



Education Institute

Strategies to Fight Religious Fundamentalisms

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We would like to dedicate this document to the memory of Walter Trochez, Honduran activist assassinated in December 2009. Walter took part in this institute, he made us feel enthusiastic, with energy and hope in our soul. His assassination filled us with anger, impotence, and marks our different paths with single pain. With the memory of this institute, we wish to honor him.



¿How to elude, and also do dig, the generic determination that the language imposes – not only over the individuals and their possibilities of finding themselves in the language, but also over our way of thinking and naming the world? One of the possible strategies is the one we have put in place when writing this memory, by using the asterisc (). We have adopted this text strategy in three specific situations: in the gendered plural words, when naming an individual whose gender identity is ignored and for those to whom we do not want to assign any gender in advance, and when naming an individual who does not identify themselves in either option of the male-female binarism. We have chosen the asterisc due to a number of reasons. The sign (@) is often read as “both male and female”. The letter x, also utilized for the same purpose, may be confused as assigning an intersex person, as it has been utilized in some parts of the text. We are fond of the asterisc, in turn, because of its graphic representation, as it almost hangs over the phrase, as a star over the horizon or a runaway point towards somewhere. Obviously, the asterisc cannot be pronounced – and we are fond of that too, as however it allows us to express, by making the language trip over the tongue, the status of those whose gender we ignore.
(Memory of the Institute on Transgender and Intersex people, 2005. Text by Mauro Cabral)

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1. Introduction

IGLHRC in Latin America and the Caribbean

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) is a non-governmental organization founded in 1990 in San Francisco, USA. At present, its main office is located in New York, USA and the office for the Latin American and the Caribbean program is in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

IGLHRC Program for Latin America and the Caribbean does not intend to replace local, domestic, regional or international initiatives. We would not be able to do that, even if we wanted to, because we do not have sufficient resources. But the most important thing is: it is not our interest. We believe that if the organizations of a given city (or country, or region) want to work together, it is up to them to be united, to propose their agendas and take them forward. Occasionally, we may bring some information or disseminate what that network is doing, or exchange ideas, or cooperate in the way it may seem more appropriate to the network or to ourselves. Or not to join in at all, if it does not fit in our working priorities and/or to the organizations taking part in such network it seems that our involvement would not bring them anything interesting. We have examples of all these situations and for us it is absolutely all right that they are so.

Since its very beginning, ILGHRC Program for Latin America and the Caribbean has learned a few things. One fundamental point is that we are not the only nor the main tool of the LGBTI movements in the region. We are just a group of 3 people interested in working with sexual rights, within the concept of human rights, with an emphasis on issues that affect LGBTI people – but not limited to that. We cannot deal with all the issues that fall into sexual rights, nor all the issues that affect LGTBI people. We have chosen some topics, some countries, some projects, and we take care of them. That does not mean that the topics, countries or projects on which we do not work are not interesting, or urgent, or valuable. Our choice expresses that we are quite aware of our limited resources, both material and human, and we would rather choose little and do it well than intend a lot and do it badly. We also know that what we do not do certainly somebody else will do, if it is important to be done. Fortunately, there are many organizations in the region working on these issues at this time, as well as other international human rights organizations (such as Amnesty) which ten years ago didn't want to even hear about LGBTI cases and today they are crucial allies of the LGBTI movements in most countries.

WHAT DOES IGLHRC DO IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- a. Our program considers that an approach that can be done to the movements is to circulate information. We prepare materials that we strive to be of good quality and we distribute them absolutely free of charge and with no requirements other than request them, no matter if it is an organization or an individual. Concerning this, disseminating information, we have no restriction at all: we have sent books to people whose names we ignore, who simply emailed us with a nickname and a hotmail address. And we will continue to do that because we are aware of the difficulties that many LGBT people go through to lead their lives out of the closet and it seems to us that these people are those who most need information. We have also included in this chapter the circulation of information on international events of interest to the LGBTI movements and how to gain access to them.
- b. We also disseminate original documents that are being produced in the region, on issues of human rights and sexual orientation/gender identity. This distribution is also limitless and free of charge (we have a lot of people who do not have Internet access to whom we send material through conventional mail). This seems important to us in order

to disseminate the thought of the groups and to build a theoretical collection produced by ourselves in the region. We are pleased to receive any material for this project, from anyone or any organization.

- c. We disclose Alert Actions involving cases of human rights violations.

Here, once more, we are very aware of our limitations:

- We do not become aware of every single case that takes place.
 - We do not take care of all cases that are happening, for a number of reasons.
 - We are not the decisive element to resolve the case but only an element of pressure. It is always the local groups who stand up, who interview the authorities, who organize marches, etc., who have more possibilities of putting up pressure. We do the best follow-up we can; sometimes the letters coming from different countries make an impression on the authorities and influence the case in a positive way, sometimes they are used as scrap paper. In all cases, it is worthwhile to make an attempt, of course.
- d. And then we have what we call our “special projects”. In this case, it is a specific action, on a given subject, for what we also select specific partners. Criteria according to which we select the subjects and partners in these projects are varied, and the main criteria include:

- Our interest on the subject
 - Our belief that working on this subject will result, in a broad sense, in great acknowledgement on international level of the sexual rights, particularly the aspects that affect LGBT people.
 - That we have tangible possibilities of working on that subject.
 - That we know organizations and people with which/whom we are able to work together for that project.
- Our Institutes may be included within this range of work.
- e. In coalition with organizations, networks and campaigns in the region, or in the world, we also work in several projects such as (mention a few of them), the Campaign for and Inter American Convention on Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights, the World Social Forum and its various regional expressions and in making the LGBT issues visible within the Human Rights System both of United Nations and the Inter-American Commission.

Latin American Network of Catholics for a Choice

The Latin American Network of Catholics for a Choice - CDD/AL – is an independent movement of Catholic people committed to seeking social justice and the change of cultural and religious patterns currently in force in our societies. We promote women's rights, especially those associated with human sexuality and reproduction.

We struggle for gender equity and for the citizenship of women both in society and inside the Churches. We are in a process of collective construction, working in a democratic and participative way.

In the Latin American Network, ten groups are articulated and spread among nine countries, as follows:

- CDD – Argentina:
- CDD/Buenos Aires
- CDD / Cordoba
- CDD – Brazil
- CDD – Mexico
- CDD – Chile
- CDD – Bolivia
- CDD – Colombia
- CDD – Nicaragua
- CDD – El Salvador
- CDD – Paraguay

The actions currently carried out by the Latin American network include:

- The publication of the Revista Conciencia (Consciousness magazine), distributed free of charge in Latin America with 10,000 copies, 8,000 international subscribers, and also approximately 2,000 copies are distributed in domestic and international events nacionales. In addition,

CDD/Mexico prints 5,000 additional copies to cover their own subscriptions.

- Regional campaigns are conducted and articulated such as the September 28th Campaign for the depenalization of abortion in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Campaign for an Inter American Convention on Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights, the Campaigning Condoms for Life, the Campaign against Fundamentalisms.
- Public activities of impact are carried out on dates of the feminist calendar.
- Seminars and workshops on ethic issues concerning human reproduction and sexuality and other relevant subjects, our proposal in each country and on the regional level.
- Dissemination of ideas from our website.
- Follow-up of initiatives arising from groups that are already members of the network.
- Presence in multiple regional events with proposals and permanent solidarity toward the women's movement throughout the region.
- Active presence in international scenarios such as United Nations, CSW, OAS, CEPAL and others associated with the network's action lines.
- Production of permanent documents and statements both nationally and regionally.

- Production and distribution of bibliography, primers and materials on specific subjects based on CDD viewpoint.
- Facilitation of ongoing education/training spaces for the members of the Network and (female) speakers throughout the region based on education/training seminars of our own and participation in other relevant events to build capacity for women's from the network.
- Processes of permanent CDD presence in Latin America
 - Follow-up of education/training processes for grassroots women.
 - Permanent questioning of cultural patterns that deny, make it invisible and violate the women's rights.

2. Part One: The Institute

2. Part One: The Institute

I. A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

The Project Institute arises from an evaluation of the limitations of most capacity-building courses conducted by IGLHRC – and other human rights organizations – taking place in the region and in other parts of the world.

It is for this reason that, since 2005, we have proposed an Institute aimed at providing training and which integrates all the characteristics that we deem inescapable when considering the needs of activists from the region:

- Outreach: opening the training instance to people who due to their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or due to their lack of academic background have no access to the traditional circuit of training in human rights.
- Protagonism of the subjects sexual orientation, gender identity and expression – which is not found in the traditional courses on human rights.
- An effective intervention in dismantling all kinds of hierarchies and inequalities: economic, social, ethnic and gender currently in force within the L, G, B, T, and/or I movements, and also sexual and reproductive

rights, which reproduce those found in Latin American societies in general.

- An intensive and quality training focused on acquiring both theoretical and practical skills, to enable an in-depth approach of the subjects
- Creating and opening opportunities of inter-regional encounter and communication.
- Potential liaison with other projects run by ILGHRC.
- A flexible format that every year fits the participating groups and/or the subjects that will be dealt with.

Make it available as a permanent resource for all activists from the region, whether they took part in the Institute or not, through the circulation of study guides, publication of the memories of each Institute and reference materials, etc.

The first institute by ILGHRC Latin American and the Caribbean Program was held in La Falda (Cordoba – Argentina) in October, 2005, after an expansion of the Latin American team whose purpose was to work hard on trans and intersex issue, and also to conduct institutes intended for activists. The institute for Trans and Intersex Activists was an important instance for learning and exchange. The experience is sorted out in the “Memory of the Institute for Trans and Intersex Activists”, which can be found in our website www.iglhrc.org in Spanish, Portuguese and English.

The second institute for “Lesbian and Bisexual Women from Spanish-speaking Central America and the Caribbean” was held in San Jose, Costa Rica, in May 2007 with the participation of 18 women from that region. The major axes were feminism, organizational development and HR systems. The entire document is in www.iglhrc.org also in the three languages.

Now we present the memory of this third institute, “Strategies against religious fundamentalisms” directed at lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual and intersex people.

The three institutes have a continuation: the support and guidance, (on organization, preparation of projects, and fundraising), the information, the exchange of experiences, the international bond, joint activities, etc.

There are many factors affecting Human Rights activism on behalf of lesbian, gay, trans and intersex people, that is why we would never dare to claim achievements that belong to history and to the effort made by the people, however we are aware that we have contributed, that we put our tiny grain of sand in such construction for a world free of discrimination.

As says Alejandra Esquivel, participant in the institute on “Strategies to fight religious fundamentalisms”

“It is evident that such great job of capacity-building requires a lot of coordination and logistics, but over all economic support is mainly needed. This means that they bet on us, male and female, with the trust that in future we will continue the transmission to and training

of more people, with the certainty that real activists would be trained, those who really fight for the cause, who really know their “enemies” and allies. In my own case, that’s what happened, they have created a monster full of information, arguments and regardless of their intent, strategies acquired along the course provided me with weapons and tools to face people, not only religious people but also fundamentalist people. In Costa Rica, a country where there is an official religion and it is almost compulsory to be Roman Apostolic Catholic, as reads our constitution, this capacity-building course is still more important as we face these confrontations on a daily basis.

In general, it was a very fruitful course, sharing with activists of large experience and long personal trajectory. One could realize that facilitators were chosen selectively, it pleased me that most of them were from the LGTTBI community, as we know that they knew in their own flesh what they were talking about inside these four walls” Definitely, activists who go on fighting, working and opening new paths...

II. Presentation of the Institute

Objectives

Structure and contents of the institute

Participants

Why an Institute to fight fundamentalisms?

In the past years the advancement of religious fundamentalisms in Latin America (and throughout the world) is evident. Opposing the principle of the Lay State, they want religion to be the first law in all countries, and they propose a great restriction to the individual liberties based on a single morality which intends to provide legitimacy to the control over women: turning back to status of subordination, a woman must be subjected to her man in marriage, rescue of stereotypes: a woman must be inferior, intuitive, sentimental, passive and dependent, and she also must be a abnegate mother and wife.

The morals they propose focus on sexuality and the prohibition of liberties, with arguments similar to those held by jurists from the Middle Age who justified the Inquisition. That is to say, homosexuality is a sin “contra-natura” (against nature), an insult to God, abortion is a crime. However, they do not condemn domestic violence, nor hate crimes, among other items.

These are groups with high economic and political power which, as inherited along many years, have invaded the educational, labor, and political party instances. Taking hold of the term “life”, their thinking is centered on sexuality. Their subjects of obsession are abortion, homosexuality and sexual education for children and adolescents. Their presence in the communication media, in the powers of State and in places of influence enhances their power. In the USA and in almost all countries they have

their own TV stations which generate news and bombard the population with “moral values”, such as for example that sex outside marriage leads to death.

Religious fundamentalisms advance, they are able to slow down bills of law on behalf of LGBTI people and women and also they are a backlash against previous rights (for example, the ban of therapeutic abortion in Nicaragua in 2007) by manipulating information, the use of influence. To fight this, LGTBI groups and feminists have developed a number of successful strategies. We have offered this instance to LGTBI activists from the region so that they could share these experiences, get acquainted with arguments and contents utilized by fundamentalisms and design valid ways of working in the different countries in order to advance HR for all people.

