

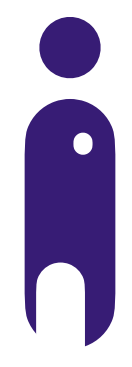
Intersex Bodies | Global South Alliances

Memoir

We, the intersex people from the Global South

Latin America
& the Caribbean
Edition

[PHOTO] Guilherme Licurgo @pajubadigital



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About GATE

GATE is an international advocacy organization working towards justice and equality for trans, gender diverse and intersex communities. Rooted in our movements, we work collaboratively with strategic partners at the global level to provide knowledge, resources and access to international institutions and processes. Our vision is a world free from human rights violations based on gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. Our strategy is to transform the landscape of global advocacy, knowledge creation and resource distribution through critical inclusion of trans, gender diverse and intersex movements at all levels of political, legal and socio-economic processes.

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Latin America
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Edition

Our bodies Our alliances

Preface



Our bodies are our first experience in the world, and not only for intersex people. Our bodies are conditions for our very possibility. They represent our chance to take action. Instead, for intersex people, our bodies are an impossibility, our first struggle to be and exist in this world. That is why speaking on intersex bodies is the same as debating intersex politics.

For **GATE**, it is vital to foster alliances between intersex bodies from the Global South. Compared to intersex groups in the North, data suggests that intersex groups in the global South and East regions are much less likely to receive funding, have access to community-building initiatives, and regional and global advocacy entry points.

Despite so many constraints, through activism we have found a way to survive, in this life, in this time and space, as long as we live in our bodies and territories. Over the past few years, our way of being and resisting has gained more strength and momentum against the force of a world that mutilates us since birth.

Their secret has become our public issue. An issue that catalyzes an activist movement and interconnects multiple agents. We have been building a complex network of alliances to save our lives; to ensure our integrity. That is a task only possible within the dense network of alliances we have articulated with increasingly greater insistence, in order to save our lives and ensure our bodies' integrity.

Articulating more alliances with brothers, sisters, and siblings with lived intersex experiences is a step in pursuing ways to survive while affirming and honoring our bodies in the precise ways we exist in the world.

Intersex Bodies Global South Alliances

Memoir



GATE hosted a webinar to discuss the trajectories of intersex-led movements in the global South. In its first iteration, we invited activists from six different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The **Latin American and Caribbean Seminars** are the first of a three regional webinars series, one for each great region of the global South, aimed at producing a space where local, national, and regional organizations working to the promotion and protection of the human rights of intersex people can encounter to discuss their experiences when it comes to their political engagement.

With this project, we cover a great variety of topics regarding intersex issues in the global South. By providing a safe space for intersex global South movements and activists to meet, we intended to foster peer-learning processes on advocacy and capacity development strategies while tracking down recommendations and priorities for human rights advocacy for intersex people. In stimulating the debate on sex variations and intersex issues at the regional level, we would like to assess national and regional trends and best practices, and persisting challenges regarding sex variations and intersex issues, while providing an encounter opportunity not very common for intersex people in Latin America and Caribbean.

Participants were invited based on regional and background diversity, meaning we hope to hear from range of actors about their experiences and projects on intersex matters. Each panelist produced a five-page article on the topic presented and their articles are now together and public in this final publication **We, the intersex people from the global South.**

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Being intersex in the Global South
personal experience



Ceci Lopez Bemsch
@argentina_intersex

Intersex activist from Argentina, a Geography student and member of the Center for Studies on Sexual Diversity (CEDISEX) at the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras of the Universidad Nacional de Tucuman. Founder of the organization Argentina Intersex.



 **Carolina lara**
@bancadafeministapsol

Carolina lara is a black *travesti* intersex woman living with HIV. She is a Co-Councillor, writer, and Master's student in Human and Social Sciences at UFABC.

The first intersex parliamentarian in South America

the weight, the pain and the power



 **Franco
Andrés
Pradenas
López**

@intersexpacificosur

Co-General Coordinator. Transmasculine non-binary, pansexual and person with disability, in continuous resignification and construction.

