018
Castelldefels	Festa Major Castelldefels 2017
Gavà	Festa Major Gavà 2017 and 2018 Festes Hivern Gavà 2018
Les Masies de Voltregà	Festa Major Les Masies de Voltregà 2018
El Masnou	Festa Major El Masnou 2018
Molins de Rei	Festa Major Molins de Rei 2018
El Prat de Llobregat	Festa Major El Prat 2017 and 2018
Rubí	Festa Major Rubí 2018
Sant Boi de Llobregat	Festa Major Sant Boi 2017 and 2018 La Puríssima Festivity 2018
Sant Sadurní d'Anoia	Festa Major Sant Sadurní 2018

### TRAINING ON THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE CARRIED OUT BY THE ASOCIACIÓN-CJAS

District	Training in the district or linked to festive events
Barcelona city	La Lali Jove 2017
Ciutat Vella district	Entities and collectives Barceloneta, 2018 Entities and collectives Old Quarter, 2018 Entities and collectives Gothic Quarter, 2018
Gràcia district	Festa Major Vila de Gràcia 2017 and 2018 (2018 was for all neighbourhoods in the district) Bonfires Vila de Gràcia 2018
Sant Andreu district	Festa Major Sant Andreu Palomar 2016, 2017 and 2018 Festa Major Sagrera 2017 and 2018 Festa Major Navas 2017 Festa Major Congrés 2017 and 2018 Festa Major Indians 2017 and 2018 Festa Major Trinitat Nova 2017 and 2018 Festa Major Baró de Viver 2018
Sant Martí district	Entities and collectives La Verneda, 2017

Sants-Montjuïc district	Festa Major Sants 2018
Sarrià-Sant Gervasi district	Entities and collectives of all neighbourhoods in the district, 2017 and 2018
Barberà del Vallès	Festa Major Barberà del Vallès, 2018
Caldes de Montbui	Entities and collectives Caldes, 2018
Premià de Dalt	Entities and collectives Premià de Dalt, 2018
Cervera	Entities and collectives Cervera, 2018
Malgrat de Mar	Entities and collectives Malgrat, 2018

In parallel, we have also begun a collaboration with **Barcelona District Council's Department of Municipal Policies - Office for Feminism and LGBTI Affairs** to provide support to different municipalities in the province in drawing up **action protocols for dealing with acts of sexual aggression in public leisure venues and zones**. This means that 2018 will already be the second consecutive year that, with the support of **Barcelona District Council**, we are able to develop these processes of community building towards the prevention of sexual violence in different districts. In 2017, we carried out this work with the municipalities of **Barberà del Vallès**, **Manresa** and **El Vallès Occidental County Council**, and this year we have launched the processes with the municipalities of **Badalona** and **Vilafranca del Penedès**.

## 2. Changing perceptions: training prior to the festivities

We are clear that to succeed in breaking and transforming a patriarchal structure rooted so profoundly at all levels, it is necessary to overturn it completely. And to achieve this, the training that we do with the entities and collectives that organise the festive activities in their neighbourhoods and municipalities is essential. The training is one of the indispensable activities that needs to be carried out in order to raise awareness on and prevent sexual violence in festive contexts. In fact, we consider training to be one of the key tools for achieving a change in social reality.

In the majority of interventions that we have carried out within the context of festes majors or other festive activities, prior training has been provided; when this has not occurred, it has usually been because the request for us to be involved with the festa major was very last-minute meaning there was not enough time beforehand, and on other occasions owing to a lack of funding, or occasionally, for both reasons at

the same time. It is necessary to continue to advance in order to highlight even further that the work being done in festive spaces to prevent sexual violence goes far beyond the campaign in the festive zone itself. It is essential to devote resources and efforts to bring about actions that work more towards the “transformation of social reality” through the “transformation of the imaginaries imposed on people”. It is for this reason that prior training plays a key role in this matter.

It is also, therefore, highly important that in any intervention we are considering carrying out and in any “protocol”, different training and activities to raise awareness on sexual violence should be consolidated throughout the entire year, where the participation and engagement of the community is achieved. The more the community has greater awareness and the greater the role it plays, the more feasible it will be to carry out preventative actions.

During training, we have observed how the entities and collectives need to play a lead role in driving the preventative actions against sexist violence, prioritising this issue. They have to make it their own. This responsibility shouldn't fall uniquely on an external unit of 2 or 4 professionals in a Punt Lila and/or pairs of circulating professionals, but has to be a shared responsibility.

On the other hand, whilst it is clear that making the campaign more visible during the festive event is important, other factors are too, such as reviewing all the elements that form part of the festivity from a feminist viewpoint, understanding that the actual festive event is not only the space where the festivity takes place but also all the surrounding areas and routes back home, etc. For this reason, the campaign needs to be built on robust foundations, and these can be achieved through the empowerment of people, through a change in perception, through giving greater prominence to the violence that women and non-hete-

nonnormative individuals suffer, through community responsibility and action and through political commitment.

### **For the fact of being a woman...**

Of the different aspects which we reflect upon in the training work done to raise awareness and to prevent sexual violence, there is one that seems to us particularly worth sharing: the social construction of gender.

During training, we work using an experience-based dynamic where people attending are asked to explain what messages they have received throughout their lives (and continue to receive) for the fact of being read as a woman. We ask the men the same too, to be able to reflect on how society wants to “construct them as men” with these messages.

It is very interesting to see how we have experienced and experience these messages, how we have assimilated them, how they have conditioned our way of expressing ourselves, or relating to others, our way of dressing, our interests, our attitudes and aptitudes, our way of experiencing sexuality, etc. These are the gender mandates, what is expected of us, what the patriarchal system says about being “a man” or being “a woman”.

The reflections and discussions that arise by using this activity bring the persons attending the training session face to face with one of the sources of gender violence: the social construction of gender. These are moments in the training that, especially when the attendees have never really thought about the issue in the past, bring up a range of reactions, feelings and emotions that sometimes need support... There are blocks, guilt, anger, denial, surprise, etc.

People in the training sessions are usually aged from approximately 21 to over 70. “Curiously” the messages they have received throughout their lives, each and every one, have been more or less the same, although yes, the manner has changed. At first sight it seems that “we have progressed”, we have moved on from “you can’t go out at night” to “don’t come back alone”... “*Oooh young lady*”, a woman at one of the sessions said a little while ago, “*at least you girls can go out - me at home, all quiet: ‘the honest women at home, not at the party’ my mother used to say to me*”. But for anyone who thinks that things have changed, really, in this example, what is the underlying message after three generations? In the end, it’s not that different from “don’t come home alone”, is it? The mechanism of control and domination of women continues to be the same, in different clothing, but the same: the patriarchal system. For this reason, the value of intergenerationality in the training sessions and the richness this brings to the local arena should therefore be highlighted.