General objective

- Strengthen action strategies of the LGTBI movement against religious fundamentalisms

Specific objectives

- Get to know the objectives, spheres of power, actions, arguments, strengths, weaknesses and actors/actresses from the religious right-wing in Latin America and the Caribbean.

- Build solid argumentations based on HR to oppose fundamentalist discourses.
- Create strategies for joint action.

Results

- 20 activists from Latin America and the Caribbean now possess conceptual and strategic tools to face the religious right-wing
- LGTBI groups make contact and are able to articulate themselves for joint actions against the religious right-wing

Structure and contents of the institute.

Three content axes were established to match each specific objective.

- Get to know religious fundamentalisms in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Get to know alternatives to the religious fundamentalisms
- Prepare action strategies

Within each axis, the following subjects were addressed:

The religious fundamentalism in Latin America and the Caribbean

- Analyzing the context of the fundamentalisms in the various countries
- The use of Human Rights by the fundamentalisms. Natural Right (Law) and its contents
- Power structures, financing and networks of the different churches
- Fundamentalisms as civil society in the fight for RH in the UN and OAS
- The “healing” of homosexuality.

Alternatives to fundamentalism

- The Lay State
- LGTBI Human Rights in the light of international instruments
- Argumentations on sexual rights.
- Sexuality and Religion

Strategies

- Communicational strategies
- Successful actions in the region

- Documentation of LGBTI Human Rights violation cases
- Resisting and challenging religious fundamentalisms.

Participants

After a long and difficult selection process, as there were more than 250 candidates, the following selection criteria were applied

1. Adherence to the institute’s objectives
2. LGTBI activist in LGTBI organization or HR social movement
3. Interest in the subject proposed
4. Teamwork skill
The resulting group must have and has had:
5. Representatives from all the countries where a candidate was submitted (eventually, there were persons who were selected but could attend so we gave priority to self-defined identity over country of origin or residence)
6. Balance among L, G, T, B, I identities with affirmative action toward deprived ones.
7. Representation of other diversities: different religions, ages, ethnicities, PWHA, etc.

These were the participants:

Full Name	City	Country	Organization
Clayvert Alcón Saavedra	La Paz	Bolivia	Coletivo GLBTs Bolívia, Federação GLBT La Paz
Michel Riquelme Norambuena	Santiago	Chile	Organização de Transexuais pela Dignidade da Diversidade (OTD) Rancagua, Chile e Coletivo Trans Lésbico "Paila Marina"
Franco Aníbal Fuica Fuica	Osorno	Chile	Coordenadora Universitária pela Diversidade Sexual de Osorno. CUDSO
Galilea Bracho (Monroy de Leon)	Guatemala	Guatemala	OTRANS- Organização Trans Rainhas da Noite
Olenka Marin Benítez	Iquitos	Perú	Rede Trans de Loreto
Flavia Córdoba	Isidro Casanova	Argentina	Movimento antidiscriminatório de Liberação
Shirley Valverde Quiñones	Quito	Ecuador	Casa Trans - Projeto Transgênero
Dowithilla Battaring	Recife	Brasil	Gestos – soropositividade, comunicação e gênero (Grupo OXUMARÊ – Travestis e Transexuais organizadas para superação da AIDS e do Preconceito
Marlene Vivas	Managua	Nicaragua	Associação Movimeento Gay Lesbico Intermunicipal AMGLIM
Karla Rebeca Bermúdez Ulloa	Managua	Nicaragua	Movimento Autônomo de Mulheres
Eduardo Jesus Juarez Villafuerte	Lima	Perú	Movimento Manuela Ramos
Walter Orlando Trochez	Tegucigalpa	Honduras	Grupo de Advocacia pela Diversidad Sexual
Horacio Pricola Lujan	San Jose de Mayo	Uruguay	DIVERSEXU -"A Verdade te liberta"
Yonatan Matheus	Caracas	Venezuela	Venezuela Diversa AC
Pablino Caballero Aguilera	Asunción	Paraguay	Fundação Vencer
Ariane Celestino Meireles	Porto Alegre	Brasil	Liga Brasileira das Lesbicas
Juana Mercedes Cruz Díaz	Arequipa	Perú	Lésbicas Independentes Feministas Socialistas – LIFS
Ana Francis López Bayghen Patiño	México DF	México	teatro cabaré rainhas chulas a.c.

Rilian Mejia Lima	La Paz	Bolivia	ADESPROC LIBERDADE
Ruth Villata	Tegucigalpa	Honduras	Associação LGTB Arcoiris de Honduras
Tatiana Paola Hernández Nieto	Bello Antioquia	Colombia	AMAM, Associação de Mulheres que Aman Mulheres.
Ana Lucia Ramírez	BOGOTA	Colombia	Mulheres à beira
Catherine Jennifer Serpas Argueta	Delgado	El Salvador	Associação Nacional de Pessoas Positivas Vida Nova ANP+VN El Salvador
Marcia Ugarte	San José	Costa Rica	Coletiva pelo direito de decidir
Cristian (Christopher) King (Mora)	Sto Domingo	Rca Dominicana	Trans Sempre Amigas (TRANSSA)
Maria Alejandra Esquivel Mena	San José	Costa Rica	Mulher e Mulher. Comunidade Lésbica de Costa Rica

3. Part Two: Themes and contents worked on

Knowledge of religious fundamentalism

Specific objective 1: Get to know objectives, spheres of power, actions, arguments, strengths, weaknesses and actors/actresses from the religious right-wing in Latin America and the Caribbean

Analyzing the context of fundamentalisms in the different countries

ROSA POSA

In this part we present a summary of the analysis during the institute

The best in our countries is:

- The increase in the number of civil society organizations and the new LGTBI groups
- The left-wing supports the struggle in some cases. (The right-wing is always against the claims).
- Creation of laws, for example in Venezuela: law against any form of violence toward women, in Mexico: law to stop violence against women, gender identity, abortion.
- In some cases, situation is going toward Lay state
- There is visibility
- Small successes are seen and advancements can be made.
- The subjects and themes are in the public debate
- Derogation of sodomy as a crime (Nicaragua)

- Opportunity to claim rights from other groups in society
- We are organized, we are working to change the situation



The worst is:

- The presence of fundamentalists in all power spheres.
- Opposition to any initiative for the inclusion of NGOs and Social Movements.
- Sectarism among social movements and struggle for economic power.
- Organizations arguing
- Little dissemination of information, success and benefits
- Groups do not communicate
- Catholic and evangelical churches.
- Lack of political willingness to effect changes for LGBTBI people
- The Catholic church has political influence over governments and manipulates with lies

- Lack of laws protecting the LGTBI community
- High levels of violence and crimes
- Laws that make abortion illegal
- Political persecution.
- Buying movements to de-mobilize activism
- Racism – sexism – xenophobia.
- There are no public LGTBI policies in education

Sectors that are not allied to the movement

- Conservative population, a biased society (a religious and sexist culture)
- Conservative churches and groups
- “Yellow” press
- Conservative policymakers
- Some NGOs.



- The police
- Some governments (depends on the country)

The Allies

- Feminist/women's movements
- Strategic allies
- Sensitized communication professionals
- Civil society organizations
- Some international cooperation agencies
- Labor trade unions (some of them)
- Religious groups in favor



- Part of population standing up for the claims
- Some state governments (depends on the country)
- Some non-colonialist development agencies

In this first part, according to the participants' evaluation, an adequate introduction was presented. It provided an overview of the situation of fundamentalism in the different countries and contact with the reality of the region, the allies and those who are not allies.

It also gave the opportunity, when getting to know the realities and the experiences from the countries attending the Institute involving the actions by fundamentalist groups, to see that in Latin America in general there some characteristic traits that the religious fundamentalisms use to express themselves in governmental institutions and society at large. In addition, advancements and backlashes in Latin America and the Caribbean were addressed.

As an introduction, we have thought about the possibilities of a more strategic incidence to face the religious fields in the different countries where fundamentalists take action and look for opportunities to work together with both male and female companions with effective and creative initiatives in order to successfully fight against fundamentalisms.

The use of Human Rights by fundamentalisms. Natural Right (Law) and its contents. Fundamentalism, natural right (law) and human rights
MARCO HUACO P.

With the purpose of getting to know the basic aspects of the religious fact in order to identify the object of study, its relationship with fundamentalism and the doctrine of natural right (law) and human rights, we discuss the contents of Religion and fundamentalism; natural right and human rights; the Papacy and HR; the political use of HR by fundamentalisms.



Marco Huaco made an interesting introduction in an effort to expand our views, with a visual exercise in which one had to look for a five-point star in an intricate drawing. He showed us that we are used to see things in black and white, in a dichotomic way, in plain oppositions, with no combinations, overlooking diversity. Sometimes we only perceive our own diversity, but we are unable to identify it elsewhere; we tend to label and keep our paradigms.

Somehow the inability to see the global picture maybe is causing us to take strategies which empower fundamentalism.

Sometimes we use categories that facilitate stunts: for example: “the churches”, “fundamentalisms”, “homophobic people”, “the State”, “Christianity”, “religion”, “the Catholic church”, “the Catholics”, “Evangelical people”, etc.

Schematic thinking erases all dyes and frontiers in order to classify reality in a manichaeist way and through that it creates its own enemies, losing effectiveness in its action. Sometimes, we judge the bush for the tree (we do analysis but we do not do synthesis), we judge the whole for the part, and we are not able to “see”, and therefore we cannot act effectively. Then, when we discard these dichotomic ways of thinking, we take a distance from ourselves, and we begin to be get ready to see and transform reality in an effective manner.

Religion and fundamentalism

Religion as social fact can be studied from two angles: faith and science. From the perspective of the social science: “the social science of religion”

The contents of the religious fact is: “a system of beliefs, rites, forms of organization, ethical norms and feelings, through which human beings relate with the divine and find a transcendent meaning to life” (M.Marzal)

We can talk about 3 roles that religion plays:

- The first role characterizes religion as an integrating power: according to this role, the task of religion consists

of supporting the integration of the members of a given society, for such it enhances consensus within the communities (Comte, Durkheim, Freud).

- The second role sustains that religion plays a compensation function. Here, religion is lived as a mechanism that helps making life more acceptable by providing psychic relief (Feuerbach, Hegel, Freud, and Marx).
- The third role understands religion as a cosmologic interpretation, summarized in the theory of secularization. Thus, religion serves to interpret and define the order of phenomena in the world by using the media at its hand; the more the natural science develops, religious interpretation is displaced by scientific knowledge, the world loses its enchantment, the interpretation thereof is secularized. (Max Weber)

Marco Huaco invited participants to mention religions and religious practices that they were acquainted with from their immediate milieu, to acknowledge religions that are different from the traditional ones. We concluded that evidently there is a great religious diversity in Latin America:

–“For 40 years now, the religious map of Latin America has been changing quite quickly. Tens of new religious movements have come out from all countries in the region. These movements have slowly and consciously conquered some room which was until then an absolute monopoly of the Roman Catholic church. The

most recent statistics reveal that some countries (Guatemala, Chile) and regions (Chiapas) up to one fourth of the population no longer takes part in the traditional sacred mediation and escapes from the control of the Catholic hierarchies... for the first time since the time of the Conquer, the Roman Catholic church is losing control over the religious field and over the gods.” (Pierre-Bastian, Jean Pierre)

There is an inter-religious diversity:

- Religions of the Book: Christianity, Islam, Judaism;
- Wisdom-base Religions: Buddhism, Hinduism
- Originary Religions: religions of the indigenous peoples.

And also an intra-religious diversity

- Within Christianity: Catholicisms, Protestantism.
- Within Catholicism: Roman Catholicism, Orthodox Catholicism, Eastern Catholicism.

Cultural Catholicism (devotion to popular saints and icons),
Social Catholicism (Grassroots Ecclesial Communities inspired by the Theology of Liberation)

Charismatic Catholicism (miraculous healing by the Holy Spirit)
Syncretic Catholicism (indigenous Catholicism in Amazonia and Andine)

Integristic Catholicism represented mainly my religious quasi-militarized movements.

- Within Protestantism:

Historical Protestantism (Lutherans, Anglicans, Calvinists)

Dissident Protestantism (Presbyterians, Puritans, Quakers, Anabaptists, Baptists)

Revivalist Protestantism of the first wave (Pentecostalism,

Adventism, Mormonism(*), Witnessess of Jehovah (*))

Revivalist Protestantism of the second wave (Neopentecostalism, Fundamentalism).

- Diversity within native religions:

Ancient native religions (not accultured)

New native religions (Evangelical Apostolic Catholic Crusade Church of Peru,; the Israeli Mission of the New Universal Pact and the Founded Divine Revelation Alpha and Omega).

- There is also diversity of religious experiences
- Orthodoxy, heterodoxy; orthopraxis, heteropraxis (“liberals”, “conservatives”)
- Heresy, renegation, conversion.

Fundamentalism may be considered as a negative reaction toward modernity: “adamant rejection”, against liberalism and a return to the “origins”.

- Fundamentalism-integrism-orthodoxy-conservativeness-religious right-wing.

Fundamentalism and political religions (right- and left-wing), and civil (patriotic) religions

Fundamentalism and integrism, are they the two sides of the same coin?

