

## Program Guidelines

### 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. Climate change,

migration, peace and technological change are of special interest to the Foundation.

Through their participation in the Program, partners 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 are also 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 were 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 are also supported to engage with each other and the Robert Bosch Stiftung Inequality Team over the course of the project cycle. 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 invited to attending several virtual sessions over this year, as well as a final workshop in January 2022.

## **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 exhibits 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. Overall, [11 projects](#) have been selected.

Submissions were reviewed by [a panel of experts](#), drawn from a spectrum of geographical, organizational and social backgrounds.

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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.