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DECENIO INTERNACIONAL PARA LOS
AFRODESCENDIENTES

Equipo de Implementación, España
#AfrodescendientesEspaña
<http://www.un.org/es/events/african-descentdecade/>

**Othered in the
Diaspora:
Recommendations
to Support the
LGBTQ+
community**

**Creative Treaty and the Implementation Team
for the International Decade for People of
African Descent in Spain: May 2019**

On 10th May 2019 Creative Treaty and the Implementation Team for the International Decade for People of African Descent in Spain are attending the United Nations consultation for the Permanent Forum for People of African Descent. The one day consultation will define modalities, format and substantive and procedural aspects of a Permanent Forum that aims to realise the stated objectives of the International Decade for People of African Descent (IDPAD) - including promoting the recognition, justice and development theme of the Decade.

At the consultation, Creative Treaty and the Implementation Team for the IDPAD in Spain will present the results of a study that makes recommendations for the Working Group for People of African descent, civil society organisations working on the rights of people of African descent, UN agencies and Member States to better support LGBTQ+ individuals from African/Afro ethnic groups. In order to formulate the recommendations both Creative Treaty and The Implementation Team for the IDPAD in Spain carried out a two month consultation¹, where we held question and answer sessions with individuals supported by LGBTQ+ organisations and structured a survey that focused on gender, sexuality and race based issues that commonly affect groups within the LGBTQ+ community. We then used the collated information from the question and answer sessions and percentages gathered from the surveys to develop modalities that can be implemented by the Working Group to engage LGBTQ+ individuals of African descent with IDPAD.

The survey was anonymous and no personal information was required; it was shared with a select group of organisations² that support LGBTQ+ people of colour, who then dispersed it amongst relevant service users.

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One of the objectives of the survey was to better understand the intersection between sexuality and gender with race, deciphering how this impacts LGBTQ+ individuals of African descent comparatively with other ethnic groups. In order to ensure our research's comparativeness, **the majority of our respondents (62%) defined themselves as being of African/Afro descent with a smaller proportion (38%)** of our respondents from other ethnic groups, categorising themselves as: White European, East Indian, non-black Latin and non-black Caribbean. Our respondents from African/Afro descent ethnic groups defined themselves into four categories: from a country or countries in Africa, Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latin and African-American. In the report we will include data from respondents who are not of African/Afro descent to highlight key differences in experiences navigating race and sexuality and/or gender simultaneously.

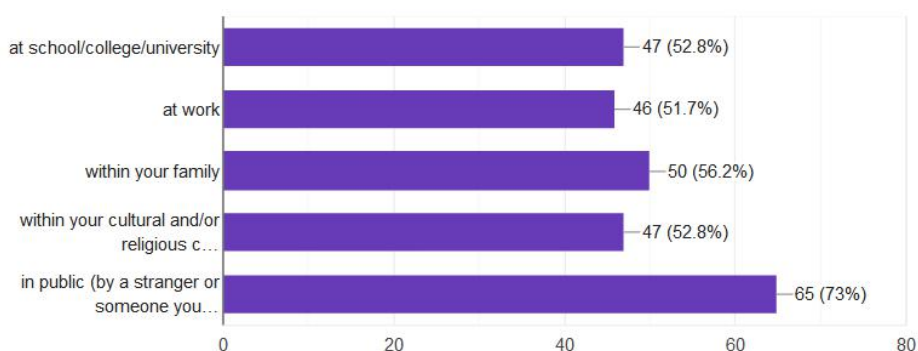
Another objective of the survey was to establish divergences between the LGBTQ+ experience and the heterosexual experience for people of African/Afro descent, to fulfil this aim we surveyed a proportion of respondents who defined their sexuality as heterosexual **and** their gender as cisgender (27%) with the remaining majority identifying their sexuality or gender as: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Pansexual, Queer, Asexual, Polysexual, transgender man, transgender woman, gender fluid, non-binary or genderqueer.

¹ Consultation were delivered in the European and American diaspora, with Q and A's and surveys carried out in: the United Kingdom, Spain, the United States of America, Guyana, the English speaking Caribbean and Spanish speaking Americas.

² 16 organisations in total, 113 respondents reporting.