- Integrism: is born in France, adamant Catholicism (in opposition to social Catholics) which implied a return to Tradition.
- Fundamentalism was born in USA, Evangelical Protestant (in opposition to liberal Protestants), return to the Bible.

Both appear in early 20th century.

¿Who take part in the Catholic Integrism?

- Lefebvrian integrists (Lucien LeFebvre)
 - Romanist integrists (Ecclesia Dei)
 - Seat-vacant integrists (Guérard des Lauriers)

Fundamentalism (Evangelical)

- “Moral Majority”

The 1970’s, anti-abortion, creationist, literalist, imperialist.

- “Christian Coalition”

Pro-life, Pro-Family, politics.

Discursive characteristics:

- Reaction to setting Christian religion aside: Christianity, state confessionality.
- Anti-modern selectivity (“there is nothing good”, even though they use modern resources).
- Moral manichaeism (the enlightened ones against the lost ones).

Hermeneutic absolutism and unmistakeness (Biblist, Traditionalism)

- Milenarism (eschatologism).
- Separationism from the world, creation of bold marginal subcultures.
- Moral authoritativeness (sectarian, legalis, and censoring ethics).
- Organizational authoritativeness (dependence on charismatic leaders).
- Obsession for doctrinal purity (“the plain and intransigible truth”).
- Belief of holdin the absolute and immutable truth.
- Theology of fear (hell, guilt).
- Socially selfish and utilitarain spirituality (social help is just a means).
- Political instrumentalization of faith.
- Warlike theological view, eclesially militarized.

- Profoundly pathological: fear, fear and fear: breaking of moral certainties.
- Politically “conspiracyist”.

Natural Law, human rights and fundamentalism

Natural law cannot be “easily reached by the people” but only Catholic lawyers.

They use a technique of closed (impenetrable) discourse of natural law which is forcibly imposed onto lawmakers, public servants and the public in general who, according to them, have nothing to do with religion in its common sense, of “natural law”.

Natural Law is a part of Philosophy of Right whose essential topic of study is Justice.

“Philosophy of Right” historically supersedes “natural law” (as a discipline of knowledge).

Natural Law considers itself as a justice superior to human law, as it is universal and immutable.

From Jewish-Christian and Greek-Roman religious sources.

- Divine natural law.
- Rationalist natural law.

Iusnaturalism against Iuspositivism (ius=law, right): For iusnaturalists, norms contradicting natural principles are unfair and are not compulsory, even if they have been promulgated by competent authority in compliance with formal requirements. In

turn, from a iuspositivist viewpoint, the validity of a norm does not depend on its moral value.

- Hugo Grocio proposes an international law based on rationalist natural law in order to achieve the conviviality between States faced by religion:

“Natural law is a dictate of the righteous reason, which expresses that an action, whether or not it complies with rational nature, has in itself a quality of moral ugliness or moral necessity; and that, as a result, such act is prohibited or ordered by the author of nature, God.”

– Divine natural law offers itself as a direct product of the Heavenly lawmaker (this is a characteristic from the Middle Age).

Today, it is a political instrument of the integrism and the fundamentalism to penetrate and settle itself in democracy. Now it is not “religious constraints” but “natural constraints”, common to all human beings. It is actually a way of reconquering the world through the rationalist natural law and then restore divine natural law as it was used during the Middle Age.

According to these ideas, “sexual orientation” is not a condition comparable to race, to ethnicity, etc., because, unlike it, that is an objective disorder; (...) “The rights to work, to housing, etc., are not absolute and they can be limited due to exterior disorders of conduct, to avoid scandal”; (...) And, above all, “there is no such right to homosexuality and, on the other hand, it cannot be a legal

basis for complaints“. (Considerations for the Catholic response to legislative proposals of discrimination against homosexuals”, “Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith”, July 1992.)

NATURAL LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are natural rights.

Here we repeat the situation analyzed by Hugo Grocio: set worldly ground for an institution in order to achieve consensus. UN Assembly has based human rights on Human Dignity. HR are conceived as: innate and inherent; previous and above the State that simply acknowledges these rights; they are universal; inalienable.

“ All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood“ (art.1 of the UDHR).

THE USE OF HR BY FUNDAMENTALISM

HOW THE VATICAN USES HR

The right to religious freedom translates into the right to “moral judgements in temporal matters” and the “right” to influence the State and the laws by imposing its doctrine.

The right to objection of conscience converts itself in the “right” to sabotage laws and public policies and the “right” to collectively make it illegitimate the norms set by the State and its policies.

The “healthy laicity” is a concealed confessionality that places “The Church” as tutor or the objective moral order which is the basis of the Lay State...

The diversity of confessions in alliance with evangelical fundamentalism under the argument of “civilization of love” =

Christianity

The right to life talks about the “sacred life”, the “sacredness of life” (natural beginning and end of life). The “Family”: monogamous, heterosexual and reproductive (in defense of Tradition). These three elements are united: BIOLOGICAL LIFE (science) CREATED BY GOD (Church) AND PROTECTED BY LAWS (State).

Then, homosexual marriage, contraception, artificial conception, dignified death, pleasant sexuality, abortion, etc... DO NOT REPRODUCE “LIFE”, therefore they are CONTRARY TO NATURAL LAW and they are: “UNFAIR LAWAS” according to such criterion

POWER STRUCTURES, NETWORKS AND ACTIONS BY THE FUNDAMENTALIST GROUPS

These institutional Vatican bodies include

- Pontifical Council for the Family:

It was instituted by John Paul II with the Motu Proprio *Familia a Deo Instituta* in 1981, replacing the Committee for the Family, created by Paul VI in 1973.

It deals with: sexual education, demographics, contraception and abortion; sterilization, genetic engineering and prenatal diagnosis; homosexuality, and ethical and pastoral issues related to AIDS and other bioethical issues; legislation on marriage, family, family policies and protection to human life. From 1994 on, the Year of the Family, the Dicastery is responsible for organizing the World Meetings of the Families: Roma 1994; Rio de Janeiro 1997; Roma 2000 marking the Jubilee of the Families; Manila 2003. The 5th World Meeting took place in Valencia, Spain, in 2006.



THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY FOR THE LIFE:

Under the Motu Proprio “*Vitae Mysterium*” of February 11th, 1994, John Paul II instituted the Pontifical Academy for the Life. Its objectives are: to study, to inform and to educate on the main issues of biomedicine and law, regarding the promotion and the defense of life, especially in direct relation with Christian moral and the directives set forth by the Magistry of the Church. To achieve these purposes, the “*Vitae Mysterium*” foundation was instituted in October 1994.

The Academy has 70 Members – nominated by the Pope –, who represent the several branches of the biomedical sciences and

those which are closely related to the issues of promoting and defending life.

The integralist “Bible” on “life, sexuality, family” is a book named “The lexicon”, published by the Pontifical Council for the Family

Opus Dei is an institution that belongs to the Catholic Church, founded in 1928 by Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, a Spanish priest who was canonized in 2002. “Opus Dei” is a Latin expression which means “work of God”, all information can be found in www.opusdei.org/

Tradition, Family and Property was founded in 1960 in Brazil by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira (1908-95), from the Catholic extreme right-wing. He as a lawyer, a Congress member and college profesor in São Paulo, Its main activities include: reimplementing nobility titles, proscription of the socialist parties, using force against the “bastions of marxism” in Cuba, Venezuela and in the rest America, censorship to books, films and TV series thar are against “the Western moral values”. There are similar organizations in almost all Latin American countries. www.tradicionyaccion.com; www.colombia-autentica.org/; <http://www.tradicionyaccion.org.pe/tya/>

Sodalicio de vida cristiana

(“Association or Community of Christian Life” in Spanish) is a Society of Apostolic Life founded by Luis Fernando Figari in Lima, Peru, in 1971 and approved of by the Pope in 1997.

It is made up of consecrated lay persons and priests, named Sodálites, who make perpetual promises of celibacy and obedience, as well as a commitment for the communication of good and of community life.

The main points of the sodalite apostolate are: promoting youth and family, and the Evangelization of Culture.

Movement of Christian life: www.m-v-c.org/; Sodalite family: <http://www.familiasodalite.org/>

Human Life international, founded in 1970 in the USA by father Paul Marx. It is Catholic and has simliar organizations through Latin America. (<http://www.vidahumana.org/>)

Population Rechearch Institute: its objectives are the surveillance and control of US programs supporting sexual and reroductive rights. Fight against UNFPA on international level. Political lobby to the State. Create public opinion “pro-life”. Promote repopulation of countries. Its Latin American office is in Lima, Peru (<http://www.lapop.org/>)

ALAFA Latin American Alliance for the Family (<http://www.alafa.org>)

Red Familia www.redfamilia.net/ (family network)

CEPROFARENA: Center for Family Promotion and Natural Regulation of Birth “CEPROFARENA (<http://www.ceprofarena.blogspot.com/>)

According to the evaluations by s participantes, this module allowed to think that fundamentalisms are based on fear of losing power instances, this makes them consider the social movement as a threat that can defeat them.

Ideas were clarified by providing information about the networks, the churches, the origins, objectives, geographic locations, characteristics, different groups, forms of organization and funding, etc. It allowed to see the different networks of power that exist inside the Catholic church, the structure of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and get to know concepts without which we may make mistakes when analyzing and devising our strategies.

In addition, participants said they learned a new lexicon and history. The relationship between fundamentalisms, human rights and poverty, shed light on the strategies adopted by fundamentalist groups to influence the governments.



Fundamentalisms as civil society in the fight for HR in UN and OAS

ALEJANDRA SARDÀ

By means of a fantastic roleplay created by Alejandra Sardà, representing a real scene in the UN Human Rights Council, we had a vision of how to handle the topics, of the fundamentalist lobby, both Catholic and Muslim. As well as the limitations and contradictions within the lobby by the civil society. We witnessed as, actually, HR may be an instrument of interchanging interests not all subordinated to interest of other nature.

To foster the use of this interesting exercise, we fully included the instructions to play it in http://www.mulabi.org/juego_de_rol.pdf Participants considered unanimously that the method utilized (the roleplay of a session of the UN Human Rights Council

with scripts based on reality) made it possible to get to know the functioning of the powers in these decision-making instances and the functioning of the very UN HR Council in its practice. It allowed to see the decisions that are made on these spheres and how hostile the ambience is in general. It helped make it evident the variables that are unknown to participants, how the countries “negotiate”, and which is the true place they take in these “negociations”, the sexual and reproductive rights also made us understand the difficulties that we have to advance our rights on political level internationally. Limitations were perceived in the participation of civil society, the influencia of Vaticano and Muslin countries, the difficulties faced by Latin American countries in taking forceful positions.

“Healing” homosexuality

GABRIEL ORLANDO

Our topic has the title “healing homosexuality”, in the perspective of both religious and scientific fundamentalisms. Our reference is in the universal declaration of human rights, an inclusive conception. We do not consider ourselves to be the owners of “the Truth“, we simply want to approach a knowledge that we consider, we all take it cemented in



experiences, sometimes painful, which we want to get hold of, for the effective conquer of the rights that are ours as human beings. I wouldn't like this chat to be exclusively religious or scientific. We are going to pivot between these margins without settling foot in none of them. As I said, my mind is inclusive and that is why I am going to reword the phrasing that is made extensive to the community of sexuales minorities, that is, LGTBI. Why am I making this clear? Because what is at stake here is not a

critical judgement of a sexuality, but “Sexuality” itself, with all that this implies: pleasure, body, identity, etc. We all handle the concepts of sex, which is different from sexuality, gender and identities. When we talk about sexuality, what is it that we have in mind? From a psychological paradigm, which also maintains its fundamentalisms and reductionisms such as neurosis, psychosis and perversion, by dividing human

reality in an incomplete, fragmented manner; many of them with euphemisms which characterize other fundamentalist contexts (for example, dsm-IV; sexual identity disorders). Coming back: what are we talking about when we mention sexuality?: the unconsciuous, sex drive, pleasure, fantasies, the

gold brooch of desire and in the last instance the unconscious desire and finally one or several choices of object, which is not worries fundamentalism so much. Of course, this is not enough to understand the social phenomenon of condemnation and pathological naming but by making an effort to comprehend social and historical processes, such as those futures that performatize human thought, feeling, and behavior. Why do I say it in the singular? Because that is the point, the construction of a single, prevailing discourse which, in turn, subdivides all the previous under arguments of denial, projection of a reality that admits many variables, rejected entirely by such hegemonic discourse, that is: binarist, heterosexist, patriarchal and sexist, marked within the vectors promoted by capitalism. What is the interest of this simple analysis? The arbitrary and authoritative outline of what is correct and what remains outside, that is, what is marginal, within what is considered normal and abnormal by fundamentalism... as if somebody could size the complete plot of situations that fluctuate in these historical processes, about the fantasy of immutability of human values, as if history was a immobile dead fossil.

