

“Proyecto de Sensibilización Trans y/o No-Binarie” - Nielson Grant Report

Project Description

Project Title: Trans and Non-binary Anti-discrimination Training Project: Facilitadores Trans Sensibilizando Servicios Públicos en Costa Rica, from here on referred to as Transflorar.

Mission and Goals: This project is aimed at addressing the urgent need for public service personnel in Costa Rica to be trained in anti-discriminatory practices against gender-expansive individuals. The mission is to educate and inform public employees—ranging from hospital staff to government office workers—about the experiences and needs of trans and non-binary individuals. By doing so, the project seeks to reduce instances of discrimination which can lead to denial of essential services and support.

Project Background: Partnered with the local activist group No-Binarie Costa Rica, this initiative builds upon ongoing efforts to create safe and inclusive environments for trans and non-binary people in Costa Rica. No-Binarie Costa Rica has been actively involved in political activism and community building, focusing on the rights and protections of gender-expansive individuals under Costa Rican law.

Importance of Work and Community Relationship: The work of this project is critical in fostering understanding and reducing systemic discrimination within public services, which often have direct consequences on the well-being and survival of trans and non-binary individuals. The project leverages the lived experiences and expertise of trans and non-binary facilitators to provide authentic and impactful education.

Impacted Community and Stakeholders: The primary beneficiaries are trans and non-binary individuals who frequently face discrimination in accessing public services. Secondary beneficiaries include public service employees who are receiving training to improve their interactions and service delivery to the trans and non-binary community.

Project Colleagues and Collaborators: The project was supported by No-Binarie Costa Rica and included consultations with external experts such as Prof. Mar Fournier, Keyra Martinez from TransVida, Soraya Vallejos from ASODIVERSIDAD, Emmeril Morales from No-Binarie CR, and lawyer and independent activist Jota Vargas. The project also developed collaborations with public institutions like the University of Costa Rica (UCR), which provided spaces and audiences for the workshops.

Additional Support: Funding was primarily provided by the Nielson Social Change Innovation Grant. The project also received in-kind support from local organizations, including donations of materials and logistical assistance. Additionally, Colectivo Flor y

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Miel contributed by donating materials such as condoms, lubricants, and informational resources on safe substance use, enhancing the educational resources available during the workshops.

Implementation Timeline & Structure

Methodology: Transflorar employed a structured, multi-phase approach to equip trans activists with the knowledge and skills needed to counteract discrimination against trans and non-binary individuals. This involved initial training sessions, combining theoretical education with practical application.

Detailed Timeline:

Announcement and Applications:

- **July 2nd:** Announcement details and applications were released through the social media of No-Binarie and partner organizations (Les Cucarachas, Siwo Alar, Transvida, Asodiversidad de Puntarenas).
- **July 9th:** Deadline for applications, ensuring participants were committed and met the required criteria.
- **July 10th:** Selection results were shared with applicants, confirming the list of participants for the training camp.

Training Camp Dates and Activities:

- **July 14th, 21st, and 28th (Sundays):** Training sessions conducted from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm at Casa Javorai. These sessions included:
 - **First Weekend (July 14th):**
 - **Realidades de las Mujeres Trans en la Periferia:** This workshop focused on the lived experiences of trans women in peripheral areas, highlighting the specific challenges they face. It was presented by Soraya Vallejos from Asodiversidad.
 - **Asesoría Legal en Derechos:** “Estado actual y herramientas disponibles” by Jota Vargas: This session provided legal advice on the current state of rights and the tools available for trans and non-binary individuals in Costa Rica.
 - **Second Weekend (July 21st):**
 - **Manejo de Conflictos en Público y Facilitación:** This workshop aimed at training participants on how to handle public conflicts and improve their facilitation skills. This workshop was given by psychology professor Mar Fournier.