So, how are we being educated (and are we educating) and socialising for the system of inequalities and associated violence to be able to continue to be so alive? It is clear that sexual violence crosses and penetrates all levels of society, from how we educate and socialise “boys” and “girls” to the discourses that are presented to us in films, songs, TV series, pornography, the media, etc. and also, unfortunately, in justice, as we see in the majority of court rulings.

As Kate Millett told us, male gender identity is constructed as a rejection of the female, and awareness of this identity is acquired in the first years of childhood. Boys from a young age learn to disparage and devalue the activities of “girls”, to use sexist insults, to not express their feelings in order to behave “like a man” (“because boys don’t cry...”), to consider that girls are weaker, they’re not resilient, are silly, etc. And of course, not



all families and persons responsible for the child's education would view these attitudes as sexist, and even less think that this behaviour based on superiority could turn violent.

And so the first thing we do in the training sessions is this: we don't start with theoretical concepts, but rather we go through an entire experience-based process of deconstruction and de-naturalisation of what is considered the patriarchal construct of "female" (vulnerable, weak, sentimental, having a natural disposition towards raising children, being caring, doing housework, gentle, discrete, made for motherhood, etc.) and what is considered the patriarchal construct of "male" (strong, brave, impulsive, not being emotional, intrepid, risk-takers, determined, competitive, self-sufficient, etc.). We also reflect on how the roles and characteristics considered male have more value socially than those considered female, here finding ourselves facing the structural source of sexism.

As part of the training, we then continue to talk about privileges. The objective of this part is to enable attendees to be conscious of them and question them, and also to be conscious of the forms of oppression and see how these intertwine. We reflect on how patriarchal ideologies not only affect women by relegating them to a level of inferiority in most areas, but that they also restrict men, regardless of their privileged status, as men are obliged to relinquish certain behaviours, roles and characteristics "that belong to women" and thereby highlight even more their differences from them, progressively widening the gap between women and men. Moreover, this same system justifies the negative reactions observed towards whoever does not conform to it, thereby ensuring the status quo.

Having reached this point in the training session we then introduce the legal framework and specific concepts, and also provide information on questions and clarify any queries that

have arisen relating to the action protocol to be followed during the intervention. We also do a review of the elements that comprise a festive event and how these should be for it to be devised from a gender and feminist perspective. On this point, it must be made quite clear that this review cannot be done, nor a protocol applied, nor difficult legal aspects broached or issues concerning a conceptual framework on sexual assault and sexist violence understood without having first embarked on an awareness-raising drive. In other words, a good approach to tackling acts of sexual violence in festive zones cannot be guaranteed if workers from the entities and collectives that will be in charge have not been made fully aware of what sexual violence is, don't understand that it is structural and that the main cause is sexism that violates the rights of women and persons with non-hegemonic sexual and gender identities to live their sexuality, their space and their life with freedom and autonomy.

Here it should be stressed that it is important that not only the entities and collectives should undergo training, but also all the actors involved in the organisation and execution of the festive event, whether these be private security, bar staff (if these are outsourced to companies), civic agents who will be at the festivity giving out information, etc.

### 3. Because we are stronger together! Community work.

“We are stronger together!” is not only one of the most popular feminist slogans and cries that is most heard round the streets on 25th November and 8th March, or in rallies condemning an episode of sexual violence, it is, in fact, one of the main thrusts of the work of this project, often cooking away on a slow burner.

**It is essential that we work together for social and cultural transformation.** And when we say together, we are referring to all areas: organisations and the community fabric and also administrations, the competent government institutions and departments, security services, the educational system, the legal system, etc.

Over the course of this project, the different experiences accumulated have enabled us to observe the difference in the quality and final impact of the intervention with regard to the number of actors involved (and their degree of engagement) in the process of devising festivities that are non-discriminatory and free of se-

xist violence. It is therefore **highly important that coordinated action is provided** from administrations, entities and collectives from the district and other actors that are participating in the organisation of the activities, police bodies, private security, civic agents and other social actors involved in the festivity, on healthcare and social circuits, etc. and ensure that all parties have the same standpoint in terms of the prevention of sexual violence and devising the festive event (and the districts) from the perspective of feminisms. This is a slow process – it cannot be hurried – and one that is developed by the community, that should always be based on drawing up a protocol for the prevention of sexual and sexist violence in the public space.

But it is also clear to us that each district is different, that we are working from highly diverse social realities in terms of raising awareness on sexual violence, and the quality and intensity of relations between the administration and the associative fabric. It is taking into account these distinctive characteristics that we need to fit in and provide support for the process in accordance with the maturity and willingness of the different actors involved and the past record of earlier relationships. This means that **the pace cannot be set externally** (as in any support process), but that it **has to be flexible and that actions cannot be proposed for which the district still does not feel ready**. We see the objective clearly, but the way in which we get there will always be different. We all want 100%, but we cannot demand it occurs in one fell swoop in a district that is only just starting work relating to the prevention of sexist violence in festive spaces.

We have also found differences in relation to the point where this process begins. This also involves flexibility (and an assessment on whether to do the intervention or not) on our part as sometimes this path starts with the most visible part – locating a Punt Lila in the festa major for example, as a first action relating to the prevention of sexual violence – but it is not always

the most transformative (e.g. as would be the training of different entities and collectives).

It is therefore as important in this process of support to respect the moment in time where the district finds itself in regard to its degree of maturity on the prevention of sexual violence, as to **ensure that the following year we don't find ourselves with the same difficulties and shortcomings**. This support, therefore, **should go hand in hand with a process of evaluation and review** where the objectives to be achieved in the next intervention are set out, and also to present the municipality or district a document-guide with the goals to succeed in achieving more over the long term gradually, always noting the need to draw up a specific protocol.



Festa Major del Prat 2017 (2)

In connection with the previous paragraph, as **methods and tools for evaluation and monitoring** we use the final report that



Festa Major del Prat 2017 (2)

is presented once the intervention has finished, the subsequent evaluation meetings with the actors involved where the report presented is talked about in terms of the intervention's impact plus the recommendations and suggestions

for improvement that are included in it, and the document-guide that we mentioned before, where the goals to be achieved in the medium and long term are set out. This will be used, on the one hand, by us as guidelines for monitoring the process and, on the other, as a means of self-evaluation for the districts themselves.

Once the interventions are finished, the team that comprised the specific unit also draws up an evaluation of it. This includes aspects relating to the festive activity itself (location of the activity, coordination with other actors, suitability of the materials and other elements such as the Punt Lila, identification of workers, etc.), aspects that are included in the final report, internal work aspects on how successful coordination was, and appraising other factors that permit us to evaluate our intervention and relationship as an entity with regard to the team and gradually include aspects for improvement and attention.