Here we contend that this fallacious refuge where discriminatory concepts lie, such “healing” something that has no longer been considered to be disease for a long time (APA 1976, OMS 1973) that is to say, these mentioned values are not immutable, we must have in mind the different ages of humanity with their relative

truths and tenacious opposition to face these relative truths and make them “absolute”. We have a great deal of examples in the history of social and historical processes (Galileo, Darwin, etc.) Before going on, I would like to define some expressions that acquired different meanings according to the person who states them: the notion of subjectivity, of subject and person; it will seem obvious for some but I would like to give my version of these terms and how they relate to what I said before. Subjectivity is not static, but it is an unfinished process of ongoing transformation and construction, which becomes richer and richer (or unfortunately poorer and poorer). For example, let’s think about our processes of making ourselves visible, our vital changes in thought. Or, for example, we hope that when you go back home from this meeting that a change will have occurred, no matter what, but we will not be the same, just because we have gone through this valuable experience. The other notion is the cultural knot, being a subject, being subjected or anchored in culture and its relative but effective designs in our lives, in the social and historical process with the risk of the over-adaptations implied in it, engendering not free and independent subjects but objects, automatized parts of this machinery that makes is slave and rusts every libertarian notion that we may harbor replacing it with pain and suffering, for example, feeling that you are abnormal, defective or a mistake of God due to the condition of being what you are, internal homophobia, of being rejected

by your sexual condition, etc. Then we call on you to reveal yourself in the perspective of the oppressive attitude that such subjection imposes on us in a ferreous and tenacious way operating in the culture as persons with the same rights and duties that everybody else has, being the one who resignifies the term “person” as the subjective structure with higher levels of social organization and capacity to associate with others and cooperate for the common well and in the construction of another society. We promulgate the desiring subject’s capacities, who imagines their potential, with the knowing subject, who invents and creates the conditions that the producing subject will culminate literally, without preferences everyone is important, in all we can see ourselves as a whole, not as the system says by cancelling the former two and exploiting the latter, because the market is the important thing... the market needs production machines that do not question, do not think, but just consume and produce, this is a central element for the fundamentalist manipulation. All of that triggers the appearance of institutions for the regulation, prohibition, control and marginalization of all truth that falls outside “the Truth”. But as we are not mind only, neither society only, we have to be more specific, bring all of it down to our everyday life and understand that everything is mediated by institutions which we have to endure and they are part of the tangible world.

Who maintains the healing of homosexuality and from where? The statement sounds ridiculous, from the perspective of the Catholic church with its “sources”, as the Bible, the patristic texts, the backbone theologies by Augustine and Thomas of Aquino, the tradition and above all the contradictory magistry of the church which can manipulate all the previous ones under the pretext of defending what is right, normal and natural, (about the latter, a comment is valid for other fundamentalisms, sexuality is part of a complex CULTURAL construction, therefore there is nothing that is natural or antinatural. The mistake is to make a difference between normal and abnormal, maybe in medicine one can admit this expression with accounts on a per case basis, a blood test can be “normal”, this is acceptable, but when this paradigm is translated into a social and cultural dimension as “normal sexuality” then we are on different ground. As I said, fundamentalisms are plagued with falseness, ignorance or euphemism, and they go unperceived to ordinary people, who believe that they are the authors of their thoughts and they do not think themselves over in a broader context in which there are variables such as: “Where do my values come from?” and similar questions. We would realize that more than one assumption does not belong to us, it was imposed by a subtle, a symbolic violence, which locates the factors of reality at its own will. For example, the case of intersexuality, the culture of castration, which is not only physical, where the decision is made based on

the heterosexist paradigm that defines that person as either man or woman.

On the other hand, we have fundamentalisms that come from the US, with the involutive imprint of the fact before and during the Bush administration, and we see an increasing advancement of such cosmovisions, especiall Pentecostals, with their biblical compendium which is clotted and interpreted in a literal way as if two thousand years have not passed between these writings and the present, but as the catholic church, we also see the unwillingness for this interpretation, in this case, any other truth that is not “The Truth”, comes from Satan, a very convenient figure to cancel any questioning, even though it is more logical, it fall aside as an anathema, they would say.

In this situation, social oppression would be the universal set (poverty, explotation, discrimination of women, etc.) and sexual repression would be a subset coherent with this context. The method can vary but the results intend to be the same: silencing reality and replacing it with ideals that are absurd, unsustainable and shameful.

The campaigns by the Pentecostal churches in Latin America are ferocious toward sexuality. Probably you suffer it here in Brazil, as well as we do in Argentina and I think this is true in many Latin American countries.

Why is it so important to handle sexuality and normatize sexual desire and choices? Who benefits and why emphasis is placed

onto other people’s sexuality? We are seen with the logic of disorders, disease, the wrong transmission of some psychosexual stage, an incorrectly elaborated Oedipus, a reproductive logic that excludes pleasure, as if rejoicing were something reserved to a few who comply with the requirements of an imposed normality, which obviously does not include us. They call us promiscuous (something I can’t define), the manipulate us with sin, family, they treat us as degenerates, they demand us to make reverence to the acknowledgement of our sexual condition. While we do not do anything about it, they consider us perverts, making visible the conflict with the multiple hierarchies of the system, either ecclesial, legal or scientific between what is pleasant and what is repressed, and when I say repressed I am talking not only about what is symbolic in this term but also what is concrete such as the hate crimes, the oppressive and discriminating legislations, and the silent genocide that thousand of people have to put up with as they cannot come out of the closet with an extremely high cost to their quality of life and with the cost that we pay in our everyday life when we make ourselves visible.

But the most enigmatic question is: Why an growing number of people look for fundamentalism?

After all I have expressed above, it is necessary to link and integrate on a situational basis the problem of the globalized capitalist oppression system and the ongoing dynamics of impoverishment and social/economic unstability with which the

powerful have oppressed and manipulated the will of the masses. Let's think that in this current context of abyssal changes, whose variable to adjust each crisis is always the already impoverished working class. This makes it safer to turn to Saint Cayetano or the evangelical church than to trust in the social security, in the State, as a warranty of this social inclusion, on the other hand. Specifically, the institutions tuned with the system prepare compendiums where they manipulate guilt, moral, and the "good customs", which together with the prevailing general lack of security is exploited by a sort of monster that stamps on both the social struggle of the workers and the struggle for sexual liberation. An alienation is produced in the persons who are permanently bombarded with consumerism, which generates the fantasy of need, amidst a killing structural poverty, which makes impossible the access to what produces pleasure and security amidst the compulsion for acquiring and possessing... from there comes the highly mentioned prosperity promoted by fundamentalists, that can be stated like this: "if you give to the Lord and to the church your dizimus and you keep the commandments, God will make you prosperous". Meanwhile another big business consolidates as something aberrant on persons of little education, marginalized, or persons who are in a crisis, easy to manipulate, and a pervert pact is consolidated to reproduce the matrix of the system in detriment of the poor, who are now soldiers of Christ, a manipulated, gagged, warring,

discriminating Christ. All of it in the name of God and his love, the same God of the Catholic inquisition, the Calvinist persecution etc., thus justifying the saint war, against the Moorish, the native peoples of America... Now we see the shock of three fundamentalisms in struggle. On one hand, the North-American imperialist Jewish-Christian fundamentalism and on the other hand the Muslin fundamentalism, for both sectors, the other is the axis of the evil, as said Bush. It seems that history repeats paragraphs that had been overcome, but with some clarity we can realize that petroleum, money and power turn the nations from the Arabic world are exceeding in their own countries and they have the same options that our native peoples had, that is, to be exterminated, or conquered, or the one go most unpunished: "colonized". Therefore, our cause is the cause of the progressive humanity, who believes in hope, in the protection of the environment, in promoting humanitarian values, and we do not limit ourselves to our own bellybutton as if we were not part of the scaffolding of oppressions, which are deposited as convenient with more emphasis in one or the other sector but always, under the same logic: the logic of the powerful.

However, all over the world we can see the effects of a hint of change, due to the activism and commitment. In Argentina there are some achievements that may make way to others and there is a number of bills of law related to the rights of the sexual minorities, such as civil marriage, adoption, legal

acknowledgment of same-sex couples, sexual health, contraceptive methods free of charge, there are national commissions of political parties with their own internal bodies dealing with sexual minorities, but still lacks a different speech in the mouth of the People and not from an enlightened minority, and this is our commitment, to integrate ourselves with those sincerely mistaken, the manipulated masses, the oppressed and checkmate in all fields possible the different faces that express the oppressing discourse. We know that we are not only gays, lesbians, trans or intersex persons, but we are people with qualities, skills and handicaps who do not hide ourselves in our sexuality only, who are often exploited, obliged to do things we don't want to in order to subsist, that we have to pay our taxes as everybody else, and thus with our talents we want to be fully seen as ordinary people, just that, and as citizens full of rights.

Well, as we have already said sexuality may have more or less pleasant aspects but the concept of disease that we deal with is not individual but psycho-social, corroborated in macrosocial sphere of configurations previously mentioned, since the healing we appeal to has its substance in this field of the present and reference in the segregating and discriminating mechanisms, which surround the support of Institutions both religious and scientific, which do not reveal the consequences of suffering and the consequences of homophobia in most of our people, whose consequence is at sight in this chat, which degrades the human

condition, the idea of happiness as a state that can be reached, the self-impositions that our sexual condition and its related social meaning imposes on us with a pathological rank and consequences that are often terrible as they macerate life in its entirety, both intrapsychical and familiar, of social transcendence. Healing homosexuality: What is it to be healed? Who among us did not participate in some Catholic mass where paragraphs of Bible were tendentiously used to hurt us? Or an evangelical service where we were treated as possessed by the Demon, as sinners? Who among us confessed to a priest who subtly told us: "god loves the sinner but hates the sin" – meaning that one may be gay, lesbian or whatever provided you do not really perform your sexuality? That is why I believe that if there is anything to be repaired, but not in the oppressive meaning but as something liberating of a patriarchal, sexist and eventually capitalist society is the way spokespersons mediatize their oppression through institutions which magnify and retranslate the messages of injustice which necessarily cannot come from the Divinity, but from the fragmentation, prejudice, ignorance – and why not? – the malice with which we are discriminated, our rights are denied to us, we are abused, my friends, this is what needs to be repaired. We are the victims of this identity genocide which turn the basic assumptions of Human Rights bastard, or in the name of which god femicide is justified, or the discrimination within churches that take advantage of internal homophobia to dig deeper where

it hurts and then they say this scar is in benefit of our soul of the ideal family, etc.. Terrible is that we create it and sadly many LGBTBI people go to allegedly repairing therapy centers which it is proven that they are harmful and only stress the character of self-rejection to one's own self that goes in-depth and exploits internal homophobia by taking it to a state of naturality which makes our lives dull. From any perspective nobody can change their sexuality and become something they are not. The sacrifice we are submitted to is useless and sterile, I repeat, we do not have to play the oppressor's pervert game as long as we keep our convictions on the community level.

If there is anything to be repaired or healed is the wound that remains in regard of the rejection by our original church when they impel us to be sincere and paradójico when we are, they punish us. When, faithful to our beliefs, they separate us the assumptions instituted by other persons as you and I, however many times we are victims of condemnations or adjectives by others who speak for us. It is the entire social that must integrate us and not reject us, by hurting us in the name of god, or because the bible says so or because someone says it, maybe my mother, we have to see it clearly that the dynamics that makes us ill is the same that oppresses and the one we refute here.

If our sexuality goes bad, what about other people's: why is it good or is it normal? Who says so? Norms do not tell us anything, there is nothing to be healed, there is no disease or

damages to repair, but this is a construction that will take a long struggle. I invite you all to join such struggle. Thank you
After the words by Gabriel Orlando, there was group work on the following questions:

1. Do you believe homosexuality can be healed? Yes/no, why.
2. How do you believe we should act toward our oppressors?
3. Are we a social fighting group? Do we feel it is effective?
4. What else do we lack?
5. Do I feel I am a second-class Christian?
6. Can we develop strategies to fight fundamentalisms?

In addition, the groups worked on the letter allegedly written by a priest to a gay who wants to change his sexual orientation. The letter can be found in <http://www.vidahumana.org/vidafam/homosex/ayuda.html>

Participants highlighted that the approach was, on one hand, for getting to know why and how fundamentalisms operate and the role they play in the Christian churches, including the Catholic church, in managing our bodies and, on the other hand, the acquisition of arguments, new concepts and tools required to dismantle the argument used by religions intending to heal a non-existent disease.

It also provided a different angle mainly in the analysis of discourse and arguments utilized by the fundamentalisms

and/or those who insist in condemning homosexuality. The practical activity in which the response letter from the priest or representative of a homosexual curing center was ver appropriate and helped evaluate two or more levels of arguments that are often given to condemn homosexuality.

It also opened up the understanding of the Catholic church's relationship with governments in search of the political power.

Specific objective 2: Build solid arguments based on HR to oppose fundamentalist discourses.

The Lay State

CECILIA OLEA

We started with the explanation of key concepts:

Aspirations of modernity are the conformation of a state that represents the interests of the entire society, the separation between temporal and spiritual powers and the equality of citizens before the state and vice-versa, the treatment provided by the state has to be equal to all citizenship.

With the assumption of liberty, in the modern State, democracy is understood as the system that guarantees the expression of everyone's opinion. Initially, this process included only property owners, all men who were literate los and excluded women and the illiterate.