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- **Diversidad y Género: Historia de la Comunidad Trans y No Binarie:** Focused on the history of the trans and non-binary community, emphasizing diversity and gender issues, particularly in terms of human rights and a cartography of Costa Rica’s trans and non-binary history. This workshop was given by Keyra Martinez from TransVida.
- **Third Weekend (July 28th):**
 - **Interseccionalidad:** “Comprendiendo las Diferencias Dentro de la Comunidad Trans y No Binarie” by Emmeril Morales: This session explored intersectionality, understanding the differences within the trans and non-binary community to foster inclusivity, particularly the most updated terminology and resources to prepare trainings related to gender and sexuality.
 - **Manejo del Conflicto en Capacitaciones:** This session was dedicated to conflict management during training sessions, equipping participants with strategies to handle disagreements and facilitate constructive dialogues in educational settings. This workshop was provided by Theo Rojas Castro, part of the organizing team of the project.

Follow-up and Distribution:

- **Early August:** Follow-up information was provided to participants, including contact details for the facilitator roster and evaluation forms. The first two weeks of august were used for participants to create their own personalized materials based off the training given and materials provided during previous weeks.
- **Mid-August:** Materials finalized during the camp as well as created individually by the participants were corrected, printed as necessary and prepared for distribution.
- **Late-August:** Distribution of educational materials to public institutions began, with the first round of workshops offered at the University of Costa Rica and other locations. Further workshops have been programmed for mid and late September as requested by the personnel at the University of Costa Rica.

Locations: The primary activities were held at Casa Javorai, with additional workshops and distribution of materials taking place across various public institutions including universities, hospitals, and government offices.

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Expense Reporting

The funds for the Transflorar project were allocated and spent across various essential categories to ensure the successful implementation and execution of the training sessions. Below is a breakdown of the major expense categories:

- **Venue Rental:**
 - **Total Cost:** 200,000 CRC for venue rental during the training sessions.
- **Facilitator Fees:**
 - **Soraya Vallejos from Asodiversidad:** 200,000 CRC (workshop facilitation + food and transportation due to rural location of the activist).
 - **Jota Vargas, Keyra Martinez, Mar Fournier, Emmeril Morales and Theo Rojas Castro:** 175,000 CRC each (1.275,000 CRC) for facilitation across different weekends.
- **Materials and Supplies:**
 - **General Supplies (papers, pens, beverages (milk, snacks, coffee, etc):** 100,000 CRC.
 - **Specific Workshop Materials:** 50,000 CRC for additional materials used during the workshops such as extensive law project printing.
- **Transportation and Logistics:**
 - **Catering and Meals:**
 - **All weeks:** Lunches + Snacks for 20 indiv. 650,000 CRC for meals during the workshops.
- **Other Direct Costs:**
 - **Extra Rentals and Services at Casa Javorai:** 50,000 CRC.
 - **Emergency Fund/Contingency:** Used for unforeseen expenses during the project implementation.

TOTAL EXPENSES: 2.525,000 CRC (\$4950)

Achievements

The Transflorar project achieved significant milestones in its mission to train public service personnel in anti-discriminatory practices towards trans and non-binary individuals. Key achievements include:

- **Successful Training Sessions:** Over three in-person weekends in July and two asynchronous weekends in August, Transflorar conducted comprehensive training sessions attended by experienced activists and professionals from the trans and non-binary community. Topics covered ranged from legal rights and diversity to conflict management and intersectionality, all aimed to train activists

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on the skills needed to promote a more inclusive and understanding service environment from public employees.

- **Creation of Educational Materials:** The project developed a range of materials tailored for public service use, which included best practices for interaction with trans and non-binary individuals and guides on using inclusive language and pronouns. These materials have been distributed to various public institutions and are set to be used in ongoing training efforts.
- **Community Engagement and Participation:** The project successfully engaged a diverse group of participants, including key stakeholders from the trans and non-binary communities, who actively contributed to the discussions and shared their experiences, thus enhancing the relevance and impact of the training provided.
- **Strengthened Partnerships:** By collaborating with organizations like No-Binarie Costa Rica and other local activist groups, Transflorar has strengthened the network of support for trans and non-binary rights and advocacy, paving the way for future initiatives.

