

Challenge-Based Learning Collaboration

**Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Ajuntament de Terrassa (Barcelona)**

Discrimination among Youth Groups in the City of Terrassa

FINAL REPORT

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Challenge-Based Learning Collaboration UAB - Ajuntament de Terrassa (Barcelona)

1. Challenge Description

The Team copes initially with a general definition of the challenge being:

Discrimination among Youth Groups in the city of Terrassa

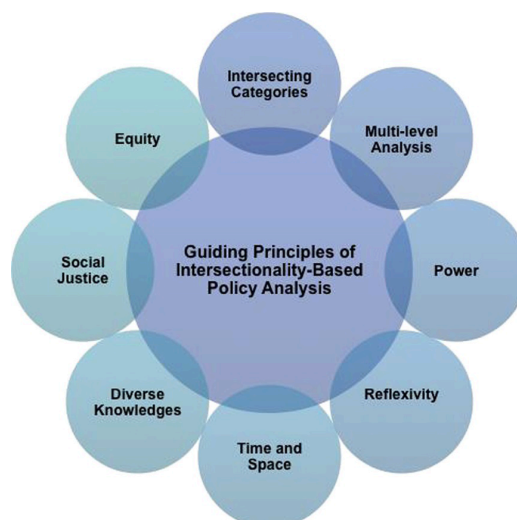
After the Team meets with the Teresa del Amo Busto, representative of public policies in Participation, Democratic Quality, and Human Rights at the Municipality of Terrassa, it is possible to make the challenge concrete and to link it to two main goals / needs:

- Dissemination and awareness raising among youth groups to involve youngsters into a sensitization process to identify and notify situations / experiences, either individual or collective, of discrimination in the city.
- Data collecting and monitoring of discrimination(s) taking place on the way to creating an Observatory for Non-Discrimination in Terrassa.

2. Methodological Approach

With the goal of elaborating a situated analysis of the state of affairs for specific youth groups sharing similar material life conditions in the City of Terrassa, we decided to implement a Gendered analysis understood and articulated in intersectional terms, that is, taking into account different axes of discrimination, being age and class undoubtedly relevant in this case. But also space.

The Municipality of Terrassa is well acquainted with the employed methodology and, therefore, a clearly productive synergy was established from the start of the collaboration led by efforts to follow the guiding principles of intersectionality-based policy analysis as shown in the figure below: (Hankivsky et al. International Journal for Equity in Health 2014, 13:119 Page 10 of 16 <http://www.equityhealthj.com/content/13/1/119>)



Also, a new digital tool has been recently developed by a group of Catalan researchers at the UPF (<https://reliefmaps.cat/en/about>) for the study and visualization of social inequalities according to three dimensions: social, geographical, and psychological. This perspective adds complexity to the methodological approach by relating as factors of inequality places in daily life and emotions.

3. Taking Action

With the former considerations in mind, the Team took action by meeting with

- intersectionality experts (Júlia Pascual Bordas, PhD at UPF),
- public policy analysts (Sara Cuentas Ramírez, Technician at the Centre of Resources in Human Rights at the Observatory for Non-Discrimination by the Barcelona City Council),
- public policy makers (Eunice Romero, Director General of Migrations, Refuge and Anti-Racism at the Equity Department at the Generalitat de Catalunya).
- public youth policy officers (Casa Baumann, Youth Services Headquarters in the city of Terrassa)
- independent entities granting institutional / social justice (*Síndic de Greuges* or Ombudsman of the city of Terrassa, who is locally in charge of coordinating and responding to citizen complaints about wrong-doing by the public Administration in the horizon of defending fundamental rights and public liberties of citizen; *Col·lectiu Punt 6*, a diverse group of women architects, urban planners, and activists working in Catalunya from the city of Barcelona on the transformation of cities, neighborhoods, and architecture to fight discrimination and exclusion).

The Team met also with a few young women in La Caseta, a youth community center situated in a marginal neighborhood in Terrassa, Can Parellada, and with the social workers appointed there. This visit gave crucial information about the existing patterns of relationality and of mobility for young people of a specific class segment who are initially given less options / opportunities for socialization and, thereby, initially subject to all three dimensions of inequality deriving in discrimination.