The public space:

Public power is the active and strong emanation of the public opinion, which in turn is a collective phenomenon supported by an individual reality, in which float the other uses and enforcements nurtured by it.

Public power always supposes, behind it, an opinion that is truly public, and therefore with bold enforcement, and from there comes the acknowledged interaction between public opinion and democracy.

Secularism (lay state):

The Greek term laos refers to the unity of a population, considered as an indivisible whole.

Institution with a neutral creed and spirit of freedom and equality that allows to achieve a truly universal dimension.

Secularism supposes freedom of consciousness and its reference and basis are the common background shared by all beyond the spiritual references.



Recognizing people as citizens whose consciousness has been liberated from any servitude and who are able to provide themselves with a law that unites them.

Secularism implies autonomy: as legal and political capacity, that is, as sovereignty.

Ethical and civic: to know the origin of the Law, that must be obeyed, and then understand that such obedience has nothing to do with subjection or servitude.

Freedom of consciousness, equality of rights, the common good beyond differences.

Clericalism:

It is characterized by not only the exercise of clerical functions with the community of the faithful but also an ambition for temporal power over the entire society.

Exerts a guardianship over the public sphere

The Catholic church. When Europeans came to the part of the world they asked themselves if the natives had a soul. Do we have a soul? And then baptism was used as a way of incorporating them into humanity.

The **Sumario de la Natural Historia de las Indias** (summary of natural history of the Indies) is one of the first books circulating in the New World (Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo)

- The Elvira Council, in the year 300, set forth that sodomites were denied the religious rites when in deadly trance or after it.

- In 342, Constantine the Great, first Christian emperor, imposed the capital penalty for the crime of sodomy.

In 390, Valenciano issued a decree that heresy should be punished with death penalty in a bonfire. Justinianus, in the codification of the Roman law in 538, prescribed homosexuals with torture, mutilation and castration before the execution (Nicolas 1982: 46).

- Indians from Spanish [territory] and from other islands of the Caribbean are “of shorter height than those of Spain, and of dark colors” that is brown (Summary, III: 91). Notwithstanding, “Indians from Firm Land are of same height and color than those from the islands, and if there is any difference is declining to majors not minors, especially those before were said to be crowned, who were sturdy and tall” (Sumario, X: 115).
- Fernández de Oviedo describes sexual practices among Indians that were contrary to his medieval Catholic moral, for example Indians who had several wives and who also “took” other women, without caring if they had a husband. They practiced sodomy: sodomy was intertwined with practices that were equally detestable as the use of arrows poisoned with herb (grass)
- This author considers that women have sexual liberties similar to men’s. For example, women from the Firm Land do not “have an end when they are widows, nor religious

who keep their chastity”, even though “after they get to know a Christian in carnal manner, they keep loyalty if he is not away or absent for long” (Summary, X: 123).

In *Historia General y Natural* (general and natural history), Gonzalo Fernández talks about the Amazonas, a tribe exclusively made up of women, with sexual/social practices different from the Spanish model.

Involving the concepts of Race, gender and sexuality:

A new feminism is proposed which does not see maternity as the best gift God has given a woman; likely, homosexuality is seen as an extra sexual choice and not as an objectively disordered inclination. There is a sort of “international club to promote social aberrations”, which promotes recreative sex as a model of life, falling in many attitudes which affect spiritual health of a Christian, and which are visible to everyone. (Juan Luis Cipriani, *Cardenal y Obispo del Perú* 2005)

Tutelage (guardianship):

Guarded citizenship: when someone is incapable to represent his interests another instance is required to take care of an appropriate representation.

It does not require special merit but a recognized incapacity

Moral Invoice: promotion of selective solidarity (in the social, political but not in the sexual)

The armed forces and the church

Supervision and contests of patriotism

Guarantee of the state order.

Determination of the public moral

Guardianship:

¿How can it be explained in Latin America and the Caribbean?

Servitude System

Caudillaje (authoritarian leadership)

Domestic arrangements for the public sphere

Lack of authority in the domestic sphere was covered by the ecclesial and state authority

The school: place of socialization.

Reading and writing as an individualization tool.

Unwritten law: strengthening of local powers.

The military behavior of schoolboys and girls is the best sign of order.

The sources of moral, that is, the individual responsibility is in the religious teaching and in the corresponding ceremonies.

¿The public sphere as an extension of the domestic ambience?

Seen from generation and gender arrangements.

Difficulty to see, perceive and imagine a historical time for one's own life

Concordats: moral and economic arrangements.

Tax exemption.

Subventions

Those who are in charge of religious education in the schools.

Resistance to education in sexuality

INDEX

It was created in 1559 by the Sacred Congregation of the Inquisition of the Roman Catholic Church (later on called Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith). The Index contained names of authors whose works were prohibited in the entirety, isolated works from other authors or anonymous and also a detailed repertoire of chapters, pages or lines that should be cut off or crossed out. This task was done by librarians who should take care of them before handing books to the readers

Education of feelings:

Nadie puede desear lo que no imagina: Culpa, miedo vergüenza

The lay state in Latin America and the current debates:

In Latin America, along the independence process, there was the Influence of ideas from encyclopedists and the French revolution and a weakness in the liberal attitudes. The projects of nation were made together with the church, as it was necessary to add up what was called “The Indian Problem”. Through liberalism (late 19th century and early 20th century) higher education was implemented for women and the right to vote: Ecuador 1929; Uruguay 1932; Brazil and Cuba 1934 and in some countries, also the divorce.

The Lay State in Uruguay, 1906, eliminated the crucifixes from public hospitals and approved the Act of Divorce (1907) and religious teaching was withdrawn from the public schools (1909).

In Mexico, during the 1910 revolution, lay state was established and the Church was proscribed. In 1992 the agreements between the Mexican state and the Catholic Church are modified.

In the current debates, there are two types of arguments at stake:

- There is a religious majority.
- LAC is one of the regions with the greatest number of Catholics.

There is a symbology of legitimacy for Catholicism in the states, for example: National Independence Day is celebrated with a Solemn Mass *Te Deum* (Thanksgiving liturgy), the Crucifix is in the Courts of Law, the Congress members render their oath before a Crucifix and a Bible or the public spaces have religious images. If they are the majority, do they have the right to decide? Other approaches of the argumentation say that secularism is no longer a paradigmatic response to confront religion and that the separation of Church and state grants religion with the possibility of expression in the public space.

Other approaches come from the Theology of Liberation: the Church undertook the task of taking care of the excluded ones through pastorals of solidarity, people living with HIV/Aids, the poor.

Church articulates itself as a social actor and as such makes pressure onto the state. It is not about denouncing the violation of the democratic principle of secularity, but the search for new forms

of argumentation. Civil society, as a democratic arena, is also an instance where conservative and regressive sectors work together. There are new articulations between state and church and new forms of articulating society, church and religiousness. There is a religious dissidence inside the very institution (some Jesuit communities, Catholics for a Choice).

See the secular and the religious not in a dichotomic way but find their communicating vessels. Dichotomy prevents us from seeing the possibility of making alliances.

Conceptual retos are:

- What is the secular and where do we place spirituality?
- Qué es un espacio público plural para la elaboración de propuestas con relación a arreglos en sexualidad.
- Strategies against power asymmetries
- A lay moral or should people be amoral?

Political retos are:

- Campaigns for secularism (lay state) in a continent that is profoundly religious.
- How do we make it visible and politicize demands in sexuality?

Who is politically responsible, churches or rulers?

If one the characteristics of democracy is the game between majorities and minorities: how do we express publicly our proposals in sexuality and how an agreement is achieved?

In the group work the following strategies came up:

1. Campaign for massive apostasy on Latin American and the Caribbean level. A symbolic day must be chosen, for example the day of crimes in the name of faith, an official statement is made to publicize RH violations, and the profit with the number of people who were baptized. Actors would be civil society and the persons baptized under the Catholic dictatorship.
2. We intend to pass laws in each country that are exclusively in the legal sphere, to acknowledge equal rights to all citizens, with no interference from religious creeds or churches. We fight for respect towards full development of citizenship.
3. We wish to articulate a network of effective action made up by groups that are vulnerable to any form of discrimination. We want to influence the change in all fields: cultural, educational, social, legal, regulational.
4. Create a Hearing Commission, on domestic and international level, to examine the effective enforcement of principles set forth by the constitutions and international treaties on secular principles and HR.
5. An itinerant photographic exhibition (on the streets) with famous artists, with the topics: feeling, spirituality, sexuality, eroticism, feeling, social inclusion, in an everyday life perspective. Make ourselves visible and part of the

collective daily landscape. On the streets and public sites of our countries. Freedom of speech, art is universal and is a public good, HR.

6. Encourage participation of allied persons in making decisions by the State, so that they will have full influence on public policies.
7. Encourage educational instances among decision-making institutions to identify the citizen participation toward the effective enforcement of public policies and the breaking of cultural structures.
8. Utilize alternative communication means to deconstruct the tutelage, by politicizing the acts of discrimination and violence exerted by the church on to vulnerable citizens and communities.
9. Build a new all-inclusive movement with organisms with an influence on strategical areas. We wish a process where different areas are touched: religious, social, cultural and political to influence society and be able to devise a plan of political and strategic impact open to people from civil society and government institutions that support the process.

Arguments for democracy in a Lay State

- If a democracy does not acknowledge the rights of minorities then it is not a complete democracy.

- Democracy: full participation of all sectors in creating effective policies, free of any religious influence.
- Constitution and laws coherent with diversity and the citizens' needs.
- Neither the bible or other book considered "sacred" must inspire or condition the expressions of life or the legislations of the states
- The minority must be taken into account (principle of equity).
- The State must be secular to guarantee all fundamental rights.
- No church must interfere with the matters of the state.

The evaluations by participants defined this subject as clarifying. The notion of secularism and thinking over the original meaning and the concept of the term lay helped us strengthen our speech. Also, by having a full picture of the state's evolution since the 19th century we could understand the modern State and its contradictions.

The strategy-defining activity was considered very interesting as it contributed to uncover dilemmas of secularism and thinks about some action on LAC level to oppose the actions by the Catholic church and to strengthen the secular state.

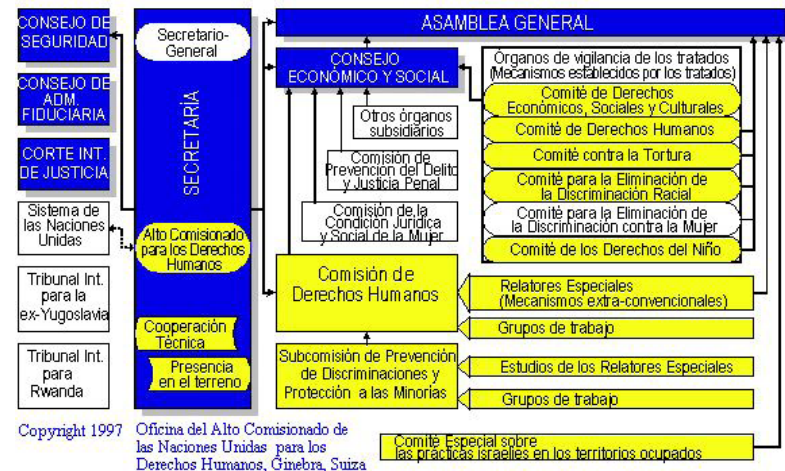
Human Rights of Lesbians, Gays and Trans people in the sight of international instruments.

MARCELO FERREYRA

As in previous institutes, Marcelo Ferreyra presented the labyrinths of the system of United Nations, to understand that the consagración of rights is a hard way, but is not impossible. The UN Human Rights Commission (whose task is to surveil the enforcement of the Civil and Political Rights Pact), in its 89th period of sessions made an Examination of the Reports, presented by the Member States in compliance with art. 40 of the Pact. We highlighted the important aspects of the final observations on Chile (March 2007), which includes among its major reasons of concern and recommendations, “discrimination suffered by some persons on the basis of their sexual orientation, among other



levels, before courts of law and when accessing health services. (Art. 2 and 26 of the Pact)”, even though acknowledges the ban of penalization of homosexual relations between consenting adults. The Commission recommends the guarantee to all persons of equal rights as established by the Pact, regardless of their sexual orientation, including equality before the law and in the access to health services. Also, awareness programs should be put in place to fight social prejudices”.



These recommendations to a State are very important and they influence other countries. From there comes the strategy of working with the organizations in preparing shadow reports.

Participants evaluate this module positively because it allows to get to know more of the intricate international mechanisms which can be used when rights are violated in the countries.



Approach the structures of UN and OAS makes it possible to be aware of international instruments which give support to LGBTI rights on which our countries are based, even if it results a little dismaying that many time these treaties do not manage to have our States to acknowledge or to include or to guarantee RH for all people.

It was important to get acquainted with these mechanisms which can be later utilized.

Arguments on sexual rights

REGINA SOARES

Regina Soares based the argumentation on the Campaign for a Convention on Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights.

After examining our context: a process of gobalization (economically, polítically, culturally), change of age with old paradigms to understand reality that are now useless. Our context changes and we change from the inside.

The binary opposition starts to be overcome, on behalf of plurality, but at the same time the sexual division of labor remains, as well as heteronormativity and the social and institutional structures “that grew old” and no longer are able to acknowledge such changes.