An Intersex Body
the living proof that breaks the cístem



**The mirror of
experience**

Notes for an intersex
phenomenology



Hana Aoi 
@vivir.intersex

Mexican writer and activist for the human rights of intersex people. She has a Master in Women's Studies from UAM-Xochimilco on the intersex experiences. She coordinates the project Vivir y Ser Intersex and regularly contributes to Brújula Intersexual and Proyecto Intersexual.

 **Bea Is**
@peru.intersex

Human rights activist for intersex people in Peru. First Peruvian woman author an article for Brújula Intersexual. Founder of Peru Intersex, the first space for intersex people and their families in the country



The **Latin American and Caribbean Seminars** are the first of a three regional webinars series, one for each great region of the Global South to discuss the trajectories of intersex-led movements in the region.

Check out a replay here!

We, the
intersex
people
from
the
Global
South



Being intersex in the Global South

Personal Experience

Ceci Lopez Bensch 
@argentina_intersex

Intersex people are those who are born with sex characteristics that do not fit into the binarism of male or female. Finding out that I was born intersex was quite a challenge, fighting against silence, lies, standing up for myself in front of the doctors and especially my family, I have spent many years in an exhausting struggle.

In 2020, after meeting other intersex people for the first time, I began to engage in activism through an invitation to participate in the 2nd Intersex Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean that took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Activists from all over the region were present at this conference and they had been observing how to address the issue of being intersex in their respective territories and how they could apply it to where they lived.

My experience of activism in Argentina was distinct in that it coincided with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, where all the face-to-face activities that I had planned had to instead be accommodated virtually. One of the main objectives was, through a series of talks, for people get to know the different intersex organizations, which was a success, as we managed to established and strengthen ties with the regional intersex community. In addition to the talks, we began to meet with LGBTI organizations that had the “i” without clearly knowing our demands, establishing our visibility and awareness work.

One of the activities that created an impact within the LGBT community in Tucumán, the province where I currently reside, was the organization of the **1st Conference against Intersex Genital Mutilation** held outside the Hospital del Niño Jesus de Tucumán, a place where Intersex Genital Mutilation (IGM) practices never ceased, despite the pandemic. This activity was accompanied by different LGBT organizations and the media and it was the first intersex activity developed in the province.

Although this experience in activism was a lot of work, was implemented without funding, and came at the cost of considerable exposure of my privacy, it brought together people with a story similar to mine who discovered that they lived an intersex experience, and who today are an active part of our organization. The case was mentioned of a mother with her daughter with Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia (CAH) who was about to be operated in the hospital where we held the Day Against Intersex Genital Mutilation.

One of the challenges that I had to go through as an intersex activist and survivor of Genital Mutilation was the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many intersex people like myself have health care traumas that make it difficult for us to seek help in hospitals. Intersex people were left out of aid from the State in matters of food and economic aid, and it was the intersex organizations in Latin America who came to the aid of people who did not have money to buy medicines, pay for medical examinations (x-rays, CT scans), buy healthcare materials (alcohol, oximeter, thermometer) and (mostly) buy food. Many intersex people at this time lost their jobs, further aggravating their economic situation.

Our approach to intersex politics originated with **Mauro Cabral**, an intersex activist from the organization **Justicia Intersex** who invited me to work together with other activists from Argentina on the **Bill for the Comprehensive Protection of Sex Characteristics**. This project aims to guarantee the rights to autonomy, bodily integrity, non-discrimination, and access to truth, guaranteeing the human rights of all intersex people at the national level. Although great progress has been made in Argentina regarding the rights of LGBT people, the State still owes reparations to the intersex community. Throughout the country, the practice of Intersex Genital Mutilation is still in force in public hospitals and private clinics.