4. Situated Description and Diagnosis of main Facts of Discrimination in Terrassa drawing from Can Parellada

a. Discrimination among young people:

According to what the Team was told, young people coming from marginal neighborhoods in the city of Terrassa experience several types of discrimination in their everyday life although not all are equally aware of it since their lives respond greatly to structural patterns of relationality related to their social status.

Discrimination is mainly experienced as less access or even as total lack of access to specific city areas such as the city center and, in particular, to public spaces. This includes access to certain schools (and thereby to a certain kind of education, more diverse) or shopping areas. To a large extent, this is due to a significant lack of

opportunities for mobility (only a few buses connect the neighborhood with the city center and even with other neighborhoods closer by and time tables are not necessarily kept).

Street access is limited even within the neighborhood due to ostensibly insufficient street lighting. Daily life spaces become thereby inhospitable and unsafe at night.

b. Seldom reporting of discrimination:

The Team was told that instances of discrimination are seldom reported, particularly among girls, and this is attributed to a sense of shame. The failure to address discrimination sometimes leading up to violence among young people contributes to normalizing these various situations taking place in daily life.

This failure results in a culture of silencing for young people that conforms to an environment where reporting or openly discussing discrimination and its effects in individuals and in groups is not only tacitly overridden or even banned but also explicitly.

c. Institutional distrust in public mechanisms to address discrimination:

The aforementioned culture of silence is at least partially explained by the institutional distrust young people express as regards the possibility of addressing issues relating to discrimination in order to challenge them.

While young individuals are aware of the City Council as an avenue for reporting discrimination, they likewise express a lack of confidence (in particular in local police forces) that a situated and timely solution can be provided. Questions arise: Is this mistrust rooted in the perception that the City Council may not fully understand their challenges, or is it due to lengthy and ineffective procedures to restore or even to build social justice anew in shared co-creative terms? Is dissatisfaction with the overall service delivery to young people a contributing factor?

Diagnosis suggests a crucial need to focus on building trust in the relationship between the City Council and young individuals. Without trust, the Team is told, the collection of necessary data to get a reliable picture of discrimination among youth groups in Terrassa is not only an arduous task, but compromised, and the authoritative options to take action diminished.

d. Public transport services and street lighting:

Public transport needs to improve reliability and to bring down the waiting times for buses. Mobility is a crucial matter for inclusion in marginal neighborhoods also in the city of Terrassa, and this includes offering to young people the possibility of filing a complaint to the relevant authorities, located at the city center. The lack of regular and simple access to the city center redoubles discrimination in that young people are not only discriminated against but they are not given the necessary means to formally complain about it. Consequently, young people often experience a deep sense of hopeless exclusion.

e. Safety concerns:

Safety concerns are a big worry for young people in Can Parellada, particularly for young women. Questions arise about their chances to walk freely at night and wait alone at bus stops. It remains to be analyzed if the installation of additional street lights might serve, at their proposal, as a potential solution to address these safety issues which constitute a clear discrimination by motives of age and gender.

5. Institutional Resources and Networks at Hand in Terrassa

In the Catalan context of public policy making with a Gender perspective, the Municipality of Terrassa is a pioneer in applying intersectionality for institutional matters. The project “Igualtats connectades” (*Connected Equalities*), created to promote new ways of planning that will allow more accurate and personalized answers to citizens witnesses this pioneering genuine interest.

Terrassa’s City Council has a historical trajectory of promoting equality and working against discrimination. The Council is structured in different municipal services, some of which directly address the axes of inequality: gender, sexual orientation, social class, race, origin, age, religion, and disabilities, among others.

The aim of these services is to ensure that the specificities of diverse groups are incorporated into public policies, in order to grant they are inclusive and, thus, prevent discrimination.

The City Council of Terrassa has developed a valuable document to approach the elaboration of guidelines to take action regarding discrimination of youth groups locally by means of intersectionality as in local policy making <https://www.terrassa.cat/interseccionalitat>

As it is stated in the document, when making policy at a local level, it is very important to raise the question about who the policy is referring to. In our case, we are referring to a very diverse community and it is therefore even more relevant to make sure all different needs are taken into account. Therefore, speaking to everyone involved is a requirement.

Why is it so important to make use of intersectionality as a methodology in local policy making?