We need a radical democray, not only representative and formal... but democracy going through all social relations, including sexuality. We need to guarantee equal rights respecting the differences without sorting them into a hierarchy, to recover the body as political site, to promote a conter-cultural fight where we combine personal and social changes and transform the symbolic change, mentalities. The transformations we need are not merely material but also symbolic.

Culture is especially a field where transformations take place because within it subjective and symbolic horizons of a society are made.

The rights are under dispute, they are in conflict, they are dynamic.

When considering the sexual rights and reproductive rights as democratic rights, this means a conceptual leap, which is subjective and symbolic and gives rise to a subversive proposal that is able to incorporate the achievement by the social movements and by the non-hegemonic groups, opening up the traditional concept of democracy.

¿What do fundamentalist groups do? They universalize a cultural vision as the only one that is valid. Therefore it is necessary

- To recover a plural, democratic vision that includes the complexity of culture. Talk about power relations, cosmovisions, talk about ourselves, recover individual, inter-personal dimensions, build social relations between different peers.
- Reconceptualize freedom as something relational – freedom is not having everything one wishes– our freedom is defined in relation to other people’s
- Rethink our conceptions of pleasure and sexual pleasure. Pleasure is something diverse, multiple, vital, bodily, sensorial and emotional.
- Work with a new ethics – a new public and emancipating ethics, to support our human rights, to recover a democratic sense for life, where fundamentalists would not be able to convert it into a single vision.

In addition, a presentation was made about the Campaign for an Inter-American Convention on Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights. www.convencion.org.uy

Conclusion from the group work on the convention. What rights should be included in an Inter-American Convention on Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights?

SEXUAL RIGHTS

- Access to information
- Right to sexual intercourse (Who decides the age when someone can have intercourse?)
- Access to and enjoy sexual health
- States must guarantee adequate health (medical care that is adequate in regard of diversity.)
- Right to access medication to STI in all ages.
- Right to make decisions involving one’s own body
- Soberany-autonomy
- Right to a free sexual orientation
- The State must acknowledge the sexual and gender identity of each person.
- Right to bodily integrity: we replaced “consecrate” with “stipulate”
- Add trans, intersex and underage people.
- Right to privacy.
- Right to a secular education.

- Include sexual and gender identities in education.
- Right to be a sexual worker, including social benefits
- Right to be educated for sexual autonomy (since we are not educated to make choices, it would be good to have an education that promotes the tool for making choices and foster autonomy)
- Erotic autonomy.
- Right to include a teenage perspective in sexuality
- Right to persons living in jail to enjoy their sexual rights
- Access to information, to self-erotism, self exploration...
- Information taking into account sexual diversity, (so that the media will not show heterosexual models)
- Right to free expression of oneself:
- In addition to loving couples, include the perspective de multiple love
- The State must act to change mentalities about things that annihilate one's capacity to decide.
- Sexual education, access to a complete, secular and scientific education.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

- Access to information about reproduction. Truthful, updated, objective and scientific information.
- Right to universal contraception.

- Right to a safe pregnancy and childbirth, with capacity-building provided not only to the pregnant woman but also to midwives who should be given biomedical tools.
- Capacity-building for bio-security measures to all midwives.
- Unbiased, objective and impartial counseling
- Make sure pregnant woman will keep her job after childbirth.
- Make sure information is disseminated
- Impartial information. Unbiased education.
- Right to intimacy and confidentiality
- Right to contraception with no discrimination based on age and gender identity
- Timely and free access to emergency contraception.
- Mention the existence of lesbian, straight and bisexual women and transgender men
- Right to abortion
- Right to adoption

The great outcome was being able to contextualize the sexual rights and reproductive rights in a globalized world with all of its complexity. Not everyone had learned about the Campaign for an Inter-American convention on Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights before, and it was made clear that an international HR instrument is much needed in this field. As the world changes,

forms of oppression remain such as heteronormativity, sexual division of labor and structures that resist changes. Sexual rights and reproductive rights must be understood as a landmark for democracy and the Lay State. This workshop allowed participants to understand and participate in the process of this Campaign for an Inter-American Convention on Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights.

Sexualities and religion

VALERIA MELKI

Valeria Melki analyzed sexuality in the construction of the Catholic thought. In general, religions have a tradition of devalueing sexuality. In the Western Christian vision there is a link between the concept of sexuality and the social and religious rank of women. In the primitive and medieval church prevails a pessimistic idea of sexuality which installs a manichaeistic view, an extreme dualism where God is one side together with holiness, the soul and on the other side is matter, the sex, the body. Sex equals impurity. The ideal condition is being celibacy. Marriage is not condemned but is considered to be inferior to virginity.



According to Saint Augustine, the marital act would be “pure” if intended for procreation; the purpose of marriage is to have children, its law is mutual fidelity and the sacramental meaning is indissoluble.

In the Middle Age, Saint Thomas of Aquino and the Scholastic thinking mediate the morality of human acts according to the natural law where creation is the expression of God’s will and

the human beings can understand His will through reason. Biology gives an important pattern as wished by God: sexual intercourse produces dependent children who need education and support, and therefore, stable unions. The consequences of that is that sex within marriage is for procreation and sex outside marriage is a sin, because it is opposite God’s intention, it is a morally irresponsible act.

Sexual desire may be “forgiven” if intended for procreation. There is

a split between sexual pleasure and procreation, since sexual pleasure in itself would be a sin no matter if within marriage. The woman is completely devalued as this approach assumes that a loving relationship would be impossible due to the differences between male and female. Actually, the idea is that man “uses

woman well” for procreation and “uses woman incorrectly” if it is for pleasure.

Marriage must be monogamous and indissoluble. The ideal woman must be an asexual, honest mother and a frigid, cold wife. In the modern period, sexuality is equally repressed and controlled, in the sexual acts and in the body where a woman must be always passive. The sins are classified as: those “in compliance” with nature and which allow for procreation (adultery, rape, incest and kidnap) and those which are “against” nature, as they do not allow procreation (masturbation, homosexuality, sodomy). The consequences of these concepts are a negative, legalist morality, focusing on individual acts, defined by moral absolutes and inconsiderate of person-oriented values.

Anyway, there has always been dissidence to these concepts, for example in the 15th century, Maton Le Maistre said: “Not all copulation of the spouses not intended for the generation of breed is an act opposed to the marital chastity”. Or Thomas Sánchez who in the 16th century wrote: “it is not a sin if spouses get united simply as spouses”.

In the contemporary period, Pious the 10th wrote “On chaste spouses” where on one hand there is a vision that is somewhat centered around the person, which is an advancement, then we find contradictions such as the sexual act must be open to procreation and on the other hand is the possibility of “natural” planning.

Yet, Vatican II defines sex as the interpersonal relationship between husband and wife and focus morality on the individual. In “On human life”, Paul 6th prohibits artificial family planning methods. John Paul 2nd gives a step forward when he says that “artificial” control of birth is morally condemnable in his letter named “The splendor of the truth”.

As a conclusion to this issue, the inheritance of the moral Christian tradition on sexuality is to condemn sexual desire and pleasure, linking sexuality to procreation and female inferiority (women are meant for giving birth).

Violence was another topic widely addressed by Valeria Melki, mores specifically symbolic violence and exclusion exerted against lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people. Violence is a violation of rights (civil rights: to life, circulation, freedom of mind and religion. Political rights: to vote and being voted, to political participation. Social rights: to housing, health, education, security. Economic rights: to employment, salary. Cultural rights: right to keep and express one’s own culture.)

Depending on the place where it occurs, violence can be domestic, institutional, etc. Depending on who suffers it, violence is against women, against the elderly, against childhood. Depending on who commits it, violence can be self-inflicted, inter-personal, collective. Depending on the way it is expressed, violence is physical, sexual, psychological, symbolic.

Symbolic violence is an invisible way of coercion often based on collective beliefs and prejudices. Symbolic violence is generated through ongoing fabrication of beliefs in the process of socialization which induce people to interpret the world according to criteria and patterns imposed by the prevailing discourse.

The difference between the rule and the exception is in the fact that the exception needs to be justified, says Noberto Bobbio (Equality and Liberty, 1995:10)

Gender is a social and historical construction that translates into a different value and a hierarchy assigned to what is considered masculine and feminine (masculine is more valuable, honored and dignified, feminine is undervalued). Some religions make it legitimate women's subordination by using beliefs upon which violence is based, for example, in the book of "Genesis" Eve gave in to temptation and made Adam sin which entailed the entire disgrace of the world. In addition, god created man in his own image and similarity and commanded him to master the earth and subject all living beings.

Symbolic violence exerted against lesbians, gays and transgender people is based on gender prejudice and stigmatization:

- Gays, transvestis and MTF transexual people
 - are victims of such prejudice as they allegedly get close to the feminine which is socially undervalued.

- are associated with pedophiles, scandals and promiscuity;
- are still associated with HIV and Aids.
- Lesbians:
 - as they are independent of a man on sexual, emotional and economic basis.
- Lesbians and FTM transexual people
 - are seen as impostors or competitors to real men.

DISCOURSE PRACTICES mark realities. Language not only tells us how the world is but also it constructs reality. Our identity is determined by language. Language is action upon the others and influences conformation and development of social relations and practices.

Religion exerts symbolic violence on what we call sexual diversity. Let's take a look at some fragments of the Catholic catechism:

- 2357¹. (...) Based on the sacred writings, which present it as grave depravations, tradition has always considered homosexual acts as intrinsically disordered, contrary to natural law. It says they prevent the sexual act from the gift of life and do not come from a true emotional and sexual complementary pair. They shall never be approved under any circumstances
- 2358. (...) These people are called on to fulfill God's will in their life and, if they are Christians, to unite to the Lord's

1 Catholic catechism. http://www.vatican.va/archive/ESL0022/_P86.HTM

sacrifice in the Cross through the difficulties they may find due to their condition.

- 2359. Homosexual people are called on to be chaste. With the virtues of self-control, which educate for inner liberty, sometimes with the support of a disinterested friendship, through prayer or sacramental grace, they may and must get closer to Christian perfection.

An evangelical group from the city of Recife (Brazil), the church known as “Christ Lives”, was accused of promoting hate against homosexuals. Three years ago the minister started to conduct “outdoor services” with a sound truck and he said “We are far from God’s word, therefore we lost our natural use and men behave as women and women behave as men ... they are the children of Devil” There are other evangelical groups who believe that public display of affection between same-sex persons is a sign of the end of the world.

Other examples are they think that while there is one single person who does convert him/herself, nobody will be saved in the face of the earth.

RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISMS AND SEXUAL DIVERSITY

The great monotheistic religions are those imposing most difficulties to the social acceptance of homosexuality, even though

the majority of traditional religions also show some level of rejection.

The concept of heterosexual and monogamous family comes from that ideology. The idea that the role of sexuality is for reproduction only contributes to crystalize prejudices even if the majority of Latin Americans do not follow the whole package of what is recommended by the religions.

- There are three topics we must discuss:
 1. The alleged condemnation by the bible of homosexuality comes from men getting close to the role assigned to women. It is based on the fact that a man approaching femininity makes him similar to a woman and therefore he would sexually behave like a woman. Then, we see that gender inequality is cemented as a founding base of Christianity.
 2. Female homosexuality is not mentioned in the bible. This leads us to the Western way of putting the phallus in the center, and also the cultural condemnation of sexuality (getting close to an altar to conduct service in a state of impurity) does not reach women, does not concern them because they have been drawn away from ritual power since ever.
 3. There are passages both in the old and in the new testament that are not accepted. Why some passages were put aside

and others are still enforced, as those which mention homosexuality?

This discourse perpetuates the inequality between men and women and between masculine and feminine; it creates and maintains the frontier between “us” – defining what is normal, therefore accepted and valued – and “the others”, who must be rejected; it creates conditions to control sexuality and the bodies, behaviors and thoughts and offers sacred alternatives, within a vast religious market, for the redemption of sin and salvation.

- They strongly utilize mass communication media, such as radio and TV;
- They act upon public policies to prevent laws from being passed.
- They do not create new prejudices, but they provide a social base for the existing ones
- They make violence against LGBTTI legitimate;
- They disseminate prejudices and discrimination.
- Aggressive proselitism may incite hate crimes.

The impacts are:

According to the report on Policies, Rights, Violence and Homosexuality – Research during the 9th GLBT Pride Parade of São Paulo 2005:

- 73.6% of LGBTTI people were raised in Catholicism, but only 28.5% are still Catholics;

- According to the 2000 Census (Brazil), only 7.4% of the population say they have no religion, but among participants in the research 40.8% said they had no religion;
- 22.7% of all interviewees said they have been a victim of marginalization or exclusion in religious ambiances.



Cartel de la campaña de Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir. Brasil

Final comments:

1. The Catholic religion permeates in the relations and affects even those who do not belong to that religion;

2. The condemnation of homosexuality is internalized since one's childhood when they do not have a clear idea of what is homosexuality.
3. The suffering that comes from this process is intense, painful and lasting, including when homosexuality has been rationally accepted by the person.
4. Denial is a common way of dealing with the pain of rejection and prejudice: one decides to either deny religion that causes the inconvenience or to deny the suffering itself.



that church has about sex and realize who the church cooperates with the hatred towards women and the LGBTI community. It was the opportunity to think over about the influence of religion onto to popular images and it also happens within the context of “spirituality” where they are concealed, the prejudices and ideology to punish, qualify and degrade.