Have you ever experienced discrimination or prejudice due to your sexuality/gender?

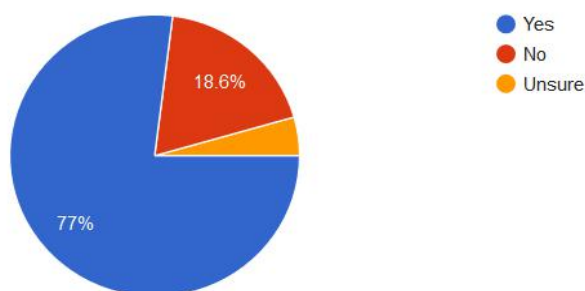
74% of our respondents reported that they “**had experienced discrimination or prejudice due to sexuality/gender**”, with cisgender women making up 54% of these responses and cisgender men closely following at 26%. Of those who stated that they had experienced sexual and/or gender related discrimination, 73% reported that they experienced this in public by a stranger or someone they knew - which made it the most common experience amongst respondents. Within family, cultural and or religious communities closely followed:



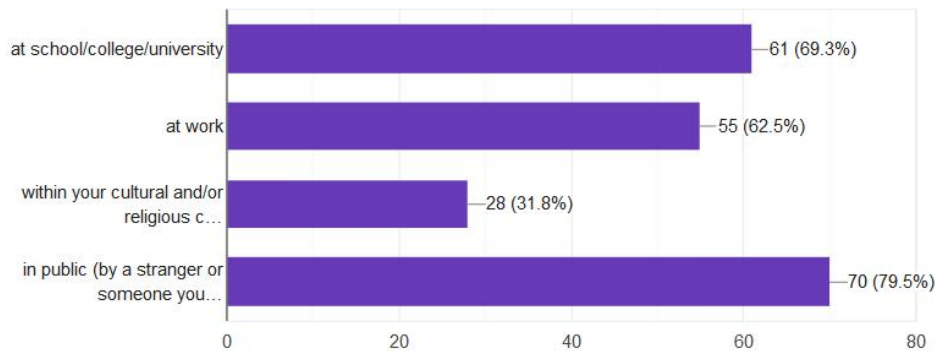
75% of respondents who reported ‘in public (by a stranger or someone known)’ as an answer were of African/Afro descent. 87% of respondents who listed ‘within family/cultural/religious communities’ as an answer were of African/Afro descent. Other prejudicial and discriminatory experiences listed were: at a party, online and in an interpersonal relationship.

Have you ever experienced discrimination or prejudice due to your race or ethnic background?

77% of respondents reported that they had “**experienced discrimination or prejudice due to race or ethnic background**”, a slightly higher positive response than the previous question by 3%:



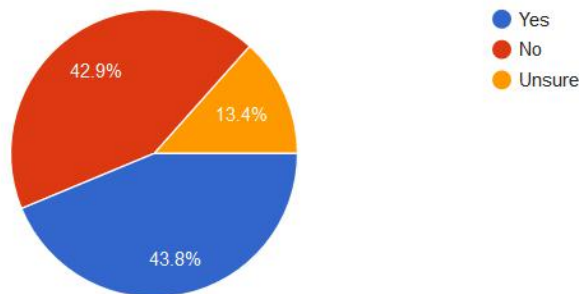
At 80%, the majority of these respondents were subject to a prejudicial or discriminatory experience ‘in public (by a stranger or someone they knew)’, with scholastic or professional experiences following at second and third:



84% of total respondents to this question identified as African/Afro descent, with only 3% of total respondents to this question identifying their ethnic/racial background as white/European descent.

Have you ever experienced a situation where you were discriminated against for both your sexuality/gender AND race?