- It shows us the limits of those political practices that fragment reality and do not allow us to address the complex structure of inequality.
- It allows us to go beyond the logic of policies aimed at “citizenship in general”, which is not effective in explaining the nuances and intricacy of the lives of real people.
- It gives us tools to address more effectively, efficiently, and foremost, fairly, inequalities that occur in our local environment.
- It helps us recognize the diversity of realities and needs of the citizens in our neighborhoods through a non-homogeneous lens.
- It warns us of how *via* public policies biases and thereby exclusions are also generated, depending on aspects such as how we define the person policies address or the (lacking) mechanisms of participation we establish thereto.

Whenever a municipal service is concerned (education, health, employment, sports, or culture), it is known for a fact that the different axes of inequality have a specific impact and effect. In order to subvert discrimination, to take this impact and effect into account is a requirement. For instance, class impacts on educational and health options to the point that it might redound in detriment to the quality of life. Gender and sexual orientation might adversely affect employment due to sexist discrimination in the labor market. Being a trans person might not allow sport development since this domain is organized in hierarchical binary terms.

Effective and fair policymaking is made possible when intersectionality translates into a critical cross-cutting analysis and diagnosis, that is, when municipal services carry out programs for implementation of policies based on the impact of the axes of inequality operating simultaneously in several arenas of social life. In this way, policymaking avoids the risk of turning indifferent to differences and precisely thereby it is able to make generally evident the structural condition of discrimination.

At the same time, in this explicit effort to address concrete yet structural issues of discrimination locally in a situated manner, context needs to be paid attention to in order for inequalities to be properly identified and acted upon. It is important that not only institutions take part in this identification process. Rather, it is equally relevant that citizens participate in becoming aware of discriminatory situations and, moreover, structures as well as of their complexity. Parallely, identification needs to be followed by a testing of the levels of support, complicity, and / or resistance that both citizens as well as other socially relevant actors might react with.

This collective approach to intersectional policy making amounting to sensitization of discrimination stands as well as an effective measure to prevent institutional segmentation. Municipalities are organized according to different societal challenging areas and they respond to different needs (cultural, budgetary, educational, etc.) and, therefore, segmentation might turn into an obstacle for not only effective but likewise policy making. The risk here consists of institutionally reproducing social discriminatory practices. Thus, new models of institutional organization need to be tested in order to avoid not only segmentation, but a reinforcement of discrimination. And this begins already with space distribution and, furthermore, with space partitioning.

As we have learned with Col·lectiu Punt 6, spaces can become artifacts of exclusion and, therefore, of the perpetuation of inequalities. But for this very same reason, they can also contribute to diminishing them. Intersectional consideration of space, working space in this case, helps coordinate support measures taking into account several axes of discrimination, because when various services are developed in the very same space, a shared vision of challenges is made possible and more sophisticated solutions might be fostered. To provide more informal meeting areas among professionals (coffee room, kitchen, etc.) facilitates interaction and allows for non-hierarchical patterns of approaching policy making as a collective and plural way of coping with complex social concerns such as discrimination.

A working space like this one is to be found to a very significant extent in **La Bauman. Punt de trobada jove**. Situated at the very heart of the city of Terrassa in an old Modernist building, this municipal facility offers in an extraordinarily competent way a variety of services to youth in Terrassa, such as counseling of different kinds, psychological support, opportunities for participation, work guidance, internet connection, etc. It is an open and safe space for young people with very concrete needs yet with motivation to try out new ways of being in the world and of relating. In this respect, La Bauman is no doubt an attractive platform for youth to take action and make a difference in the city at a societal level. However, not every young man or woman in Terrassa can get there as easily and youth in Can Parellada is an example of this very specific discrimination consisting in being excluded from this municipal service thanks to which young people become part of the city by getting actively involved in what takes place there.

The Team sees **La Bauman** as being a fundamental social, cultural and political actor to structurally challenge discrimination by empowering young people in Terrassa who otherwise lack the means to be actors on their own. It is obvious that a whole network can be built around La Bauman as its pulsing nut, as the facilitator of the circulation of relevant information and, thus, as capacitation for the life of marginalized young people to undergo a structural change.

La Bauman has potential to become a catalyst for true social and cultural change and, as such, to contribute to policy making against discrimination of youth groups in Terrassa, because it has the capacity to raise awareness and, thereby, to mobilize young people in favor of themselves and others.