The project has very important points, such as guaranteeing the right to bodily and sex diversity, ensuring that no person is subjected to interventions aimed at modifying their sex characteristics if they are not medically necessary and if they are not consented to by the individual, and protecting the bodily autonomy and integrity of those born with sex characteristics that vary with respect to the male or female average and who are usually subjected to body "normalization" interventions in their childhood. This project also guarantees the right to information for all people regarding their sex characteristics, including medical history. It guarantees that no person is discriminated against due to their sex characteristics. It guarantees the right to truth and access to adequate forms of rehabilitation and reparation.

In addition to engaging with intersex activism in my country, I was able to establish ties with intersex organizations from across the Global South. I believe that the work between movements in different countries is key to advancing the rights of intersex people, as listening and seeing how they carry out their activism and how they face adversity helps us to find strategies for better planning in our activities. In particular, I was able to work together with **Brújula Intersexual**, Mexico, where we produced several interesting materials for the community in general: the **Intersex Information Brochure 2021** and the **Intersex Information Brochure 2022**. With **Intersexuales Chile**, I worked on the development of a manual for a course in the Chile Medical College..

The Global South faces many obstacles, including lack of opportunities to attend international conferences, lack of access to financing, and not knowing how to apply for funding is another great barrier that intersex activism encounters, often conditioned by language, since most of the offers and requests for funding are in English.

Organizations with fewer resources face burnout of activists, who have to come up with their own money to carry out activities. Also, these organizations, unable to count on financial support, are much less visible in terms of the scope of their activities.

Although the intersex movement has a clear and marked agenda, it is important to begin to intersect the intersex agenda with other agendas such as disability, HIV or AIDS, migrants, etc.

I am very proud of intersex activism in my country. The different organizations and activists make up a large network called the **Plurinational Intersex Network** where we work together whenever we have a meeting with a State agency, when planning activities, and we talk about political issues. I think that each one of us, from their place, in this vast country, does a magnificent job of raising visibility and awareness. I highlighted the great work of the activist Mauro Cabral Grinspan, who for many years has been doing intense activism in defense of the rights of intersex people.

It is my hope that, in the not-too-distant future, no person will be subjected to human rights violations based on their sexual characteristics ever again. We, the intersex people from the Global South, are... human beings. We, the intersex people from the Global South, want... our bodies to be healthy and whole.

PALÁCIO ANCHIETA
CÂMARA MUNICIPAL DE SÃO PAULO

Carolina Lara de Oliveira
@bancadafeministapsol

PHOTO | Guilherme Licurgo @pajubadigital

FLORESCEU OUTROVA, AS ... DO ANHEMBI,
PAULO APOSTOLO ... DE ANCHIETA E NOBREGA
E MERCÊ DOS AV ... ROSOS, BANDEIRANTES A BUSCA
TES, DILATOU A ... TEIRAS DA PATRIA
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ALFREDO MARTINS
ARARIPE SERPA
ARMANDO SIMÕES NETT
CARLOS EDUARDO SAMPAIO DORIA
DAVID ROYSEN
EPHRAIM DE CAMPOS
JIHEI NODA
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JOSÉ FREITAS ...
LUIZ GONZAGA
MARIO OSASSA
PAULO SOARES
SAMIR ACHÔA
THEODOSINA ROSA
TIBIRICA BOTELHO
VICENTE DE PAU
ANTONIO SAMPAIO
CAIO SERGIO PO
JOÃO BRASIL Y
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JOSE ADRIAN
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Carolina Lara de Oliveira

@bancadafeministapsol

PHOTO | Guilherme Licurgo @pajubadigital





The first intersex parliamentarian in South America

the weight, the pain and the power

Carolina Iara de Oliveira 
@bancadafeministapsol

What is it like to be the first intersex parliamentarian in South America, while also being a black trans woman living with HIV?

When I was invited to take part in the discussion with **GATE**, this was the question I suspected would stand out the most in my explanation of what being intersex is in the tropics, in the so-called Global South, but which has had so many other names: colonies, third world, developing countries, underdeveloped countries, and so many other denominations.