Challenges

Despite its many successes, the Transflorar project encountered several challenges that tested the resilience and adaptability of the team and participants. Key challenges included:

- **Participant Coordination:** Managing and coordinating the schedules and availability of participants, especially given the diverse group involved in terms of the address of the individuals as well as age and professional diversity, posed logistical challenges. Ensuring everyone could attend and fully participate required flexible planning and continuous communication.
- **Content Delivery:** Tailoring the training content to suit the varied levels of understanding and experience among the attendees presented difficulties. Facilitators had to adjust methodologies to ensure that all participants could engage with and absorb the complex topics covered.
- **Impact Measurement:** Gauging the immediate impact of the training on participants' professional behavior and the broader organizational culture was challenging. The team planned follow-up surveys and feedback sessions to better understand the training's effectiveness and areas for improvement.

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Impact

The Transflorar project has made significant strides in fostering change within public service sectors and the broader community in Costa Rica, contributing to a deeper understanding and respect for trans and non-binary individuals. Key impacts of the project include:

- **Increased Awareness and Sensitivity:** Participants reported a marked increase in their understanding of the nuances involved in serving trans and non-binary communities. This enhanced awareness is reflected in their improved interactions and more thoughtful consideration of inclusive practices.
- **Advocacy and Allyship:** Empowered with new knowledge, many participants have become active allies within their workplaces, advocating for policy changes and better support structures for trans and non-binary colleagues and clients.
- **Community Empowerment:** The project has empowered trans and non-binary individuals by providing them with the tools and knowledge to advocate for their rights effectively. This empowerment has also fostered a sense of community and mutual support among participants.
- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Transflorar has strengthened ties between various advocacy groups and public institutions, leading to more collaborative efforts toward inclusivity and respect for gender diversity.
- **Testimonials and Stories:** Participants and facilitators have shared compelling testimonials and stories about how the project has positively affected their professional practices and personal lives. These narratives underscore the tangible benefits of such training programs.

The impact of Transflorar extends beyond the immediate training sessions, promising ongoing improvements in how public services engage with and support the trans and non-binary community. Continued efforts and follow-ups are planned to ensure that these changes are sustainable and evolving.

The impact of Transflorar on its participants is a testament to the power of targeted educational initiatives in fostering understanding and respect for diversity. The project's influence is expected to grow as these trained individuals continue to apply and spread their knowledge, ensuring ongoing improvements in the treatment of trans and non-binary individuals in public services. The plan is to replicate these workshops in future months both in person and online, as in our first round, we had more than double the applicants than the number of spots we could offer. The beauty of this project is that our first round of trainees are now able to replicate the knowledge they acquired and provide it to other trans and/or non-binary individuals through the platform that Transflorar has created.

Reflections

The Transflorar project provided numerous learning opportunities and insights into effective practices for promoting inclusivity and understanding within public services. Reflecting on these experiences has highlighted several key aspects:

- **Effective Practices:**

- **Interactive Training:** The use of interactive workshops and real-life scenarios proved extremely effective in engaging participants and facilitating deep understanding. This hands-on approach helped cement the knowledge and skills necessary for inclusive practices.
- **Diverse Facilitation:** Having a diverse group of facilitators from the trans and non-binary community enriched the training, providing authentic voices and firsthand experiences that resonated strongly with participants.
- **Continuous Feedback:** Implementing a continuous feedback mechanism throughout the training sessions allowed for real-time adjustments and ensured that the content was relevant and impactful for all participants.

- **Areas for Improvement:**

- **Broader Participant Base:** Future initiatives could benefit from involving a wider range of public service sectors (and facilitators) to spread the impact of the training more broadly across different areas of public interaction, particularly in terms of cities and services outside of the GAM (Great Metropolitan Area, the most centric provinces of the country)
- **Follow-up Sessions:** Incorporating follow-up sessions or refresher courses could help reinforce the training's teachings and address any ongoing challenges participants face in their workplaces.
- **Expanded Resource Allocation:** Greater resources could be allocated towards developing more comprehensive materials and perhaps digital resources, which could be accessed more widely and support ongoing learning.

