

## Application Guidelines

21.08.2020

### Support Program „Reducing Inequalities Through Intersectional Practice“

#### Thematic Focus

The Robert Bosch Stiftung is embarking on an effort to *learn with and from* partner organizations that bring significant knowledge and hands-on experience with the application of intersectional approaches to challenging inequalities.

The Support Program recognizes that these approaches may not actively use the term *intersectionality* in an explicit sense, even though they may be informed by and applying its core tenets.

#### Intersectional Practice

Intersectionality is broadly understood as “the intersection between gender, race and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power.”<sup>i</sup>

First coined by the scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw<sup>ii</sup>, intersectionality provides a powerful framework through which to both understand and transform the underlying systems and processes that define and shape inequalities of all kinds. It acknowledges that the unique interplay between different social identities and locations produces distinct experiences of inequality. Significantly, intersectionality analyzes the role, function and effects of power in producing these inequalities, calling attention to the interdependent nature of systems of domination and oppression.<sup>iii</sup> Beyond deconstructing and critiquing power, intersectionality also offers the possibility to confront, disrupt and transform power in ways that advance social justice, solidarity and equity. The voice, agency, knowledge and experiences of those impacted by intersecting inequalities are central within this.

While efforts to address discrimination and marginalization have often overlooked the realities of those who are multiply disadvantaged, in recent years intersectional approaches to challenging inequalities have started to gain traction. Communities that face intersectional discrimination are organizing and mobilizing to claim their rights. Within social movements, for example, efforts are being made to meaningfully include

the voices and priorities of communities which have previously been left out. In parallel, linkages across issues and struggles are being forged, leading to new and potentially more effective alliances. There are emergent efforts within established INGOs, foundations and development agencies, often spearheaded by champions within the organization, to introduce and embed intersectional perspectives within ongoing work. Tools and frameworks are being made available to undertake intersectional analysis, which is increasingly understood as a necessary component of program design. At the level of policy, with the commitment to “leave no one behind,” the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also provides a promising platform through which to optimize the implementation of the SDGs with an intersectional lens. The various proposals for the “Green New Deal” can also be seen to be incorporating an intersectional perspective.

As these examples illustrate, there is a growing recognition of the value of adopting an intersectional approach, however much needs to be done to further embed it within efforts to tackle inequalities. The Support Program recognizes that intersectionality is a highly complex and nuanced framework that has come to be used in a wide array of contexts with differing interpretations. Furthermore, there are many instances in which an intersectional lens is actively and effectively adopted without explicit use of this terminology.

The Program is interested in efforts that have been engaging with the core values and meaning of intersectionality in its fullest and deepest sense. This means that beyond a focus on the intersections of particular identities/categories and/or locations, there is a recognition of the interconnected systems and processes that cause and sustain discrimination and oppression, which informs the overall program strategy. By addressing the structures and root causes underpinning inequalities, these efforts are oriented towards systemic change and guided by a robust intersectional analysis of inequalities. Communities that are impacted by intersecting inequalities lead and shape these efforts, animating the vision, strategy and analysis through their lived experiences. Intersectional approaches actively engage with questions of power and privilege, while also embracing a holistic view of the interconnectedness of issues and struggles, embodying solidarity as a key value.

A key aim of the Support Program is to learn how the principles of intersectionality are being translated into practice and policy, across different contexts, at different scales and through a range of approaches, with a view to ultimately promoting and strengthening intersectional practice more broadly in strategies to address inequality.

## **Project Focus**

Projects supported through the Program are expected to shed light on the four learning domains which have been identified as central to demonstrating the relevance of intersectional approaches to reducing inequalities. Projects should engage with at least two of the following learning domains:

### **1.) Application of Intersectional Approaches**

How are intersectional approaches being used to understand and tackle systemic inequality? What does this look like in practice?

### **2.) Value and Impact of Intersectional Approaches**

What is transformative about using an intersectional perspective to challenge inequalities? How does adopting an intersectional approach lead to greater success in challenging inequalities? What kinds of evidence effectively conveys the unique contribution and impact of intersectional approaches?

### **3.) Proliferating Intersectional Approaches**

How can policy and practice better account for the complex contextual realities and interactions between intersecting inequalities? What are the barriers and opportunities for taking intersectional approaches forward? What is needed in order to further embed an intersectional approach in efforts to challenge inequalities at different scales? How can the wider application of practical methods and tools enable intersectional approaches to be replicated and expanded?

### **4.) Supporting Intersectional Approaches**

What forms of support would be most valuable to initiatives embracing or wanting to apply intersectional approaches?

The Program is open to projects from a broad range of contexts that engage with differing dimensions of inequalities. Projects should demonstrate the relevance of intersectional approaches and present practical methods and tools for their wider application. Because climate

change, migration, peace and technological change are of interest to the Foundation, proposals that target inequalities related to these themes are welcome. However, projects that engage with other areas are absolutely encouraged, and they will not be disadvantaged if they have no link with the aforementioned themes.

Through their participation in the Program, partners will have the opportunity to examine, review and reflect on their existing practice, using the findings from this process to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of their future programs and to contribute to the broader learning agenda of the Support Program itself. Funds will also be provided to assist partners in better understanding their work, by engaging in activities such as processes of documentation, analysis, learning, reflection and planning that contribute to future-oriented, practical action. Projects that combine research and practice in line with the guidelines are also welcome. All projects are expected to produce outputs that express a compelling case for using intersectional approaches and help provide recommendations for its wider application; proposals with creative approaches and formats are encouraged.