I start, therefore, from an experience that must be thought from the perspective of coloniality, that is, from a social construction that kidnapped and enslaved my African ancestors and exterminated many of my indigenous ancestors, and which culminated in the forged notion of what it is to be black in Brazil. Along with this, the notion of Latin American women is forged, which brought together Cudinas, Timbiras, Amerindian, African, European women and that gave birth here to a dissident womanhood, **'travesti'**-lity.^[1]

^[1] **Travesti** is a word that describes some transfeminine populations intersected by class and race living in Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina. It comes from medical terminology intended to describe "cross-dressing phenomena". The term was later reclaimed by local trans-travesti movements.

Carolina Lara, before being parliamentarian, before being intersex creator of the collective mandate **Bancada Feminista of the PSOL** (Brazil Socialism and Freedom Party), she is a black woman who was mutilated during childhood. I get tired of telling this story in different spaces, but it is important to repeat it. When I was born with an atypical genitalia, with internalized testes (cryptorchidism for medicine), with a urethra ending at the base of the penis and not at the top (hypospadias for medicine) and with a small hole below the scrotum (fistula, for medicine), I was placed before the Medical Power of the Brazilian public health system, but not just any hospital power: I was handed over to the power of a Catholic Hospital, which, with their white coats and equally white cisgender men, presented a technical grammar, full of codes and incomprehensible words to a black, marginalized, single mother like mine, to undertake the biological maintenance of cisnormativity, which is this static, two-gender, anti-trans system based on invented biological sex.



Do the surgery, ma'am, or you'll have a baby who can't go to the bathroom, or worse, they will have to pee sitting down!

I don't need to say what goes through the head of a black and marginalized mother when she is told that. Without the father to decide together. With her family accusing her of having indulged in sex before marriage, although this is the reality of most poor families in Brazil. And nothing, absolutely no explanation of being intersex or even hermaphroditism for my family. Only one imposition: the surgery! But it wasn't just one surgery, it was three, and over twelve years. I spent twelve years of my life being shaped to be someone I never wanted to be, someone male.

Nothing will make up for me, reward me for everything I've been through. Nothing will make me forget the probes, the black bandages that wrapped around my manufactured penis, the many stitches in my genitals at the age of six that kept me from playing for an entire year. I won't forget the tube being inserted into my genitals without any local anesthetic, without any painkillers, to unclog the artificial urethra, when that channel just closed at twelve with my growth.

I will not forget the pediatric surgeon who, at the age of six, went to remove the stitches from the surgery and told my grandmother Altina:

“ Hold that brat. You have to stop pampering him. ”

And turning to me, he said:

“ Stop crying, *nigger*. We went to a lot of trouble to make you a man, with a toy. *Niggers* don't cry like that. The pain will go away. ”

But will this pain of racism, mutilation, interphobia go away? Will therapy after all this help? Isn't it better to stop this cycle of suffering?

Well then. Just three years after the end of this long process of body adaptation, so at the height of my fifteen years, I had already showed to my family, to the **Medical Power**, to society that my body was not what was expected or what was attempted to shape from the nefarious primers of archaic and right-wing medicine, much less what the horrendous John Money theorized about the ease of “**educating**” a person in a certain chosen gender, as long as the intersex condition was hidden from them and they underwent surgery. I am living proof of how much that didn't help.

And as I was not born in the Global North, as I am a descendant of the **Tibiras** and **Cudinas**, I only saw acceptance and the possibility of identity in travestis. It was the travestis from São Matheus, on the outskirts of São Paulo, who allowed me to consider that my body had wider hips, a waist, and was starting to have nipples for a reason, and at the time they introduced me to the **Pajubá** which is the language of Brazilian travestis that mixes Portuguese with Yoruba and Bantu, also spoken in the **terreiros**^[2] of Candomblé and Angola.