43.8% of respondents reported that they had experienced **“a situation where they were discriminated against for both their sexuality/gender AND race”**, with 13.4% ‘unsure’ when answering this question:



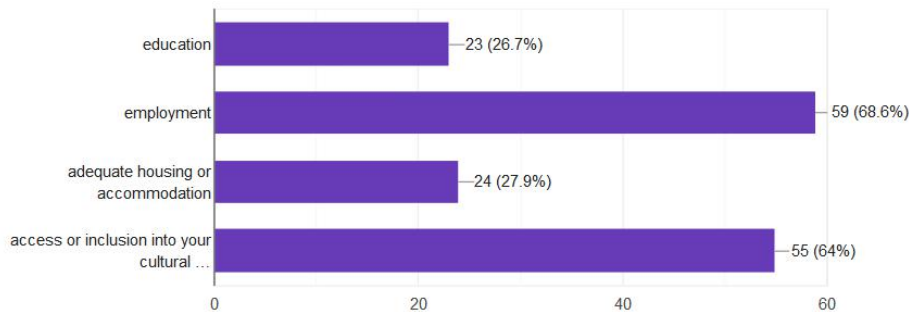
84% of ‘yes’ respondents to this question were of African/Afro descent. Only one person of white/European descent reported ‘yes’ to this question.

Do you feel that your sexuality/gender may be a barrier to:

In order to establish whether or not LGBTQ+ individuals of African/Afro descent felt that their sexuality and/or gender isolated them from societal and cultural norms, we asked if race/sexuality/gender was a barrier to: education, employment, adequate housing or accommodation and access or inclusion into cultural and religious

communities. We also gave respondents the option to state a barrier if it was not listed, respondents could report as many options that they felt applicable.

81% of total survey respondents reported that they did feel that their sexuality and/or gender was a barrier to various societal norms, with ‘employment’ and ‘access or inclusion to cultural and/or religious communities’ scoring the highest:

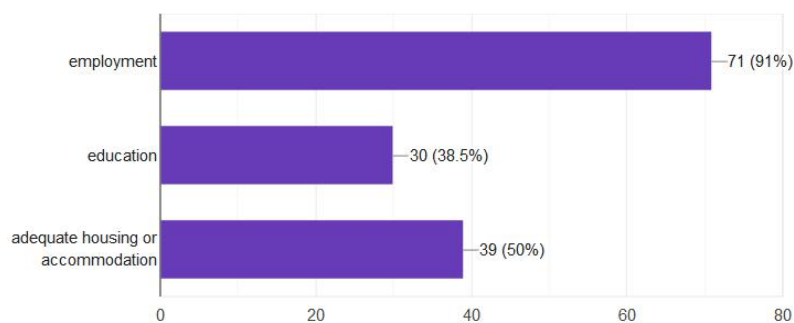


99% of respondents who reported cultural or religious spaces as their **only** answer to this question were of African/Afro descent, 75% of respondents who reported employment as their **only** answer to this question were of African/Afro descent.

Other barriers listed included ‘overall respect and consideration’ and ‘institution and structural’ barriers.

Do you feel that your race may be a barrier to:

We then asked whether respondents felt their race was a barrier to: employment, education and/or adequate housing or accommodation - using the same multiple choice option as the previous question, as well as again giving the option to state a barrier if it was not listed. 75% of total survey respondents reported a barrier, with 91% reporting that they felt race was a barrier to employment:

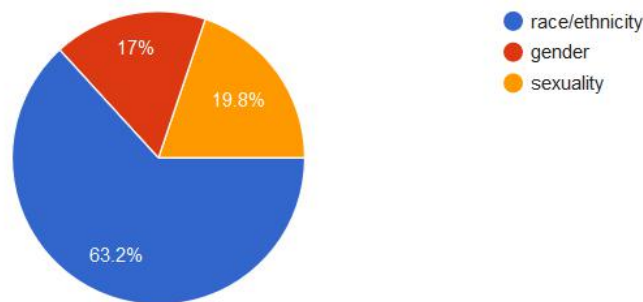


75% of respondents who reported employment as their only answer to this question were of African/Afro descent. 97% of respondents who reported adequate housing or accommodation as an answer were of African/Afro descent. None of the respondents to this question were of white/European descent. Interestingly, colourism was listed as a barrier - specifically in Afro and Indo Caribbean communities. Equal rights and ‘privileges’ were also barriers mentioned during question and answer sessions with respondents in the United Kingdom; one respondent, who is in the process of transitioning, highlighted that their ‘outward physical change in gender’ could be a

cause of concern in their work where previously colleagues and clients have interacted and known them under another assigned gender.

Considering the last two questions, what do you feel is the biggest barrier?