Specific objective 3: Create strategies for joint action.

Communicational strategies

MARLENE WAYAR

Marlene Wayar worked on communicational strategies in an original and shared way.

Tranvestite: word with revolutionary power, linked to prostitution.

Prostitution should be claimed with it is choice of live, not an imposition of the State.

One of the approaches in this module was the concept of symbolic violence which uncovered the “traps” that fundamentalisms play on sexuality. It allowed an in-depth view of discrimination and its origins, get to know the unjustified power of fear

EXERCICE 1

Write down a word that you wish to give someone (who can be on the other side, someone you care for) and holding the paper on your hand

Standing with the paper on your hand... we take a walk and then you hand the paper to the closest person. What the paper says is what you give a as present to that person.

We have to say that we are people (no matter how old we are) and say which claims of rights we have, to search for the girl or the boy we used to be and think about what we need. When Catholic parents oppose sexual education, we have to make an effort to see that it is always the right of the boy or the girl to receive education and make his/her own choice of what seems good.

Taking the exercise of going back to the girl and think about her rights is a way of building a sense of belonging.

Each participant told her/his story when they were a child. Sad stories, glad stories, deep stories, stories of discrimination, repression, violence, but also stories of love, generosity, hope... which generated a very important moment in this institute, a few magic hours full of a intense and solidary sharing.



Then there was a roleplay of a TV program similar to “Laura en América” in which several situations were represented as an occasion to face fundamentalist arguments, for example, an interview with a couple of a pregnant transexual man and a transvestite.

This generated reflections about actions that can be done with the communication means.

The work also involved the voice. Each person wrote their name and nationality in table sign as a panelist and a band (as a miss, made of paper) to use it as a mask.

Places were exchanged so everyone had to take the place of somebody else. Each participant had to distort her/his voice with the aid of a plastic cup Participants saw this session as “humanizing”, a generator of solidarity and the result was the improvement of communication between participants (with the

contribution of the diversity of identities, ages and cultural background). It allowed to see the depths and from there draw very powerful reflections so everyone can understand themselves and also realize the fundamentalisms that we all bring with us. It allowed us to take leave to simply be who we are.

A connection was made and made the personal side touch the political sphere and the need to acknowledge oneself as a starting

point to be worked on: “what I have in front of me is also a respectable story of life”. Definitely, new forms of communication and new tools for transformation were put in place.

Successful actions in the region

NEUSA CARDOSO DE MELO

Neusa Melo started with a regional overview and provided some examples of successful experiences.

In our regional context we find a great influence in the education of society (shaping people’s mind), a huge growth of the evangelical churches, religious influence on governments, on parliaments, violation of LGTBI rights and a population generally favorable to Secular State. Regarding this, Neusa Melo presented the results of a research which shows a majority of Catholics in favor of the lay state

% of respondents based on the diversity of opinions (research IBOPE/CDD/Feb/2005)

	president	lawmakers
Bolivia	75%	76%
Colombia	80%	81%
México	92%	93%
Brasil	85%	86%

In Mexico, in 2006, same-sex unions passed and in 2007 abortion was made legal in Mexico DF.

In 2007 the Latin American and Caribbean Lesbian-Feminist meeting took place in Chile.

Uruguay civil union passed in 2008, Parliament passed the act of abortion which then received a veto from the president.

In Brazil there were the Brazilian Journeys for Legal and Safe Abortion and concerning the LGBT movement, Pride Parades were organized throughout the country and also a anti-discrimination bill was introduced in the congress.

Neusa invited participants to tell their successful experiences in their own countries and cities. This a summary of the results:

- Support to the Pride Parades in most countries: from other organizations and in some cases, also institutional support.
- Legislative advancements in several countries, such as including non discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the new constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia, the elimination of punishment to sodomy in Nicaragua, right to gender identity in Uruguay, a law that punishes violence against women (Costa Rica), respect to sexual orientation in the Act of Youth in the Dominican Republic, national plan of sexual and reproductive health with includes sexual orientation (Paraguay), a law against all kinds of discrimination against women (Venezuela)

- Good practices such as general acknowledging of gender identity in the health and education system in Argentina.
- Strategic alliances with HR and feminist organizations, with local and national governments in some cases
- The topic is introduced in the public debate in all countries
- In some countries the fight to have abortion unpunishable advances (Mexico,
- The rulings by the Supreme Court in Colombia
- Awareness-raising to the police (Ecuador)
- National LGBTI conferences in Brazil and the federal program Brazil Without Homophobia

The importancia of this module was getting to know advancements in Latin America and also the difficulties in the countries of the region as well as the strategies that is being implemented in each one. With an interesting dynamics our vision opened up to become wide about what is going on in the countries concerning the fight against fundamentalisms. It was essential to become of strategies with successful actions conducted by our organization, especial on the political level and the campaigns and actions in the region (Mexico and Uruguay). This gave ideas about how to get organized in political instances and see the steps forward in legislation.



Colombian comrades, Tatiana and Ana Lucía, wrote the following song:

Por acá en Medellín (Here in Medellin)
 buscamos la apostasía (we look for renegation)
 a ver si nos liberamos (to see if we can be free)
 de severa hipocresía (from severe hypocrisy)

De severa hipocresía (from severe hypocrisy)
 Libramos a Bogotá (we freed Bogota)
 Marchando todos los años (marching every year)
 Pa' cambiar nuestra ciudad (to change our city)

Pa' cambiar nuestra ciudad (to change our city)
 Estamos articulando (we are articulating)

El trabajo popular (the people's work)

De los que estamos llevaos (that we are taking)

De los que estamos llevaos (that we are taking)

Pero cargados de ideas (but charged with ideas)

Hacemos contracultura (we do conterculture)

Con arte y con barraquera (with art and barraquera)

Con arte y con barraquera (with art and barraquera)

Creamos nuevos lenguajes (we create new languages)

Forjamos distintos mundos (we shape different worlds)

Donde acabarnos no puedan (where they cannot do away with us)

De equidad y libertades (of equity and liberties)

Los latinoamericanos (Latin Americans)

Podemos romper fronteras (we can break up frontiers)

Haciendo todos y todas (everyone doing)

Una misma acción directa (the same direct action)

Documenting cases of RH violation of LGBTI people by
Fundamentalisms

MARCELA SÁNCHEZ BUITRAGO

WHAT IS TO DOCUMENT A CASE?

Documenting is to performe a process of collecting information to:

- Convert a denunciation, a rumor, a widespread information into a CASE / to build an issue
- Identify the victim(s)
- Establish the facts
- Generate evidence of right being violated / legal framework (ex. Transvestite in jail)
- Indicate persons directly and indirectly responsible for the violation
- Sort out information
- Formalize scarce information
- Generate information that does not exist as such / oblige to ask for it / oblige to inform

Why is documenting important?

- To achieve credibility / to be RIGOROUS
- To build up memory
- To obtain reparation
- To reestablish the dignity of victims
- To make sure it will not happen again (prevention)
- To raise consciousness
- To visualize the RH situation (trends, patterns)
- To sustain the need for institutional responses (political denial of the violation of a right)
- To conduct academic research
- Based on these cases, search for generalization by means of surveys

Which are the ultimate objectives of documentation? What achievement is expected? What for?

Documenting is good for:

- Judicializing existing cases in the national and internacional levels – to resolve them punctually or to make them strategic
- Judicialize cases sparked off
- Prepare reports on human rights to yield: shadow reports, specialized documents, support of bills of law, support of public policies
- Sensitize general and key audiences
- Produce knowledge of a fact that is important to a group of people
- Contribute to reduce the violation of rights
- The action to be undertaken depends on moment/status the case is in
- Administrative complaint
- Request the enforcement of an individual right (pension)
- Denial on national level

Which are the steps required to document a case? Ideal Model

1. Planning (schedule / forecast and conditions)
2. Creating a research problem – what / strategy vs tangible case

3. Definition of objectives – what for
4. Relation with the legal framework
5. Acknowledge the incidence of the context
6. Definition of potential sources of information (primary and secondary sources)
7. Define techniques to collect information / define formats – how
8. Fieldwork – development
9. Sistematization of information
10. Analysis / framework of rights / context
11. Record information / Writing reports
12. Disseminate information to different audiences

Documentation is not a linear process, it must be flexible.

What is the legal framework?

Conventions, statements, pacts, optional protocols, treaties /
SPECIFIC OR GENERAL

- Are they higher than the National Constitutions?
- What are the follow-up mechanisms / how often
- Reporters
- Work groups
- Country reports
- Jurisprudence (national and international)
- Laws, agreements/decrees/ directives

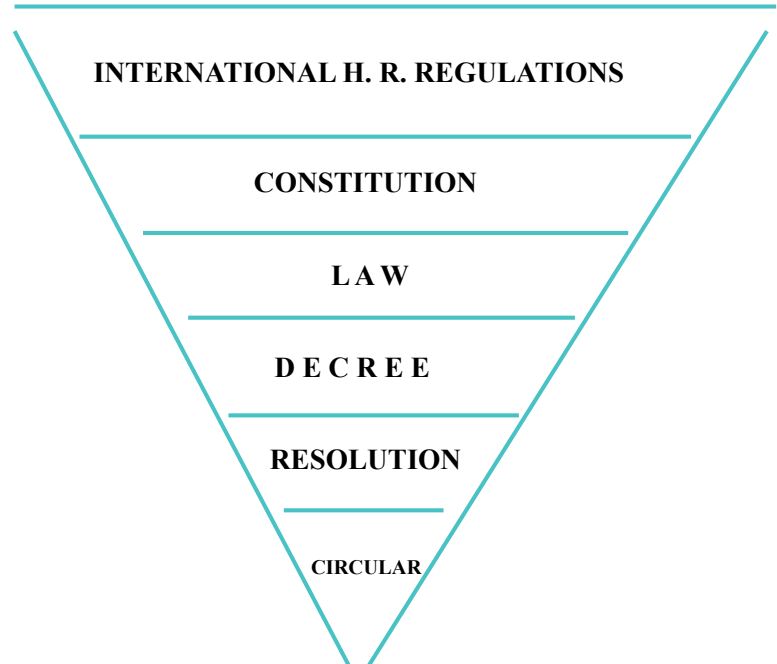
Normative and practical aspects:

- Right to equality in the constitutions
- Abstain from discriminatory acts
- Abolish laws and customs that are discriminating
- Temporary norms to compensate traditional disadvantages
- Obligation of progressiveness

What are the difficulties to document a case?

Structural

- There are not information systems (public or private) / turns the work of HR defenders difficult.



- Social legitimacy of the violation of rights
- Inconsistent data
- Impunity / lack of preceding inquiries
- Victims are unaware of their rights
- Victims or their families are afraid or ashamed of denouncing
- Fear of being a victim again
- Distrust the system
- Ignorance of de mecanismos de denuncia

- Limit situations (police abuse, violent deaths, sexual violence, reclusion) and its influence in proofs
- Particular contexts (unlawfulness, armed conflict)
- Cases of women? / invisible? vs transvestites who are visible but lack tools
- Transgender men
- Children
- Relation with other variables / weight of each of them
- Elapsed time since the occurrence
- Relationship between the victim and perpetrator (father, mother, teacher, police, guardian)
- Think of immediate protective measures

One should take into account:

- The safety of the people involved
- The safety of the work team
- Full support to the victims (if necessary) and what is required (psychological, medical, legal support)
- Informed consent of the victim
- Confidentiality
- Being a “víctima” vs not being a victim again
- Ethical issues (some proofs, contact with family that may be unaware of the situation)
- Do not generate expectancies, or clarify the goal and risks for the victims

- Lawfulness of the evidence / reasonable expectancy of privacy.

Which techniques of collecting information are used to document a case?

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

The information being collected serves for:

- Corroborating a hypothesis (active search for proofs since the starting point is a real complaint) or,
- To characterize an issue, and nothing is known about it

Secondary sources

- Previous reports, specific or general (invisible) 7 women – arbitrary arrests
- Database from other organizations
- Death certificate
- Police records and reports
- Legislation, jurisprudence, decrees
- Management reports
- (Yellow) media monitoring
- Legal records
- Petition rights

Primary sources

- Interview with the victims, family members and witnesses, employees, journalists
- Use of a tape recorder
- Take notes (including body language)
- Interview techniques
- Focus groups
- Photographs / videos
- Field visits
- Maps (Santa María foundation)
- Drawings of the team and of people

The formats

- Created by the team
- Use the existing ones

Basic data to record

- Victims
- Facts
- Alleged responsables

Information systems: sets of cases / databases of one's own

Teamwork:

Inquiry on police abuse

Denouncement of police abuse against transgender people who are sex workers

Facts: impunity in Justice administration

Physical and verbal violence

Arbitrary arrests

Violation of the right to free transit and personal freedom

Evaluations by the forensic medicine

Actions: denouncement to national and international bodies and dissemination in communication media

Lack of sufficient information, evidence has not been handed over, and it seems evidence has been concealed. More information are to be sought for, as well as interviews, testimonies, fieldwork, audiovisual research.