They also introduced the concept of **Amapô travesti**. **Amapô** means cisgender woman, or popularly also called **raxa** among travestis. I would be a biological mixture of the two bodily possibilities, the travesti and the amapô. According to Fernanda, Raycka, Márcia, Sheyla and other travestis who **fizeram pista** - that is, who prostituted themselves in the streets - with me, my body was naturally “**amapozado**”.^[3]

So, my loves, someone who lived three uninterrupted years with the **travesti**, prostitution and Afro-diasporic cultural and linguistic heritages cannot have the same point of views about “**intersex**” - in colonial English^[4] - ; if compared to white people from the Global North, or even white or middle class people in Brazil. My views are different, “my **corre**^[5] is different”, as in the jargon from São Paulo surroundings. My **corre** is black, Afro-Amerindian, based on popular and collective organizing.

I forgot to tell you before, but I share it with you now: I grew up, in the midst of all this narrative of pain and mutilation, in a neighborhood forged in the struggle for housing in the 80s, 90s and 2000s, the Fazenda da Juta neighborhood, in Sapopemba, east side of São Paulo, which welcomed the travesti Linn da Quebrada and so many other trans people. Dialectical, contradictory, vulnerable, but full of political power, which taught me what an assembly of residents was, what the social homeless movement was, the landless struggle, the occupation of land by large families to get a house. I saw the neighborhood being built up, urbanized, gaining equipment and public services through popular and collective struggle, organized and moved by simple people, without much academic skills or professional experiences. Without mastering what is required by capitalism and whiteness. And this is how I started to be an activist.

^[2] **Terreiro** is used to describe the place where some Afro-Brazilian religions, such as Candomblé and Angola, are practiced.

^[3] Similar to female phenotypes.

^[4] **Intersex** appears in English, in the original manuscript. Please, note the original version of the article was written in Portuguese.

^[5] Originally comes from the verb *-to run*, in Portuguese. Same as to hurry, to move or move quickly; to walk with speed. In a broader informal sense, it means an effort; a movement; or a task that requires complex efforts and particular skills toward a difficult goal. For instance, **corre** can informally describe the movement or task people make to buy illegal drugs which can depend on one’s ability to circumvent the prohibition. Here, **corre** describes broader processes such as life forms that require effort and skills. It means one’s particular personal trajectory which requires overcoming complexities and adversities, usually associated with class and race inequalities. In this case, it also has ethical connotations, as it can refer to people’s principles. It also points to faculties and capabilities such as cleverness to approach challenges probably derived from exposure to extreme experiences of poverty and racism. **Corre** is a polysemic word that means one’s life, history, morality, ethics, challenges, efforts, route, and experiences.

At the same time that I prostituted myself and went out dressed up 24 hours a day, I also participated in artistic movements in the neighborhood, in LGBTQIA+ collectives of marginalized and black culture, and thus I was entering the process that Beatriz Nascimento calls **quilombismo**, something very common in the black and indigenous community in Brazil, which is to group together as our ancestors did in the *quilombos* of the rural area, but raising, in the cities, urban **quilombos**.

It was in this spirit that I persisted in activism, even in the most difficult moments. And how difficult it was after the age of eighteen. With every NO that I received in the search for a job, as a travesti, I became increasingly despairing of the possibility of expressing my identity, of being myself, and the family's ultimatum for me to abandon prostitution and stay away from pimps forced me to submit to the painful experience of detransition. It's so hard to transition and then have to go back to square one. Having to walk the line, the **pêssega** as the travestis say, to pass as an effeminate gay, when you are not that. It's a horror. It was a horror that lasted seven years. And, contradictorily, it was this horror that allowed me a "disguise" to access college, the public contest in public health in São Paulo, and enter as a leader of social movements and as a party leader in the Brazilian left itself.