At the same time, La Bauman has potential to become the developer of public engagement by organizing, disseminating, and hosting participatory processes calling young people into agency and assigning them specific tasks, the individual and collective transformative impact of which could be made clear and underlined by this very same young people from the start.

In one word, La Bauman could become a **living lab for transformative societal collaboration** resulting in co-creative projects designed and executed by young people, first and foremost from marginal neighborhoods in Terrassa, **against discrimination** or, rather, against the discrimination of themselves or of their peers.

The **first task** this collaboration should entail, which would at the same time **provide material for the** according to plan forthcoming **Observatory for Non-Discrimination in Terrassa**, would consist of finding reliable and trustworthy ways of collecting data that would count with the validation of youth groups in town.

In this respect, the Team views very positively **the participation in this process of the Ombudsman at the city of Terrassa**, both due to the appraisal the entity has been given by the entire citizenship via its representatives in the Municipality, and to the sustained fulfillment of the entity's commitment with the compliance of Human Rights in any case of discrimination.

However, given the importance for policy making to be connected to real needs and to avoid missing “basics”, the Team suggests to make use of the following questionnaire or alike as a means to preliminarily self-evaluate in intersectional terms any decision prior action is taken in relation to the main challenge (discrimination among youth groups in Terrassa) or subsidiary ones:

Questions to be asked when addressing the challenge:

- What is the challenge we want to address? Why is it considered a challenge?
- Who manifests the challenge? Whom does it affect and who are the agents involved?
- What inequalities are contemplated in relation to the challenge to be addressed?
- The challenge is defined from different visions (technical staff of the different axes of inequality, diversity of people and affected groups, other agents involved, etc.) to detect how it affects several groups in relation to the axes of inequality?
- Taking into account the context (historical, social, territorial, etc.), which axes of inequality are most relevant and require consideration?
- Are there any non-structural axes of inequality that should be taken into account in relation to the challenge (for example, the physical aspect, the fact of being a mother, etc.)?
- Are there important crossings between the axes of inequality (for example, gender and social class, etc.)?
- What services should be involved in the management of the challenges (both the axes of inequality and the specific areas)?
- What privileges, prejudices and/or stereotypes (by the technical teams, the affected groups and other agents involved) may be affecting the definition of the challenge or the affected groups?

6. Dissemination and Awareness raising. Policy making I

Awareness raising about and against discrimination is relevant, because it makes discrimination visible as a structurally hierarchical relational pattern based on differences such as gender, class, race, age, religion, sexual orientation, etc.

This is indeed important as well as necessary among youth groups, because, on the one hand, discrimination or, rather, discriminations very often are subtle and, therefore, difficult to acknowledge, and, on the other hand, due to their complex and even cross-cutting character, if they are acknowledged at all, this only happens partially.

In order to effectively counteract the effects, both individual and collective, of discrimination among youth groups, it is a priority to expose its naturalization, since the immediate consequence of it is blunt acceptance. It is important on the one hand to listen to those affected to some degree by discrimination, and this includes how they feel, what they need, how they want to be helped, all of it in order to avoid more discrimination. On the other hand it is important to find and to legitimize ways of life besides the hegemonic ones, to find and to legitimize cultural difference, diversity, heterogeneity, and to allow and provide new forms of belonging based on them.

Discrimination of young people perpetuates injustice, inequality, and division within society at very early stages of socialization, hindering the full realization of human rights, and potential for all individuals and communities. Addressing it requires concerted efforts at

multiple levels, including legislative reforms, educational initiatives, community engagement, and promoting empathy, understanding, and respect for diversity.

When the Team came to wear intersectional lenses and through them came to imagine engaging proposals for young people to become aware of discrimination and actions to support dissemination of these engaging proposals to be executed and shared, quite a few ideas emerged.

Before they became concrete, it was jointly stressed that youngsters in Terrassa should have the opportunity to openly and publicly discuss about discrimination among peers but also with adults. In this open dialogue schools and/or school programs should be included since the overall point here is to intervene in what we might call **a culture of discrimination**.

A culture of discrimination is characterized by systematic biases, prejudices, and unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on the already mentioned differences. In such a culture, discrimination may be overt or covert, and even embedded within societal norms, institutions, policies, and practices.