- **Personal Reflections:**

- The project underscored the critical importance of education in combating discrimination and fostering a supportive environment for trans and non-binary individuals. The positive responses and proactive changes observed among participants have been highly encouraging and motivate continued efforts in this direction.
- As organizers, we have seen a set of connections and changes happen as the weeks progressed. Some of our trainees are as young as 18 and others much older, up to 50 years old. We have seen them connect, learn from each other, and regain hope in their activism through a project that meets the reality of our country's political scenario. This emphasis on

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taking what is available and not getting discouraged by the situation created by the government in power, has allowed us to truly see that what we proposed with this project is not only needed for our community as a whole, but also empowering on an individual level for each person that has participated in it.

The Transflorar project has set a strong foundation for our future work in this area, and these reflections will guide the refinement and expansion of similar initiatives.

Conclusions & Next Steps

Conclusions: The Transflorar project has successfully achieved its goal of raising awareness and fostering inclusivity within public services for trans and non-binary individuals in Costa Rica. The project's structured training sessions, comprehensive materials, and active engagement of diverse stakeholders have contributed significantly to the positive shifts observed in participant attitudes and behaviors. The collaboration with organizations like No-Binarie Costa Rica has further strengthened the advocacy network and supported the sustained impact of the training. Our goal is for the project to continue in the shape of the workshops we are continuously setting up with public services, as well as replicating the training for trans and/or non-binary individuals in other formats and timelines.

Next Steps:

- **Expansion of Training Programs:** Based on the success of the initial sessions, a key next step is the expansion of the training program to include more public service sectors, such as law enforcement and healthcare providers, to ensure a broader impact.
- **Development of Digital Resources:** To reach a wider audience and provide ongoing support to past participants, developing digital training resources and an online platform for continuous education and community engagement is planned.
- **Longitudinal Impact Study:** Implementing a longitudinal study to assess the long-term impact of the training on service delivery and community relations will help quantify the changes and provide data to inform further policy and practice adjustments. We are providing guidance for as well as on-going data collection and training for the services that have agreed to work with us. This will allow us to not only collect data, but also correct and adapt our program as needed by our audience.
- **Securing Additional Funding:** To support these initiatives, efforts will be focused on securing additional funding and exploring partnerships with other organizations committed to diversity and inclusion. Thankfully our project has invested in creating an information bank that now helps us replicate this project

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through the volunteer work of our trainees both in public services, and for other trainees by teaching back the knowledge they acquired over the weeks of training we provided.

- These steps are designed to build on the project's achievements and address the ongoing needs of the trans and non-binary community, ensuring that the progress made is sustainable and continually evolving.

Supplementary Media

In support of this report, we have included various forms of media that further illustrate the impact and activities of the Transflorar project:

- **Photographs:** A set of photos capturing key moments from the training sessions, showcasing participant engagement and the interactive nature of the workshops.
- **Digital Materials:** Links to downloadable versions of the training materials used during the sessions, which can be accessed for further reference and use by public service personnel.

These resources are intended to provide access to the project's activities and their impact, serving as a valuable tool for future training initiatives and advocacy work.

Personalized Thank You

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Nielson Family and the Center for Social Change & Community Involvement for their generous support of the Transflorar project. Your commitment to fostering social change and supporting educational initiatives has been instrumental in the success of this project. Thanks to your backing, we have been able to make significant strides towards a more inclusive and understanding society for trans and non-binary individuals in Costa Rica.

Your continued support inspires us and reinforces the importance of community involvement in driving positive change. This project believes in the power of taking what you have and making the best of it. And you have provided us with a great head start in order to use the amazing human capital we have. Our passion for this project is ongoing, and we look forward to further collaboration to build on the success of this project and continue our shared mission of promoting diversity and inclusivity throughout the world, starting in Portland, passing through Costa Rica, and all the way to each of the cities and countries your grant has and will touch. Once again, thank you!

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First day of workshops at Casa Javorai. Participants listened to lawyer and human rights activist Jota Vargas, who gave a workshop on current jurisdiction, law projects and protections for LGBTQIA+ individuals under the Costa Rican law.

Links for our drive with all materials collected from our trainings and logistics:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/19zX_r1T28bGPswHPyPcP0QJqTYLgPIHK?usp=share_link