

II MIGRANT AND DIVERSE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY FAIR

WE CONTINUE BUILDING ANTI-RACIST ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVES

At the beginning of 2020, our lives underwent major transformations due to the current COVID 19 pandemic, which impacted all sectors in our society, and in particular it considerably affected migrants who were already in a disadvantageous situation.

It revealed how we migrants are the ones who have been taking care of many tasks that are considered essential work, and that we undertake these tasks mired in precariousness and exploitation. It is also revealed how the racist discourses and practices re-emerge with more force during crisis, added to the social and state violence that we endure every day of our lives.

Despite our mobilization, and the mobilization of other allied sectors, we have not been able to repeal the regulations on immigration, which make it impossible for us to exercise all our rights and exclude us from governments' mitigating measures in response to the social and economic crisis. We are well aware that growing militarization of borders, criminalization of migrant bodies, and maximum restriction of our rights are no other than extensions of the colonial policies that have been expanding on our lands and communities for centuries.

In this context, it was our own efforts of self-organization that allowed many of our families access to minimal things. Despite these difficult conditions, various anti-racist groups in the city demonstrated how solidarity and mutual support networks have become a fundamental tool for community response to the new scenario under adverse circumstances. The conditions of the pandemic have made severely visible that the capitalist system is not sustainable, and it is necessary to continue building economic alternatives that put life and community at the centre, now more than ever.

It is this organizational capacity that we want to put at the service of a truly transformative economic movement. A social and solidarity economy movement that would fundamentally question the conditions that force people to migrate: armed conflicts, environmental disasters resulting from climate change and global warming, free trade agreements, among others. A social and solidarity economy movement that would stand up for the defence of our rights, of those of us who swell the armies of cheap labour in order to be employed in strategic sectors of the economy, under conditions of exploitation and devoid of rights.

This is the challenge we would like to propose to the Social and Solidarity Economy. We believe that it will be truly transformative if it is capable of putting itself at the service of popular sectors, among them migrant communities, in order to remove specific obstacles and to contribute to the solution of difficulties and limitations on undertaking self-managed economic projects. The challenge is not only that the SSE should create jobs that will enable residence and work permits, or strengthen hundreds of solidarity-based economic initiatives that are being developed informally and are threatened by their weak support network and lack of financing; but the challenge is to be able to incorporate the diversity of Catalan associative fabric, by questioning the reproduction of stereotypes, paternalism and assistantialism, which allow racism to be reproduced within the SSE. The challenge is to make the SSE fabric a reflection of composition of our society [1].

The recognition of organized migrant force as well as the need to meet again and have a space where migrant economic projects can manifest their strength, diversity and transforming capacity is what leads to the *Cercle de Migracions i Economia Cooperativa* of *Coòpolis-Ateneu Cooperatiu de Barcelona* to call for the 2nd edition of Migrant and Diverse Solidarity Economy Fair.

The invitation is to make the Fair a space to bring our cultures and languages together that will foster intercultural dialogue as a strategy to confront racism, opening the debate on its current consequences. It will also be a space to discuss the construction of the political subject of the SSE, and the limitations and challenges of participation and involvement, in a leading manner, in all stages of the economic cycle (production, distribution and consumption) by reinforcing community relations.

That is why we invite more than 100 projects that participated in the 1st edition, and all those projects that want to join the 2nd edition of Migrant and Diverse Solidarity Economy Fair, which will take place in the neighbourhood centre of Can Batlló this June 26th, from 10 am on. The call is also open for migrant and diverse collectives and people with economic initiatives/businesses/projects (with or without legal form) to join us. Together, we can contribute to the construction of a diverse and transformative economy.

[1] This is how the Social Balance of the XES (Solidarity-based Economy Network) for this same year puts forth that only 4% of the workers of the SSE entities are of diverse origin.