To designate the key features of discrimination is useful in order to uncover it as a culture and to stop considering them “normal” ways of relating to one another and also to institutions. Some of these are:

Prejudice: Deep-seated negative attitudes and beliefs held by individuals or groups towards others who are perceived as different.

Stereotyping: Simplified and often exaggerated beliefs about individuals or groups based on their membership in a particular category, leading to unfair generalizations and judgments.

Stigma: Exclusion or relegation of certain groups to the fringes of society, limiting their access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making processes.

Those three features lead to and even legitimize:

Microaggressions: Subtle, everyday verbal or nonverbal behaviors that convey derogatory messages or slights towards individuals or groups, often based on their identity.

Lack of Accountability: Absence of mechanisms to address discrimination and hold perpetrators accountable, allowing discriminatory behaviors to persist unchecked.

Normalization: Acceptance or normalization of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors within society, making it difficult to recognize and challenge discrimination.

In this respect, the Team wants to stress the highly valuable collaboration of the Ombudsman and the pedagogic task regarding Human Rights he is developing in the schools of Terrassa with children of all ages. This task could definitely strengthen the joint building of a different relational culture, inclusive and diverse, pointing towards a sustained open and public critique of discrimination.

A cogent action program could be laid down with specific participatory activities such as play-based workshops to encourage children and youngsters to express their thoughts and feelings, to ask questions, to share doubts and concerns, to open up about experiences of discrimination in a safe and supportive environment. Parallely, family members could be included at any point as part of the organization committee for capacitation and future enabling and comfortable guidance on how to take on their children’s expression about

discrimination taking into account the diverse backgrounds they share. Youth community centers in Terrassa, such as La Caseta in Can Parellada, could definitely be part of this educational network devoted to subverting the culture of discrimination.

Having made contact with the Observatory for Non-Discrimination at the Municipality of Barcelona, the framework for the ideas that emerged within the Team to counteract this culture of discrimination was the *Trobada Barcelona Ciutat Diversa* (Meeting Barcelona Diverse City):

https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/consell-municipal-immigracio/sites/default/files/documents/bcn_ciutat_diversa_2023.pdf

The Team has decided to suggest **two major activities** to inaugurate the **living lab for transformative societal collaboration against discrimination** in the city of Terrassa that could take place every half year around the same date so citizens would know in advance and count on them as social landmarks:

- a. The first one is a **local Open Day(s) and/or Open house(s)** for entities taking part of the network, the main not of which would be **La Bauman**. Materials translated into different languages could be produced and distributed by young people and a program of activities could be developed to make public the task these local entities bring about daily in Terrassa.
- b. The second one is a **local fair**, for the promotion of local entities, but also to share information about municipal services, to provide individual “testing” for discrimination, to organize joint ludic and pedagogical activities, etc. The results of this coming-together should be shared afterwards in social media for young people to disseminate.

The Fair would engage a very diverse range of actors to counteract discrimination in the city of Terrassa, including a variety of stakeholders taking part in the living lab.

The main broader goal of the fair would be creating social cohesion, fostering new community ties and strengthening the sense of belonging.

The Fair could be itinerant and take place every year in a different neighborhood and activities would be planned in order to with an intersectional perspective address prejudice, stereotype and stigma as the key features of discrimination in general terms but also specifically referring to youth groups in marginal neighborhoods in Terrassa. Youngsters would need to be involved in organization and preparation all the way up to the celebration of the fair. Previous mapping and call of youth community centers in Terrassa would be necessary. Access for everyone, also disabled young people, should be granted. Spaces, both interior and exterior should be safe to everyone, especially young women and trans people. Discrimination should be avoided by all means, needless to say.

Certain activities could be planned to collect data and disseminate information about discrimination in the city. Tailor-made materials could be handed and/or tried out such as relief maps, surveys or anonymous questionnaires. Games could be organized to foster a caring environment and trust to share experiences of discrimination across ages.

The Team strongly suggests to organize a central gathering around food and food making and food sharing as a savory way of celebrating the diversity of cultures in Terrassa but also to engage in a solidarian collect for people in need. Linked thereto an exchange market could

be organized as a form of mutual aid and support as a contribution to the sustainability of collective life.