To round off, we would once again like to highlight the **importance and effectiveness of having the entities and collectives included in this process of building and transformation right from the very start**. This is for obvious reasons, although especially because without them there would not be any real transformation. And on this point we would particularly like to underscore the work done earlier (and that continues to be done)

in the different districts by feminist entities and collectives as pioneers of this revolution. For decades they have been fighting so that public festive spaces can be spaces of freedom, where people can relate to one another in a consensual manner and where acts of sexual aggression are not tolerated. We consider it essential to have the collaboration of, and establish synergies with, feminist collectives from the district in acknowledgment of their theoretical and practical expertise.

Our experience in this regard has shown us that in processes where these alliances are possible, such as is the case of Gràcia or Barberà del Vallès to give two examples, the results are more positive and the intervention achieves greater impact. Furthermore, this collaboration should not be restricted to only one-off festive events – no longer being short-term actions – but ones that should be consolidated in a slow building process with long-term strategies, in the creation of work groups where the different political, social and security actors, etc. are involved. This is when we can start to talk about achieving the goal we want: to generate new logics of power so that social and cultural transformations are seen to materialise and structural changes no longer appear to us to be a distant utopia.

*“We will continue to occupy the nights to create safer spaces. And not only beneath a marquee, but at any time. We want to stop suffering acts of aggression, stop hearing accounts that fill us with anger. It’s not bad luck when it happens to you: it’s violence. It’s as easy as making it clear that if they touch one they touch us all, that we remain vigilant, that we won’t allow any form of aggression to go without a response. It’s as simple as a look that says “I’m here if you need me”. And we will continue to insist that the different actors take responsibility for this violence: the perpetrators in the first instance, but also the venues, the people who organise the festivities, even those who design the public space, transport, etc. Because the cynical lament about what could be prevented if you didn’t look the other way is now just tiring”. Cjas Team*

## THREE EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Gràcia district

- **Process of community building for the prevention of sexist violence** in the Gràcia district, begun and promoted by the district's Women's Ministry in May 2017, still active to this day and involving actors from different areas (technical and political team from the district, Circuit Contra la Violència Masclista de Barcelona (Barcelona Circuit against Sexual Violence); Feministes de Gràcia (FVG) (Gràcia Feminists); Espai Jove la Fontana (La Fontana Young People's Centre); and the Associació-Cjas).
- Permanent **work group** for the prevention of sexist violence that meets several times a year.
- **Specific protocol for the prevention of sexist violence in festive spaces**, drawn up by the work group and using as a base the protocol of the feminist collectives, promoted by the Feministes de Gràcia (FVG).
- **Training** for entities and collectives in the district jointly and at different times during the year, run by Feministes de Gràcia (FVG) and the Associació-Cjas.
- Creation of a **guide to support organisations** in devising festivities with a gender perspective.
- **Preventative and awareness-raising actions** on sexual violence **in all neighbourhoods in the district** in the context of festes majors.
- **Professional team** to manage the Punt Lila in the district and/or pairs of circulating professionals round the Vila de Gràcia Festa Major and the Bonfire Festival, with permanent coordination with the self-managed spaces.
- **Gradual incorporation of aspects that take gender perspective into account** in the district during the festivities. For example, in 2018 a review of the number and alteration of the siting of the toilets for the festa major, making a study of dark areas and the inclusion of posters with relevant information to ensure safer routes, such as, for example, information on public transport (location and timetable), location of toilets, where streets are, etc.



Barberà del Vallès

Devising a **Municipal Protocol for the prevention of sexual violence in public leisure zones** (process supported by the Associació-Cjas and with the support of Barcelona District Council) that brings together a series of tools to reduce the impunity of episodes of sexual violence in public spaces, and also **devising a specific protocol for festivities and leisure zones to be free of sexual violence**, based on the protocol developed in 2016 by the KDB feminist collective (Kol·lectiu de Dones de Barberà). The protocol was a **participatory process of community building that had a core work group and a technical committee** formed of persons from different areas of the city council, such as the Department of Territory and the Environment, the Offices of Gender Politics, Culture, Youth and Communication, the Mayor's Office and Local Police, and also the Mossos d'Esquadra and representatives from women's and youth entities from the municipality.

- **Targeted training and professional team** to manage the Punt Lila and pairs of circulating professionals at the Festa Major Barberà del Vallès run by the Associació-Cjas.

**Other gender policies of the municipality in operation:**

- Plan for Gender Equality for Citizens.
- Council's Internal Plan for Gender Equality.
- Protocol for Sexual Harassment and harassment on the grounds of gender.
- Protocol for an integral approach to sexual violence within the couple.

Diverse awareness-raising and coeducational activities throughout the entire year.

Also noteworthy is the **declaration of the municipality as a Feminist City** (October 2017) that involves a commitment to applying the gender perspective when shaping all public policies and the **creation of an overseeing participatory body** to guarantee the principles that define gender equity and help create an agreement for its attainment, and also other measures to advance the application of feminist policies such as devising the "**Local Agreement for Feminism**", that should include agreements covering multiple areas (education, communication and advertising, the use of public spaces and facilities, mobility and housing policies, etc.).

## Primavera Sound

- Adhesion to the “NO callem” protocol (“We won’t keep quiet”) drawn up by Barcelona City Council specifically for night-time leisure venues and festivals.
- Prior training run by the professionals that developed the protocol, directed at people in charge of the organisation and other actors present in the running of the festival.
- Prior to the intervention, adaptation of the specific intervention protocol and the action and referral circuit in the same festival.
- Associació-Cjas professional team, specifically in place for the prevention of sexual violence for the duration of the festival, daytime and night-time (Punt Lila and three pairs of circulating professionals at all times - in total 17 professionals).
- Permanent coordination and integration of the professionals at the Punt Lila and the pairs of circulating professionals with the other key actors of the Festival Protocol (private security, healthcare services, Festival organisers).
- Permanent coordination of those responsible for the organisation of the festival with the person responsible for coordination from the Cjas Team.

## 4. What isn't spoken about doesn't exist: making violence in leisure zones visible

In all the interventions we have carried out directly in the various festive and leisure zones, here at the Association of Sexual and Reproductive Rights-CJAS we have kept a record where we compile an anonymous list of all the situations of sexual violence that have been reported to us via the different Punts Liles and the pairs of circulating professionals, as well as situations of violence that the team have detected directly. These latter are situations where some type of intervention was made as the person or persons assaulted requested our collaboration to deal with the act of aggression.

Also included are situations of violence detected by entities and collectives in the zones where the organisers of the festive event also recorded this data. In this context, the coordination and collaboration between the different actors involved in the festivities is a vital element. It is, usually, during the training prior

to the event when the profile of the definitive action protocol is being finalised that these agreements between the different entities and ourselves are established.