Argument: right to life, to freedom, have differences respected.

The Carla case:

Objective: that the State view and acknowledge the hate crimes based on sexual orientation and e gender identity.

Case: murder of a MTF transgender person, stabbed to death.

Facts: on November 26th, 4:00 am Matilde was in Avenida Paulista (Sao Paulo), who was assaulted and then killed by an unknown man.

Action: denounce of the State of Nicaragua before the Inter-American Court of HR

Another case:

Description: the LGTBI community is not included in the municipal development plans.

Facts: local authorities consider that working with LGTBI people is for civil society only. The access of LGTBI population to health and education is very difficult. Lack of care is justified due to the absence of complaints, lack of proactivity and invisibility.

Only stereotypes are perceived: beauty pageants. Expenses with “general” groups are justified with the assumption that LGTBI people are included in them. There is a lack of interest by LGBTI leaders.

Tipologies: The State does not adopt positive legal measures with effective participation. Access to education must be guaranteed. There are no measures to eliminate prejudices and there is no adequate health service available for men who have sex with men, for people living with HIV/Aids, for sexual workers.

Proof: Responses to rights of petition.

Fieldwork, reference sites.

Responsibles: local authorities, mayors, education dept., health dept., national plans.



Difficulties: Unfamiliarity with the concept of right to petition. Information not previously organized before reading by date.

Another case:

Demonstrate that transformation of a transgender person is a cultural and health issue (related to physical, mental and social well-being). Right to health, economic rights. Case of breast

reconstruction. Health system.

Testimonial records. Is it not a matter of aesthetics because nobody loses one's life because of that.

Materials: diaries, newspapers, medical records related to risky procedures.

Research on techniques of body transformation, used by transvestites according to their economic possibilities.

Christian march in Bogotá:

With the purpose of raising awareness of the increase in prejudices that prevent the exercise of rights and public policies for LGTBI people because of public demonstrations and homophobia.

Case description: incidence of Christian groups in decisions related to public policies.

The facts: debate in the senate, rights of same-sex couples, debate in the Council of Bogotá, LGTBI public policy. March against

LGTBI policies. Biased opinions and actions from Christian politicians against the citizenship of LGBTBI people.

Action: request a committee to be set up to inspect the right to expression based on article 13 of the HR American Convention

Participants considered that the information brought by this module was how to successfully document cases to make them tools of defense, the clarification of documentation processes and their importance for the memory and restitution of HR. How to detect the basics and start a documentation process. With a very dynamic exposition, participants understood how rigorous cases must be presented. Taking into account how to establish facts, sort out information, etc. In short, to correctly document the information in order to improve the posture to face the fundamentalist confrontation. The correct documentation provides credibility and therefore brings power to the movement, this is something that normally we do not pay much attention but it is how cases can be taken to a national and international level.

Resisting and challenging religious fundamentalisms

JUAN MARCO VAGGIONE

Juan Marco Vaggione chose to give the same title than the Avid initiative to make this organization's research known.

Juan Marco Vaggione started by saying that the sexual and the religious should remain in private life, but they are what is most present in public policies.

Religions do not back down, they are more and more public, more and more political and operate from several instances. Authoritarian and excluding discourses but they also have including discourses.

If modernity thought sexuality was in the intimate life, actually it is a political axis, not only because the personal is political but also because it involves different alliances and strategies.

The examples tell us that Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights have been included in a new dimension of the political. And now there are new political agreements as a result.

And these two dimensions are intertwined

Religion and sexuality are intertwined and this allows us to see the political dimension of it.

There are two ways of thinking this crossover between religion and sexuality.

Religion: one of the fundamental barriers of sexuality. The oppositor, the antagonist.

Religions measure the intensity of the religious feeling,

The hierarchy of the Catholic church has converted itself in the major obstacle.

The hegemonic way of exerting power is fractured: this control by the national and Catholic family, etc. Hegemony as structuring element of the culture and denial of sexuality has been fractured although it has not yet been broken up.

Today different alternatives are considered legitimate in favor of Sexual Rights.

The church, as it loses the control of power over sexuality, starts acting otherwise. For example, in Spain the church went to the streets to protest. The street was a place where the left-wing used to be, not the church (except for the procession). But people went out to the street against same-sex marriage.

Also in international levels, in the United Nations, when the feminist strategy came up they entered the arena

The new strategies used by fundamentalisms are many. They want to stop and make it go back, for example in the USA, in Nicaragua.

In topics such as the abortion, they debate whether emergency contraception is negative, this is their trap, they make us discuss that.

Religion can also be a source of liberation, it also changes and responds to patterns of power in the different historical periods.

At this time, religion is dynamic in relation to sexuality.

While it is a barrier, religion has also been transformed for diversity.

People starts believing in a different way.

People go on believing

The idea in the modernity people would no longer believe did not prove to be true. Everyone thought religions would be weakened.

People believe but in a more flexible and negotiated way.

People do not believe in compliance with dogmas but they negotiate their system of beliefs in an articulated manner.

There are many surveys showing that people go on identifying themselves as Catholics and also be in favor of Sexual Rights, abortion, etc.

The interesting aspect is not the double moral standard. The important change is that people articulates their system of beliefs with a concept of sexuality that has nothing to do with the Church says. They do not realize that it is a contradicton to be a Lesbian and Catholic, for example.



This is a gradual and silent change between religion and sexuality. It is not a case of double moral standard, but the articulation of a religious identification with a form of sexuality that has nothing to do with the ecclesial hierarchies.

The challenge is to understand that many people are still believers.

These changes are both individual and collective. There are churches that change their perspective toward sexual diversity. Feminism and LGBTBI groups also impact the religious system, not only the systems of belief as they influence each other mutually. It's a two-way road. The example of the Anglican church that accepts gay, transgender and lesbican bishops takes us close to this idea

Changes are generated on the sexuality level: theologies are reinterpreted and have a political impact that needs to be explored.

Theology is not only a religious discourse, it is also political. There are levels of pluralization within the system of beliefs and gaps are opened.

When we think about religion and sexuality, these two views must always be taken into account.

Strategies to politicize the pluralism. Making dissenting Catholics visible is important to show that we are not monolytic.

Pluralism within the different religious manifestations. There is not a single vertex.

How can we manage to achieve societies with more justice?

Juan Marco Vaggione presented a research by Awid on religious fundamentalisms (www.awid.org)

What else can we call the religious FUNDAMENTALISMS?
NEO-INTEGRISMS

PELVIC ORTHODOXIES.

According to participantes, the discussion was fundamental to find the clearest route to the articulation with other movements. Linking fundamentalisms to poverty is a key issue. It helped understand that the churches, as they are instruments of capitalism to manipulate and control people's lives, cannot go unnoticed and we have to study the mechanisms that each of them utilizes to maintain people in spite of the modernity around them. The idea of articulating with actions and strategies that are not fundamentalist was also included.

This module brought the consciousness that fundamentalisms are making new proposals to attract more and more people. And yes, their strategies are working and that is why they are so dangerous to LGBTI people, they are united in speech, however LGBTI are scattered in left-wing instances.

Strategies against fundamentalisms

ROSA POSA GUINEA

We will now analyze, on one hand, potential local actions (thinking in contents, objectives, places, allies, adverse reactions, how to face them and unforeseen and undesired consequences) and the other hand simultaneous action or actions.

This is the result of the work in groups:



Common strategies:

- support strategies of Catholics for a Choice
- support the Campaigning for a Inter-American Convention of Sexual Rights Reproductive Rights
- Disseminate and join the proposal of Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights
- Disarticulate the ideological power of the Catholic Church
- Work on the unity of vulnerable groups by means of respect to diversity, by defending common points, by sharing criteria and information
- Celebration of the October 13th, the day of Lesbian rebelliousness
- Set up an electronic network to share information, alternative methods, art, etc. Networking (web, virtual radio)

- Create a slogan to advertise and stand up
- Zero Hour (painted hands)
- Journey not to forget the crimes and violence in the name of religious faith
- Latin American and Caribbean renegation
- “Shelter of the collective and diversified power” look for a word that represents something meaningful.

Local actions

- Ecuador: a meeting to discuss religious fundamentalisms with the purpose of politicizing the violence caused by the fundamentalist groups and discuss directly the fundamentalisms and another way of looking at the affected communities. We are supported by universities where this action can be carried out and non-LGBTI organizations, and also feminist professors. The potential adverse reactions may be a position against by fundamentalists and not the expected ones. We will face them by politicizing the violence that the church commits against our community. The unforeseen and undesired consequences are: not having sufficient support at the time of the contrary reaction.
- Ecuador: Propose a bill with a Code of Families for the purpose of having the State recognize the several types of families (not only the nuclear heterosexual model).

We are supported by groups of lawyers to write this bill, organizations that would corroborate this law and ministries to disseminate and promote the position on national level, of the constitutional court so that the law is promulgated. Potential adverse reactions are the bill does not follow to the floor. We will face it by holding debates, politicizing the law, inciting on the court and using jurisprudence. The unforeseen and undesired consequences would be not having enough budget and not having the required coverage in the media.

We are aware that fostering feasible strategies from an institute, that is, a special moment of meeting and learning, may result in



something naive, as the commitments when we go back home and land in “real life” may change. Likewise, the experience from previous institutes de institutos shows us that it is necessary to evaluate the scenario on the long term. Notwithstanding, several tangible ideas came up in this workshop, as for example to propose a generalized renegation, join the the Campaign for an Inter-American Convention on Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights (for those who are not part of it yet), take local and simultaneous actions, and also to make a thematic quilt to travel around the different countries of Latin

America and the Caribbean. It was also found that it is necessary to disseminate among the people the notion of sexual rights and reproductive rights. The workshop intended to outline, in the light of knowledge approached, strategies that we will see develop in each organization.

Conclusions

New bonds among the organizations were started, an example is the bond between a number of organizations from Nicaragua: “Punctually the information I received along the institute allowed me to interchange with two groups, Safo and DHSDH, we decided to put up the first Lesbian forum (Myths, realities and religion), many documents that were handed out during the Institute we reproduced and they resulted in great help as we think the topic of Religious Fundamentalisms something complex, complicated and Nicaragua has its peculiarities. Talking with the women’s movement an ongoing channel of communication was opened, concerning the topic of religious fundamentalisms.” Karla Bermúdez- Nicaragua. August, 2009

There are other bonds between participants that have to do with the development of joint strategies: “With Tatiana, Ana Lucia, Isis, we are trying to prepare a strategy for interchange and we are building a Caravan against religious fundamentalisms affecting LGTBI people which results in a tour throughout our countries with a number of activities... it is not ready yet” Karla Bermúdez, Nicaragua

“Through our blog and e-mail we will keep constantly in touch with the different organizations that attended the institute in order to help each other in the actions we wish to do and to share a little of the advancement in each of our groups.” Cristian King Dominican Republic

An achievement was to get to know better our rights...

Especially the knowledge of fundamentalisms, their roots and outreaches. Also, in the analysis of the contexts, on the links between religion and sexuality, etc. The more you know the more you trust, more legitimate it is (self perception of legitimacy) and guilty ideas from Christianity are abandoned to uncover the political and economic interests behind it.

This could be seen in the participants' accounts.

"The truth is the institute helped me a lot, I assimilated much of what I learned,

not only in my speech, but also in the actions I do, for example in the workshops for capacity-building that I used to deliver to youth promoters of sexual and reproductive health under the framework of the Project Ser Jóvenes (being a youth), as well as in some presentations ..."

Eduardo Juarez, Perú

¿Did the knowledge people have of LGBTI rights increase?

One can see that through the actions that participants do in their original organizations or independently. Let's talk a look at the analysis by a participant in August 2009: "In the last year, after the conference in Brazil it was very useful to me in order to learn different strategies, both against fundamentalisms and in politics, no matter how weird this may sound as listening to the experience of others helps you understand new stuff and utilize them in your own country.

When I came back home to Bolivia together with other activists we put a plan in place with family members who are fervorous

Catholics and they stand for us and do not agree with manifest by Benedictus 16th and this was very interesting, we did several workshops and those family members of ours referred to passages in the Bible or papal documents and the alike to show their approval of us"

Clayvert Alcon, Bolivia.

To this day participants have performed a number of actions. Activities are plenty and very diversified, from a video against fundamentalisms (Michel - Chile and Ana Lucia - Colombia), to advertising campaigns (Horacio - Uruguay), actions to support bills of law (Pablino - Paraguay), theatrical works against discrimination (Ana Francis - Mexico), etc. IGLHRC finds it hard to measure the social impact of such actions, but anyone can deduce how great they are.

Changes occurring in public policies in the different countries are the result of a sum of factors influencing reality: incidence of local organizations, political opportunity, more progressive instances and associated with HR advocacy, etc. When, from LAC IGLHRC, we intend to strengthen the movement by providing capacity-building we also look for visible successes in a further instance. When success is present we know our actions contributed to it, which merges with the great majority of facts, ideas and circumstances affecting the changes. The fact that participants in our institutes (1,2, and 3) are in a visible position in the incidence for LGTBI rights in OAS is due to the work of local organizations, and also the personal worth of the activists, the

current situation of that international instance, many more factors among those is our humble effort to strengthen the movement.

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