There is an online platform that might be helpful or even inspirational in this respect to understand the needs, the aspirations, the challenges faced by young people in the city: YOUTH MAPPING IN TERRASSA <https://engage.youth.gov/resources/youth-mapping>

7. Gathering Data. Policy making II

Data collecting and monitoring of discrimination(s) taking place in Terrassa is a crucial activity with the goal of creating an Observatory for Non-Discrimination in the city.

To use the term “Observatory” as an institutional designation implies a systematic and ongoing effort to document and respond to instances of discrimination, contributing to a better understanding of the challenges faced by marginalized or vulnerable groups in society, in this case, of youth groups.

The main aim behind it is to create a more inclusive and just society by addressing and eliminating discriminatory practices. For the Municipality of Terrassa, the Team believes, this monitoring is of utmost importance to track and evaluate the change that is required to take place in the city. More importantly in areas such as Can Parellada, where there is less access to resources and less information dissemination on support services for reporting discrimination, and unfortunately less trust in authoritative support such as the police.

To sufficiently observe and record discrimination instances amongst young people in Terrassa, resources are required to enable the necessary research, data collection, and analysis. This will help to identify instances of discrimination, inequality, or injustice that are prolific, and additionally, track patterns in the types of discrimination that young people are experiencing. Through this, the opportunity to identify recurring themes will occur, and then social policies, resources and other practical measures can be applied to encourage change in Terrassa.

Currently, we understand there is an Excel spreadsheet in use that enables the Municipality of Terrassa to track the ongoing reporting of discrimination. Transitioning from an Excel spreadsheet to a more improved, low-cost, and sustainable method for observing and monitoring discrimination in young people in Terrassa can involve leveraging technology and community engagement.

Here are some reflections and suggestions regarding other means to identify and map discriminations among youth groups in Terrassa:

1. Mobile App or Web Platform:

- Develop a simple mobile app or web platform where users (individuals, community leaders, educators, etc.) can report incidents of discrimination.
- Include easy-to-use forms that capture relevant details such as the nature of discrimination, location, time, and people involved.
- Ensure the app/platform is accessible and user-friendly for individuals from diverse backgrounds.

- Allow users to submit reports anonymously to encourage more people to share their experiences without fear of retaliation. As mentioned by the Ombudsman, sometimes being heard is enough to help the victim of discrimination feel supported after the incident, and gain closure.
- Implement security measures to protect the privacy and identity of those reporting incidents.

2. Geotagging and Data Visualization:

- Utilize geotagging to map reported incidents, providing a spatial understanding of discrimination hotspots. This does not have to be a tool that is shared with the public but rather a resource the Municipality of Terrassa can use to closely monitor and observe, and implement practical tools (supported by recommendations from community leaders) to create safer spaces.
- Use data visualization tools to create interactive maps and charts that can be easily understood by community members and stakeholders.

3. Community Workshops and Training:

- Conduct workshops in schools and youth centers, to educate young people about discrimination, its various forms, and the importance of reporting incidents. Without the understanding that you have experienced a type of discrimination, you will not consider reporting it.
- Potentially, integrating the reporting tool into these workshops will encourage real-time reporting and engagement.
- Establishing partnerships with local community organizations, schools, and youth centers will promote the use of the reporting platform, as these individuals are more trusted and respected by the young people they work with.

4. Social Media Integration:

- Integrate the reporting tool with popular social media platforms to reach a wider audience and encourage sharing.
- Create a social media presence to share information, updates, and success stories related to combating discrimination.

5. Data Analysis and Reporting:

- Implement automated data analysis tools (if resources allow) to identify trends and patterns in reported incidents. This suggestion can be something to consider in the future once new tools are running.
- Generate regular reports summarizing the data and highlighting areas that may need targeted interventions.

6. Feedback:

- Implement a feedback mechanism within the platform to keep users informed about actions taken in response to reported incidents.
- Use feedback from users to continuously improve the reporting system and community initiatives.

The multifaceted approach suggested above combines technology, community engagement, and education to create a more accessible and sustainable system for observing and monitoring discrimination in young people in Terrassa.

Here are two examples of how data could be gathered and used in Terrassa.

- Bologna interactive Gender Atlas
<https://es.linkedin.com/pulse/bologna-tiene-un-nuevo-atlante-di-genere-300-000km-s-sfqze>
- Barcelona Discrimination Observatory
<https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/oficina-no-discriminacio/en/discrimination-observatory>