Thus, attempts are always made to get the event organisers to develop “protocol leaders” in the bars. The idea is to be able to guarantee that some of the individuals who organised the event ensure that this preventative feature is applied in a targeted manner and can transmit what they have learned during training. It is also important that they inform other organisation members about the action protocol and that these should be the people who centralise all the information if acts of aggression occur and that they coordinate with us. Should there be alternative spaces that have already for years been applying their own protocols and include this figure, we also propose that this collaboration should exist in order to be able to jointly enhance the visibility of all the acts of aggression detected and reported during the festivities, therefore having greater impact.

This is only a small part of the reality but we believe that it is very useful (and a responsibility on our part) to share it and thereby contribute with this publication to shining a light on male violence and denouncing it, especially sexual violence, in festive and leisure zones: both violence that everyone “sees and recognises” and also violence that is made invisible and normalised through the social norms that govern us and perpetuate it.

*A 17-year-old girl told us at the end of one of the nights during the intervention: “I’ve had my bum touched more than 10 times tonight. It’s normal here... I know that if I go out in this zone it’ll happen to me. At least I haven’t been raped.”*

We have wanted to make a small fragmented observation taken from our experience whilst **participating in 29 festive zones, where we spent 118 days, dedicated 790 hours of direct**

**intervention, with 20 Punts Liles and 26 pairs of circulating professionals...** just like when someone holds a magnifying glass up to a photo at a specific moment in time. Without being representative, these figures correspond to festive zones in both Barcelona city as well as other municipalities in the province, in the period from September 2016 to May 2018.

We will begin by showing a table with the **typologies and manifestations of violence** that have been reported to us or that we have detected **in the different festive zones**. We have made a distinction between acts of aggression that occurred in festive zones where we intervened directly with Punts Liles and/or pairs of circulating professionals (assaults in the present) and acts of aggression that were reported to us but that occurred in other festive contexts where there was no direct intervention by ourselves (assaults in the past), as this is how we include them in our records.

We show them in a differentiated form also because the action we are able to take is very different in each case. When an act of aggression reported to us has taken place in the past, in another festive event where we were not present or in any other arena in a non-festive context, what we offer the person is a **space for listening**, where they are told about different courses of action and possible responses we could offer to deal with these situations, and if necessary, an assessment is made and/or information provided on specialist services and resources. On the other hand, when we talk about festive zones where we are operating the preventative unit (Punt Lila and/or pairs of circulating professionals), many of these acts of violence **have also involved direct action by our team at the time of the aggression**.

ASSAULTS IN THE PRESENT that occur during the festive event where we are participating		ASSAULTS IN THE PAST that are reported to us but have occur- red in the past at other festive events	
Manifestation of violence	No. assaults	Manifestation of violence	No. assaults
<i>constant staring, invasi- on of space, being cor- nered and/or followed</i>	45	<i>constant staring, invasi- on of space, being cor- nered and/or followed</i>	2
<i>offensive, degrading comments, insults and/ or humiliation</i>	37	<i>offensive, degrading comments, insults and/ or humiliation</i>	4
<i>sexual comments and/or gestures</i>	19	<i>sexual comments and/or gestures</i>	2
<i>exhibitionism</i>	4	<i>exhibitionism</i>	0
<i>insisting on performing some request</i>	13	<i>insisting on performing some request</i>	3
<i>brushing against the per- son and touching without consent</i>	42	<i>brushing against the person and touching without consent</i>	3
<i>hitting and/or shoving</i>	6	<i>hitting and/or shoving</i>	0
<i>physical assault</i>	10	<i>physical assault</i>	2
<i>attempted rape</i>	0	<i>attempted rape</i>	2
<i>sexual assault with penetration</i>	2	<i>sexual assault with penetration</i>	0

In all these acts of aggression, 196 in total, **where it occurred** was also recorded. In these specific cases, 101 acts of aggres-

sion took place at the festive event itself or in the zone where the festive event was taking place, 32 were en route to or from the event, and 63 were in the vicinity of the festive event. Also taken into consideration was **who had suffered the assault**, and here we noted that 193 of these reported or detected assaults were against women and 3 of the assaults were in relation to the sexual orientation, gender expression or identity of the person.

During the interventions, apart from the typology or manifestation of the act of violence and who suffered it, **who the assault was committed by** was also recorded. Although this data is unrepresentative and only responds to part of our interventions, we believe we have highly interesting interpretations to offer. The majority of the assaults reported to us in our interventions were by unknown persons, alone or in a group. Overlooking the contradictory effect that this could have on a first reading, the fact that the majority of sexual violence is committed by unknown persons leads us once again to the issue about the **difficulty of identifying acts of sexual violence when these occur within the context of an emotional relationship or one of trust. This has, historically, been one of the situations that has remained the most invisible.** In fact, the myth of the “unknown rapist” has often been nurtured as this is what society can digest most easily. That person with mental issues who you can’t quite put a name or face to, and who can never be you or anyone around you. There are many other myths surrounding sexual violence that socially still have not been stamped out and that involve blaming the assaulted woman and taking responsibility away from the perpetrator: “alcohol is the cause of rape”, “if you dress in a provocative manner don’t be surprised when a man tries to flirt with you”, “if they assault you while you’re drunk, it’s because you deserve it”, “a woman that has had several sexual partners has less credibility if she reports a sexual assault”, etc. These myths are built around a series of stereotypes defined by the patriarchal system that establish

how the behaviour of women and men should be. The system sustains these, and culture, the media, sexist socialisation, the absence of public policies to fight sexual violence, etc. are perpetually feeding them.

If the general belief, therefore, is that these assaults are performed by strangers... *“It’s normal that I think they won’t believe me, that they will doubt me, judge me if I report or explain that it was my partner, a friend or a colleague from college or work who perpetrated the assault”*. We consequently believe that when the act of violence has been perpetrated by a known person, it is very seldom disclosed in the Punts Liles, something similar to what happens in other places where women can report an assault. There could be many reason for this: it: for being unprotected, for the complicity of the system with the perpetrators, for the difficulty in the identification of sexual violence, for that of being doubted... This is a basic observation to bear in



Stand La Mercè 2017 (imatge extreta de la web de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona)



mind when talking about this new wave where all councils want to have their Punt Lila at the festa major, as this can definitely be the starting point but should never be the only intervention carried out in order to make progress in the eradication of gender violence. We therefore want to once again highlight that these interventions must form part of a set of public policies that have this eradication as their sole objective.