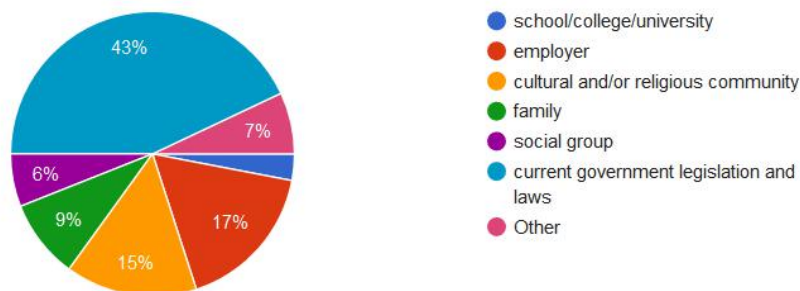
Respondents were asked to consider the previous two questions to answer whether **“race, sexuality or gender was their biggest barrier”**. 63% of respondents reported that they felt race was their biggest societal barrier:



82% of the respondents who reported sexuality and/or gender as their biggest barrier identified as LGBTQ+, of this group 67% were of African/Afro descent.

We finally asked respondents to consider **“who was their biggest barrier”**: school/college/university, employer, cultural and/or religious community, family, social group and current government law and legislations. Respondents could report multiple barriers and state their own if it was not listed as an option.

43% of respondents reported current government law and legislation as a barrier, with employment reported as the second biggest barrier at 17%:



70% of those who reported current government legislation and laws as their biggest barriers were of African/Afro descent. Systemic racism, capitalism, poor ethno-relations, the general public and public’s lack of awareness on LGBTQ+ issues were other barriers listed. In a question and answer session a respondent reported that they felt their biggest barrier was ‘themselves’, with another respondent only replying “all” in answer to this question.

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Conclusions:

LGBTQ+ people of African/Afro descent not only feel unaided by government legislation, but also within their cultural and religious communities - disproportionately so when compared to other ethnic groups, particularly those of white/European descent. Our data shows that, in regards to racism and systemic prejudice, there are many commonalities in the experiences of heterosexual people and LGBTQ+ people of African/Afro descent; however, our LGBTQ+ counterparts experience further marginalisation within their own cultural and religious communities. Anecdotal accounts volunteered during question and answer sessions include estrangement from family and fear of reprisal from gender and/or sexual status being discovered, which is also a common experience amongst other LGBTQ+ people of colour.

By collating and presenting this data Creative Treaty and the Implementation Team aims to outline some of the issues effecting LGBTQ+ people of African/Afro descent and motivate the Working Group to not only engage this community into the themes of the IDPAD, but to also devise and implement tangible strategies of support.

Lobbying Member States to better protect these individuals through law and human rights systems, as well as rallying civil society organisations and cultural communities into providing avenues of support will hopefully seek to assuage separateness.

The respect and protection of personal identity and sex orientation is central to human dignity and human rights. Categorisation of populations in statistics, and the detailed data collection that makes disaggregation possible, are important in identifying and addressing inequality and social issues.

The analysis of our survey indicates many countries in the Diaspora are failing to adequately track progress towards addressing basic human rights among people of African descent who are LGBTQ+.

The results of the survey also indicate that Member States will need to increase their focus on disaggregated data if they are to know whether the LGBTQ+ community of African descent is being left behind.

In connection with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development, countries should direct their attention to data disaggregation in order to establish proper baselines, develop and implement targeted policies to address the well-being of People of African Descent who are LGBTQ+ .

Recommendations:

1. That the Permanent Forum provides advice on intersectional discrimination that affects people of African descent to Member States, CSOs, HR institutions, UN agencies and bodies, with special attention on issues regarding sex orientation and gender identity.
2. That the Permanent Forum promotes, as part of the 2030 Agenda, the collection of disaggregated data on race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation at national levels.

3. That the Permanent Forum raises awareness and promotes the integration and coordination of activities relating to issues of LGBTQ+ people of African descent within the UN system.
4. That the Working Group installs a consultant from a LGBTQ+ organisation to ensure that the themes and objectives of the IDPAD are inclusive to the community and that LGBTQ+ individuals are being engaged with and appropriately represented.