Along with carrying out their individual projects, partners will also be supported to engage with each other and the Robert Bosch Stiftung Inequality Team over the course of the project cycle, which is expected to commence in January 2021 for a twelve month period. The goal is to facilitate mutual exchange and learning so that partners can share and reflect collectively on their experiences with intersectional practice. Partners are therefore asked to commit to attending four virtual sessions of approximately four hours each over the coming year, as well as a final workshop. The virtual sessions are scheduled to take place in January, April, July and October 2021. The concluding workshop will take place in January 2022; attendance costs, such as airfare and accommodation (if held in person), will be covered by the Support Program.

Project budgets can be allocated towards:

- Activities that correspond to the main objectives of the Support Program, e.g. for learning and reflecting on intersectional practice and for producing associated outputs

- Activities that constitute the ongoing intersectional practice of the organization
- Overhead, which cannot exceed 20% of the project budget

In developing the project budgets, applicants should clearly designate how the budget will be allocated across these three areas (learning, ongoing practice, overhead).

Given that the Program's primary aim is to support the learning agenda, the expectation is that the budget will reflect this as a priority. At the same time, under the current situation in which the impact of Covid-19 presents financial difficulties for many organizations, the Program recognizes the importance of supporting the sustainability of ongoing intersectional work. For this reason, it will be possible to allocate resources for such purposes, with the understanding that this also provides scope and space for the applicant to comfortably concentrate on the learning aspect of the project.

Project activities may have commenced before the application period, however project funds can only be used for activity expenses which take place during the project period. Projects must be completed within one year of funds being awarded. There are no co-funding requirements.

Due to the limited funds available, budgets are generally expected to range from €25,000 to €60,000. However, projects with nominally higher budgets will also be considered, taking into account the complexity of the project, context and other factors.

Given the uncertainty and restrictions presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, certain activities such as travel and face-to-face meetings may not be feasible. Applicants are encouraged to factor this within their project plans and are welcome to develop creative ways to address the current constraints.

## **Eligibility**

- Applicants must be a registered organization, with the ability to demonstrate the charitable aims of the project.
- Applicants may be based anywhere in the world; there is no geographic limitation.
- Applicants must have a robust engagement with intersectional approaches to reducing inequalities demonstrated by a strong grasp of the core tenets of intersectionality and at least three years of translating intersectional approaches into practice. Priority will be given to initiatives formed and led by persons from communities who experience intersecting inequalities.

## **Criteria**

Ideally, a project will exhibit the following characteristics:

- Prioritizes the voice and active participation of individuals who experience intersecting inequalities
- Indicates how intersectional work has led or is leading to a reduction in inequalities
- Provides a replicable model or approach with potential for wider application
- Conveys an orientation towards learning and reflection, and to sharing this knowledge with others through wider stakeholder engagement
- Produces a creative and engaging output with potential to inspire others
- Identifies wider audiences to which it will convey its methods and approaches
- Draws on organizational capacity and reach in influencing key actors or processes

One aim of the Program is to bring different groups into contact with each other in order to further enhance the potential for learning, understanding and networking. Along with the quality of individual projects, an additional consideration in selecting projects is the desire to

bring together a combination of partners that offer different approaches, experiences and perspectives in addressing inequalities through intersectional practice. It is anticipated that approximately 10 projects will be selected overall.

Submissions will be reviewed by a panel of experts, drawn from a spectrum of geographical, organizational and social backgrounds.

### **Application Process**

There are two stages to the application process.

#### **Stage 1**

Applicants were invited to submit an initial *expression of interest*. The call for applications was closed on 14 August, 2020.

#### **Stage 2**

Once all submissions have been reviewed, those that are most closely aligned to the objectives, guidelines and criteria of the Support Program will be invited to submit a full proposal. The full proposal will include a more comprehensive account of the project, including a detailed budget. Financial accounts and organizational registration documents must also be submitted at this point.

Applications must be submitted in English. Given the exploratory and short-term nature of the Support Program, it has not developed an infrastructure that can accept applications in multiple languages. The orientation towards knowledge-sharing across different contexts is another factor behind the preference for a common language to facilitate communication. Nevertheless, the Program is sensitive to the fact that language dominance reflects and reproduces existing inequalities, and notes efforts within philanthropy and funding agencies to overcome such barriers. As far as possible, the quality or sophistication of the language in applications will not influence project selection.

## Key dates

- The deadline to submit expressions of interest was 14 August 2020. No further calls for applications are planned.
- We aim to provide responses by the week of 31 August 2020.
- Full proposals for shortlisted projects must be submitted by **28 September 2020**.
- We aim to provide responses to the proposals in November 2020.
- The project cycle is expected to run for one year, commencing in January 2021.

## Feedback and Questions

Applicants are encouraged to share their feedback on the application process at any point. This would be especially helpful as this is the first open call conducted under the Inequality topic. The views shared will be used to inform the future steps and thinking of the Program.

For questions about the application process, we aim to respond in three business days.

**Feedback and questions** can be directed to:

Rana Zincir-Celal, [inequalityprogram@gmail.com](mailto:inequalityprogram@gmail.com)

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<sup>i</sup> Davis, Kathy (2008): Intersectionality as buzzword: a sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory useful. In: *Feminist Theory*, 9 (1): p.67-85, p.68.

<sup>ii</sup> Crenshaw, Kimberlé (1998): Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics, University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8.

<sup>iii</sup> Kaur Dhamoon, Rita (2011). Considerations on Mainstreaming Intersectionality. In: *Political Research Quarterly*, 64(1), 230–243.