On the other hand, at both the Punts Liles and to the pairs of circulating professionals, episodes of sexual violence are often reported that have taken place or are taking place in **an arena different to the festive context**. In the following table we reflect on the different typologies of sexist violence that have been explained to us:

Typology of violence <sup>1</sup>	No. of situations recorded
Psychological	30
Sexual	12
Economic	2
Physical	11

<sup>1</sup> Forms of sexual violence contained in article 4 of Act 5/2008 on the Right of Women to Eradicate Sexist Violence

In these 65 situations of violence that have occurred or are occurring in a context other than a festive one, in 64% of the cases the violence is perpetrated (or has been perpetrated) by the partner/current relationship or ex-partner, and in the other situations by a family member (13%), by strangers (13%) or by a friend or acquaintance (10%). In other words, in contrast to the data obtained on assaults at festive events, **87% of the assaults were perpetrated by people known to the victim.**

Also, **98% of the assaults** recorded are **assaults experienced by women and 2% are in relation to sexual orientation or gender identity or expression**. This data is also worthy of reflection, as even though the majority of protocols for the prevention of sexist violence also include in them LGBTI-phobic assaults and the Punts Liles are also spaces to deal with these, these are acts of aggression that are very seldom reported. It could be a good idea to rethink the campaigns and protocols to give greater prominence to these assaults whilst also ensuring that the professionals who are running the Punts Liles are trained to deal with sexist violence in connection with sexual, emotional and gender diversity.

After all these interventions in festive zones, one of the things that is clear to us is the need and desire of the women to disclose the assaults they have experienced, to find spaces offering trust and safety allowing them the opportunity to express and share what they have suffered which, in spite of the patriarchal system that has made these acts naturalised and legitimate, has created an underlying disquiet that has been waiting for this opportunity.

Over all these nights, we have seen how on some occasions the need to explain the episode of violence suffered was owing to the fact of requiring immediate help, to stop the assault at that moment in time or because the act of violence had just happened and the women needed a calm and safe space and someone to actively listen to them. But also, as can be seen in the table, many of the situations that they have shared with us were assaults that had happened in the past (one-off episodes or over a period of time) or that were happening at the current time but outside the festive context. On more than one occasion, the person told us that it was the first time they had ever revealed what had happened. On these occasions the forms of aggression in question were always rape, sexual assault or

sexual abuse... Hang on! Let's just stop here a minute: never before had they explained it to anyone and they're explaining it to us, in the middle of a concert or the street, at night... What's happening here? **How can it be that a person who doesn't know us at all decides to share these accounts of violence with us, accounts that have sometimes never been disclosed, in a context that on first sight would not appear to be the most ideal? Or maybe it shouldn't surprise us that much...**

As the feminist lawyer Marisa Fernández says: “Before urging women to report these acts, it is necessary to put the resources and conditions in place so that they do so”. We know that the majority of acts of sexual aggression are not reported (either judicially or via any other means). It is one of the symptoms of living in a “rape culture” that allows and legitimises the violence of men towards women, which in addition makes women responsible and blames them for the episodes of violence they suffer and that prevents recognition of the fact that sexual harassment, rape and feminicides are the consequence of a sexist society. Also, even though many specialist services deal with all types of sexist violence and provide support on different levels, the community often considers these as services that focus on healthcare and legal areas, and not so much on prevention, justice, recovery and the guarantee that there will be no repetition of the event for the women. Additionally, it is necessary to understand the process: **the identification of oneself as a woman who has been assaulted is not easy.** It is for this reason that it is also not easy in the first place to turn to a specialised service. The Punts Liles permit a closeness and reaching out to the young women who are immersed in a process of identifying the violence where, often, they find difficulty putting into words what they have experienced.

We see once again how women suffer another type of sexual violence – institutional violence – as none of the public institutions responsible are guaranteeing the application of public policies that are efficient and effective in providing assistance and protection in cases of sexist violence. And we should remember that when rights aren't guaranteed, they are violated. Furthermore, in addition to everything that we women keep quiet about in relation to violence has a toll: because that which silences us hurts us and in the end it becomes so normalised that it makes its recognition difficult. Therefore, even though it is “only for this”, so that violence doesn't remain silenced and we contribute to avoiding that “it doesn't exist” or that it is naturalised, we feel very proud to be able to provide – during the nights and days – these spaces offering support to women with active listening coming from a feminist and human rights focus that is also mindful of diversity (sexual, gender, age, cultural, etc.).

And to make clearer what types of violence we are talking about, we list below some of the situations we have detected or that women have wanted to share with us.

A group of 3 young women aged between 19 and 21 come to the Punt Lila and explain to us a situation that they have just experienced: a young male has started to follow them through the entire leisure zone, getting very close to them, and encroaching on their personal space. Seeing that the male wasn't going to stop his behaviour when they protested, they decided to go into a disco to try to divert his attention. *“We asked the security service for help but they didn't take any notice of us... We felt really unprotected”*

A group of young women of 16 years of age tell us there is a group of approximately 15 young men who have formed a barrier in the street: *“They're saying that any girls who want to pass through there have to give them a kiss”*

22-year-old woman: *“I met a young man tonight, we started kissing and suddenly he placed his hand under my clothes and tried to put his fingers into my vagina”*. When she tried to stop it and resist, he bit her neck. She shouted and her friends heard her and went to help her.

17-year-old woman: *“Two young males that I know from my neighbourhood, came up behind me, grabbed me by force and took me to a lonely, dark spot. There they started to say how I had to kiss them if I wanted them to let me go... While one held me firmly by the shoulders, the other started to touch my breasts... and my whole body”*

23-year-old woman: *“A male touched my bottom in the concert. I confronted him and pushed him. He left, but then I saw that he started to do the same to other girls, so that’s why I came to tell you here”*

A group of 14-year-old teenagers (4 females and 1 male) spoke about different situations of sexist violence that occurred at their respective colleges. The girls spoke about unwanted groping in the corridors at school, when going up the stairs, etc. *“Once we told the teachers and head... but they took no notice of us and even made some comment about if we go around dressed like this, what do we expect?”*. The boy also explained that he receives offensive comments and harassment owing to his sexual orientation and gender expression.

Two 21-year-old women: *“There’s a male in the concert who got his penis out and is dancing around rubbing himself up behind all the girls he can”*

After raising awareness amongst a group of girls, one of them came up to us alone and explained how, at 17 years of age, she had been raped at a party by a friend of hers...

*"I was conscious, I remember it all, how the boy covered my mouth so I couldn't shout out... I still often have flashbacks to it".* The girl had never told anyone about it.

24-year-old woman: *"Last night when I was going home a man of 35-40 started following me down the street asking me how much I would charge him to give him a blowjob. I started to run till I got to my car. I got in and he stood in front of the car unfastening his trousers. I started tooting and the man eventually left"*

## 5. The day of the festive event arrives. What happens in our intervention?

At this point we will try to explain how we organise ourselves – as a team – during the festive activity, what our methodological tools are and the aspects we take into account in order to adapt the intervention.

The **Punt Lila** is a point of reference at the festive event providing information and advice on sexist violence. It is a place where everyone knows they can come should they suffer any assault or need information, advice or simply a space where they can explain events and report them. It is a physical space that everyone needs to be able to locate if necessary. This is why it is important that the people attending the festive event know where it is situated, perhaps including a map with its location on posters or on the leaflets that are handed out. It is also important that it doesn't move its location should the festive event lasts more than one day, as this can confuse the public attending. It also needs to

be clearly visible, in a place where people who are at the event pass by, with its location not being too close to the stages to ensure no increased acoustic contamination that will prevent us from being able to talk to people that come to us. It is most important that its function and purpose are well identified, and that it is not confused with places offering general information on the festivity or ticket sales for the bar, for example. With regard to the structure, it must be stable (the structure shouldn't wobble) and comfortable: it has to provide a quality space that is suitable for providing information and the task of raising awareness, and it should also have a more reserved, comfortable and private space to be able to attend to people if they have suffered an assault or need a tranquil space where they can sit and talk about what has happened to them without being visually exposed to anyone passing in front of the Punt Lila.

With regard to the **pairs of circulating professionals**, we think that these couples are essential in any intervention as they act as a permanent link between the zone where people attending the event are (concert zone, area surrounding the concerts and night-time leisure venues, parks, squares, beaches, etc.), the Punt Lila and the bars. We also want to emphasise the function of the pairs of circulating professionals as being a very useful tool for the prevention of sexual assaults and raising awareness about these acts in leisure zones, especially owing to their ability to interact with many people. Whilst walking round, the pairs of circulating professionals hand out material specific to the campaign, but always take advantage of this opportunity to explain the reasoning behind the initiative, what sexual violence and sexist aggression is, what can be done if you suffer or see an act of sexual aggression, listen actively to people's experiences concerning any assaults they may have suffered and provide information on the Punt Lila and specific resources where applicable. The pairs of circulating professionals, depending on the action protocol agreed, can also intervene in the event of detecting (or in the event of it having been reported to us) an act of sexual aggression, always respecting the will of the person or persons attacked.



Their functions are fully complementary and necessary. In short, the Punt Lila is a space where an assault that is suffered or seen can be reported, and that is safe and comfortable, with professionals that know how to properly deal with these situations. It permits the attending public to know where they can go to file a report and/or receive advice on any situation related to sexual violence experienced during the same event or in other episodes of sexist violence. With the pairs of circulating professionals, the impact of raising awareness and prevention is much greater because it is not only limited to the festive zone itself, but also to the surrounding areas. They can effect a direct intervention in the event that an assault takes place and the person attacked wants our collaboration, and we make sure that routes and journeys back home are safer, as we know that these are moments that are especially vulnerable to acts of sexual violence occurring.

*“It has given me the chance to view the festive event from another perspective, to observe that which is often overlooked when you are also part of the event. You become aware of roles and mechanisms that operate in very similar ways in different contexts under one similar idea: the woman seen as a passive object at the service of man’s desire, and the mechanisms of punishment when the woman breaks with the passive role and becomes an actor giving a response” Cjas Team*

Another aspect we believe to be important in our interventions is to **keep a record of all the situations that have been reported to us or that we have detected**. This means that both the Punt Lila staff and the pairs of circulating professionals use records that identify:

- who has suffered the assault (violence towards women or for sexual orientation, gender identity or expression)

- who has perpetrated the assault
- the time and place the assault happened
- if the assault was individual or in a group (who receives it and who perpetrates it)
- the typology or manifestation of the violence (as has been seen in the table in the previous section)
- the relationship that exists between the persons involved
- if it happened now or in the past
- if the assault happened in a festive/leisure context or in another arena

Also included is whether it has been necessary to refer the person to some specialist sexual violence service or to have had to activate at that moment a unit from the established, agreed circuit (healthcare, social, police, etc.). Similarly, to understand the impact of awareness-raising, both the Punt Lila and the pairs of circulating professionals carry a record of everyone they interact with. Obviously these records are anonymous and no personal details are requested, nor are they filled out whilst we are attending the person, where we always prioritise looking directly at them and actively listening.

With the time of the intervention and the “deployment of our unit” having arrived, there are different aspects that we consider important to bear in mind. One aspect that we always insist on is the need to **begin our intervention before the festive event begins**. Why? Well because if we start when the public attending has already begun to consume alcohol and “have entered” the festive atmosphere (they’re dancing, listening to the concert, etc.), a major opportunity is lost – or is made more difficult – to be able to help prevent assaults and raise awareness, to let people know where we are, to be able to start up dialogues and reflect together, etc. In fact, we have already noted this: we have explained that we use records where we in-

clude different aspects in relation to the information, advice and interventions we carry out, and included in these is “time”. We have shown how in the first hours of the night we chiefly perform actions to raise awareness or offer advice in connection with violence from the past or that has taken place outside the festive event, and that as the night or festive event progresses, these actions reduce and move on to being primarily direct interventions dealing with acts of aggression that are taking place in the leisure zone or in the surroundings.

There are many other **characteristics or particularities of the festive zones and districts that should be borne in mind** and that require adaptability and flexibility when it comes to carrying out the intervention and designing the specific unit. In other words, whether the festive event lasts one or several days; whether the Punt Lila and the pairs of circulating professionals are there all the days or only some; whether there is only the Punt Lila or only the pairs of circulating professionals, or both; whether there are people responsible for the protocols in the bars or not; whether the protocol has arisen through a process of community building or has been developed only by the administration; whether there are other Punt Liles in the festive zone managed by other entities; whether the festive event is concentrated into one single space or square, or in various festive zones at the same time; whether it takes place in the street or a closed venue; whether it happens during the day or night; whether it is a neighbourhood festivity, a university party or large festival; whether it happens in the middle of a city or in a zone away from the urban centre (industrial estate, wasteland, etc.); the type of music and schedule; and also the consumption of alcohol and other substances; raising awareness amongst the community and social fabric... These are some examples, and there are plenty more.

All these elements and others will help define our intervention and the types of situations we encounter. We cannot go into details about all the aspects mentioned but we will give **a couple of examples.**

In some neighbourhood or municipality festes majors – especially small neighbourhoods or municipalities or those where there is a good sense of belonging and where the place people live is perceived as being safe (as everyone knows one another) – we have noted that for the very young teenage population (13 to 14 years) the festa major is the first time that their families allow them to go out at night. What we see is that they congregate in the squares and public spaces with a party mindset before the activities begin – they are usually in the streets at around 8 pm – and have promised to be at home by 11 pm or midnight. What they do is drink alcohol very quickly from the start of the evening to “make the most of their time”. We find many levels of alcohol poisoning at the beginning of the night and episodes of sexual harassment and aggression amongst this very young teenage collective, suffered by one side and perpetrated by the other, something that makes the task of raising awareness that we usually carry out during the first hours of the evening more difficult. We also often find that there is the need, especially amongst the girls, to be accompanied home by a pair of circulating professionals after having suffered an act of aggression as they are too afraid to return home alone.

Another specific situation also related to the younger population is the fact that some administrations locate the Youth Festivity in zones that are furthest away from the urban centre (“because youngsters make a lot of mess and noise”). This usually translates into places with little lighting, usually wasteland or woods, with many blind spots and corners, few passers-by, without access to public transport, few

toilets, etc. that foster the perception of being unsafe and the perfect setting for sexual violence to occur. Our working conditions in these spaces are the same, with all the difficulties that this entails for us, also being aware of the greater risk of assault owing to the fact of being in a festive space that in no way considers the gender perspective.

## The intervention doesn't end when the music ends...

Thinking that that the festive event has finished once the music stops and the lights go out is a mistake and leads us into a dangerous trap when talking about the prevention of sexual violence in leisure zones. This is a time that is particularly susceptible to assaults happening, and it is additionally a time when there are fewer eyes about to see any potential scenarios of sexual violence and other factors that it can give rise to: the people have started to leave and there are not so many left in either the zones where the festive event took place or on the streets. Organising staff are packing up and are not watching out for possible assaults, the lights are switched off and the spaces are darker, etc.

It is at this moment when it makes particularly good sense to have an external professional unit for the prevention of sexual violence in festive zones that clearly understands that the intervention needs to continue beyond the moment the concert and festive activities finish. When the music stops the people don't disappear from the area within 10 minutes, but rather leave gradually and some also hang around in the squares and streets for a fair while, talking and drinking. It is important to be able to be there at these times, that we have been given a map identifying the routes that are most frequented and the streets people normally return along back home so that the pairs of circulating professionals can be in these zones and offer to accompany

people home if necessary. It is also important to know where the back streets and darker spots with fewer people in the vicinity are, as these places are more susceptible to acts of sexual violence occurring there, and where the roaming couples would also walk.

## 6. Our team

To work in the area of sexual violence is not at all easy. All women have experienced this type of violence first-hand since a very young age. Only we know it... and how we have had to situate these experiences in our “self” to move forward. If in addition you work in this field professionally, you need to know how to see the interactions that are taking place and keep feelings arising from anything that cuts through us and penetrates us from the various manifestations of violence that we find ourselves dealing with during our interventions well under control.

This has often been one of the issues for consideration and conversation amongst ourselves, how this violence resounds within us whilst we are working, what part of me are they talking about, what silenced episode of mine has it awoken, how do I handle it, how can I support another person when I feel anger inside me, when my body also trembles...? It's not easy. We are lucky to have one another, lucky that we are a team and never feel alone, and lucky that we can share it, in more informal spaces but also provide the team of female workers professional scenarios where we can talk about the

experiences we have encountered during our nights of work and reflect on them together.

Currently, we have a regular team of 23 professionals, some of them also involved in other projects within our organisation. This team stability is highly important and gives us a great human resource pool to bring to this project. For this reason, the organisation is very mindful of different aspects that concern the team: quality working conditions, training, attending to specific requests relating to anything needed, the organisation of various meetings throughout the year to strengthen bonds and the sense of belonging within the group, monitoring and professional accompaniment in all interventions carried out, etc.

Our team is formed primarily of women, diverse women. This team that has been shaped progressively and that is involved in this project is the necessary vital element to be able to do this work and do it well. It is a team of young, trained people, with plenty of motivation and who are activists, engaged and involved in feminist collectives. Some of them have even changed tack on their professional direction as a result of their participation in this project to work on professional projects and studies directly related to gender and sexist violence: others were already involved in this work. Another important aspect to highlight about this team is its human quality, and the support network and bonds it has forged. There is no competition between the women, they look after one another, and not only during the nights they work. Each person is clear that what they do, and what they want to do, is not one specific action in a one-off event during the night, but it is rather laying their grain of sand on the path to achieving a genuine social transformation in this collective fight against gender violence.

There is no-one better than these women themselves to be able to explain it directly. Throughout this publication you have



already heard some of their reflections. Here we leave you a few more, just as they were spoken, with all the power of their words:

*“This experience has made me open my eyes, it has made me look face to face at people in the street, it has made me feel and live their views, it has stirred emotions I have experienced in what they have explained, it has empowered me with the word and the body, it has made me be more courageous when offering a response to an assault, it has made me feel part of a whole, part of a system that is not dead, a system in which women and men are aware of the symbolic and physical violence that we women suffer... With everything I have experienced, I now carry a new state within me in which I have grown and evolved for the better: I have empowered myself!”*

*“During the nights we have been able to observe interactions with other types of discrimination, such as social class or place of geographical origin. I was impacted by the microsystem that is formed between the different needs of the collectives that move around the same space, governed by economic supply and demand (leisure outlets, tourist establishments, people selling cans of beer to tourists, sex workers, taxi-bikes, etc.) and the violence that occurs between these interactions”*

*“Forming part of this project has been, to be quite honest, tough. On the one hand, the impact that it has had in different areas and festive zones is really rewarding: giving out information, preventing sexual assaults and having some influence over these, and that in addition they thank you, makes you remember all the tiredness and stress that you feel at night with a big smile. What’s more, everything that you experience in the interventions, and the closeness and immense trust placed in us by CJAS, has created a cohesion, a friendship and sense of attachment within the team that would be difficult to find in other jobs. I really couldn’t be more thankful*

*for the individual, collective and political reward that working with you has given me!"*

*"When I had the opportunity of being part of the project for the prevention of sexual violence in night-time leisure zones I felt really fortunate, but at the same time I doubted whether I knew how to deal with situations that could perhaps resonate too much with what I had experienced in the past. After more than one year being part of the team, I feel reassured and welcome amongst this group of complicit she-wolves, with clear ideas, ready to make any type of environment safe and comfortable for all women"*

*"It seems to me incredible and that I have been extremely lucky to be able to form part of this project. Not only for the fact of contributing to making systemic sexism visible and to fighting it, but also for having got to know so many people with whom I have made a very special connection: I suppose what we have in common is that we never give up! We are really eager to change things! The nights in the fight that have been the hardest are always more than compensated for with a smile or with the words of thanks of many people"*

## 7. Always growing: what have we learned during this project?

### Our methodological tools

During this period, we have had the opportunity of getting to know, discover and share how the intervention on sexual violence in public leisure zones and those run privately is. This has enabled us to identify some key learning that helps us continue to progressively define methodologies. Throughout the publication you have been able to see them. Here we provide a succinct overview to highlight those which we think are essential.

- **Involvement and commitment of the local administration.** Positive and some not-so-positive experiences confirm to us the need to have the engagement of the local administration who request our intervention. This involvement should entail sufficient time to prepare it – and therefore permit the possibility of co-building with all the actors necessary – and also the integration of activities on

sexual violence in leisure zones within a broader range of actions or strategies to raise awareness and to intervene on the issue of sexual violence in the district.

- **Association with the social and feminist fabric of the district: experience-based and intergenerational training.** Relating to the previous point, it is necessary that any intervention we make should be rooted in the associational fabric of the municipality, especially identifying which women's and/or feminist entities can and want to participate but without invading their space. Our work functions if it accompanies, nurtures and also stimulates local initiatives without seeking to substitute them, generating alliances and collaborations. One of the most rewarding examples is being able to inspire feminist and experience-based training that contributes to sowing a seed that can continue to grow in the district. The most interesting situations are those that permit a space of intergenerational dialogue (with the participation of different collectives or entities from the municipality) that, beyond the external unit they have (Punt Lila, pairs of circulating professionals, etc.), raise awareness and broaden views on sexual violence.
- **Stages of the intervention: starting before and finishing after.** We realise that the intervention in festive zones must be understood as something comprehensive, and this means identifying the zones beforehand and requirements subsequent to the festive event finishing. It is important to be actively there when the consumption of alcohol has not yet begun and the music has not started. This permits us fluid and valuable communication, and is the most effective time for performing actions to raise awareness and to provide information on who we are, where we are and what to do in the event of an assault. Similarly, when the festive event is over, as we well know, the routes home are often vulnerable environments whe-

re sexual violence may occur. These are also especially sensitive moments and when it makes more sense than ever to have on hand a professional unit and team, as the people who organise the event are packing up and are not watching what is happening in the zones around them. It is also important to consider accompanying people if necessary and to identify cases that require support when the music finishes.

- **Team training and stability.** Having a highly stable team has enabled us to ensure that the interventions are always carried out by professionals trained in the feminist model from which we work. This allows us to ensure shared professional standards that we periodically review. Each new event where we intervene permits us to live new experiences that raise some sort of conflict within us at the same time as enhancing our perception of gender violence in leisure zones.
- **Spaces of self-healing for the team.** The experiences during nights of intervention are often hard for the professionals working there. Our working tool is ourselves, and in the situations we face and in the accounts we hear, personal emotions are stirred that need addressing collectively to be able to provide a good response to demands and at the same time to look after one another. The emotional review of our work, our stereotypes, prejudices, etc. is essential to be coherent with this feminist intervention model.
- **Violence beyond the festive zone: what emerges when you listen.** We have noted from the start of this project that the Punts Liles and the interventions in festive zones in general are suitable contexts where, if we provide active listening, if we listen in a proper way, the women are able to sense an environment of trust without judgement that permits them to talk to us about other episodes of violence they have experienced (maybe beforehand or

maybe in other contexts). This aspect seems to us to be particularly important if we consider the difficulties that often exist for women, especially young women, to reach out to services that specialise in violence. It is, therefore a privileged space of detection and intervention. We need to go to wherever they are.

- **Ability to adapt to different environments.** Not all festive zones are the same and therefore require different interventions. We consider it fundamental to find the right means to adapt ourselves to the different spaces: the size of the event, the type of music, the location of the Punt Lila, the duration of the event, if it is open or closed, day or night, how the consumption of drugs and/or alcohol is... All these factors and others make each intervention different and it is important to have highly flexible criteria that permit us to adapt to the requirements of each event.

## Room for improvement to succeed in achieving feminist festive zones.

What we have learned has also permitted us to identify some areas that require improvement in order to have festivities that are built on the gender and feminist perspective.

- **Two aspects of training that are linked but that are different.** Our interventions are able to be effective in so far as everyone participating in them believes in them. This involves professionalised prior training on gender and sexist aggressions which all the actors involved in the festive event attend. Unfortunately, gender training has a highly relevant experience-based element that requires an essential minimum amount of time to be implemented and another to digest it, to internalise it and to be able to incorporate it into practice. It is fundamental and, to a large extent, cannot be conceived, designed and imple-

mented just a few days before the intervention. It must be understood that it will be of use throughout the whole year (and not just for the festive event) and for subsequent years. This essential training should be defined during the process of designing the protocol where commitments and the level of involvement must be established. It needs to be in-depth work that matures slowly, similar, for example, to training capsules.

- There is a highly-important second aspect that the intervention performs in festive zones that does not require so much forward-planning and, in fact, requires a certain proximity in time to the festive event itself. This training has to do with the organisation of the event and with the deployment of the protocol during both the specific event and in general.
- These can be two types of training that are separable in time but where one makes no sense without the other. It would be useful, therefore, to design innovative formulas to increase the commitment of all areas to carry them out.
- **Essential training and inclusion of the gender perspective by actors who are intervening in the festive event: how this translates into specific aspects.** The importance of this training and the heightened awareness that results from it will be translated into specific aspects that will greatly improve the quality of the intervention and will go on to achieve, as more aspects are considered, the overriding goal of all the measures (feminist spaces, with gender perspective, free of violence, non-discriminatory, etc.). Some concrete examples amongst many others would be: not locating the festive spaces very far from urban centres (this increases the danger of assault en route), reviewing the festive programme and the messages given out at different levels (posters, campaign image, announcement language and content, etc.), guaranteeing the quality of the space offering attention (pri-

vacy, comfort, away from the music, etc.), guaranteeing that the private security in charge of patrolling the festive zone has codes and standards aligned with ours on what constitutes sexual assault, etc.

- **Have the protocol as a reference framework.** On the one hand, the action protocol needs to be present in all the interventions that are carried out by all the actors involved. It is necessary to be fully familiar with it and also to ensure the level of engagement with it of all parties so as to not undermine it in any of the interventions. On the other hand, we once again insist on the need to fit all these actions within the framework of a protocol for the prevention of sexist violence in the public and leisure zones in the district.
- **Coordinated action is necessary.** The coordinated work of all the actors is fundamental and is that which permits making a decision on the intervention and making it more useful. Public and private security professionals, bar staff, and also people from the council who are participating in the execution must be kept abreast of the steps to follow in each instance, which are the zones for protection, the requirements for referral if necessary, the messages that need to be given out and those that should be avoided, etc.

Up to this point, some of our experiences and learning on this venture have already lasted more than two years. When it started with that stand at the La Mercè Festival not even ourselves imagined that it would lead us on to where we are now.

We have grown and want to continue to grow. We will continue working so we can enjoy and live in public spaces in freedom, having legal rights, being agents and owners of our own bodies, our affections, desires and pleasures. We want to speak loud and clear. Because whoever wants us at home, quiet and silenced, will have us in the streets and in the squares, ready



to fight and organised. We will continue working to denaturalise sexual violence and to make it more visible, and to unmask sexism, pushing forward policies that are born from our own ideas, standards, strategies, principles and with our own language. Because, in short, we want ourselves to be free, living dignified lives.

*“The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house”*

Audre Lorde



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