In 2011, I started working with victims of violence in health services, through the Centers for Violence Prevention, also accumulating bureaucratic functions in health, and from this work in the fight against domestic, sexual violence and legal abortion, I got closer to the feminists and black movements. In 2014, I discovered that I was living with HIV and joined the State Network of Young People Living with HIV/AIDS, I got closer to the São Paulo Movement for the Fight against AIDS, the National Network of People Living with HIV, and all public health activism. In 2015, I approached socialist organizations that had broken with the PSTU (Unified Socialist Workers' Party) and joined the Socialism and Freedom Party (PSOL) with these ruptures, and from there I began my party and communist activism in parallel with my work in the social movements.

It was only in 2017 that trans activists, in particular Julianna Nonato, Terra Joharis, Wyrá Potira and Luiza Coppieters, began to talk to me more deeply about being intersex, and when they heard about my childhood experiences and surgeries, they raised the hypothesis of me being an intersex person. It was in the meantime that I got to know the activism and knowledge production of Paula Sandrine Machado, a cis ally of the intersex cause, Sara Wagner York, a travesti ally, and of intersex people such as Amiel Vieira, of Olívia Denardi, Dionne Freitas and Shay Bittencourt. Later on, I learned that the idea of founding an entity that fought for the rights of intersex people was being planned, and in this process, I also met intersex people like Alex Balestrin, Sofia Riccard, Sasha and allied cis people like Walter Mastelaro, Rachel Rocha, and mothers of intersex people such as Thaís Emília dos Santos and Cássia Nonato.

It is necessary for me to name these people, who directly and indirectly, organically, institutionally, independently or just in the dispute of narratives, built the intersex movement in the last seven years. And it was in an act, at a meeting at Casa Florescer 1, under the authorization of dear Beto, coordinator of the shelter for travestis and trans women in São Paulo, that we founded the Brazilian Intersex Association, ABRAI, placing Thais Emília as its president and I, Carolina Lara, as tax advisor (a position that I abdicated with my election, in 2020, becoming instead just an associate of the entity). That was another step, not the beginning, but an important step nevertheless for the intersex social movement to be able to fight, to be able to have an institutionalized instrument to be able to do advocacy in the Legislative Chambers, in the courts, in the multilateral entities of world diplomacy, and at the same time provide direct assistance to intersex families and people.

The intersex movement as we know it today is very new, therefore it is in its infancy if we take into account the history of other social movements, which took decades to build up their strength. Over the years, I notice that more people have joined the pioneering spirit left by Roberta Close, or simply Roberta Gambine, who was the first person to say on Brazilian TV that she was a hermaphrodite, and even more people have joined the group I mentioned earlier, to join the intersex movement. I can also mention Beto himself, Thais Emília's husband, who played a leading role in the construction of ABRAI, as well as people like Mônica Porto, Mayara, Danio, Carlo Braga, Paulo Iotti, Joel Filho (with his experience as a black, intersex man from Rio de Janeiro), Vidda Guzzo, Dr. Magnus Silva, and so many other people who are building the Brazilian intersex agenda, which is crossed by the genital mutilation of babies and children, as well as by forced hormoneization, but it must also be the fight against the anti-black and anti-indigenous racism that structures the Brazilian society, as well as the fight against social inequality, hunger, sexism, the rape culture, and the social vulnerability that intersex people have been subjected to in adult life, with lack of work, lack of access to decent healthcare and services that know how to deal with their bodies, their experiences, and more: that they have legal recognition as intersex people, and not as people who have the “ignored sex” on their birth certificate, only.

Now, being the first intersex parliamentarian in Brazil, I can see how difficult it is to propose legislation for intersex people precisely because there is no such legal recognition of intersex existence. How to legislate for people whose gender is ignored? How to convince Legislative Chambers dominated by religious fundamentalism (as are the Brazilian Legislative Chambers) and with seats for the Bolsonaroist extreme right, that intersex babies cannot be made to suffer by undergoing early surgeries? How to have a dialogue with a Parliament that, in the Group agreements, vetoes the words gender, sex, LGBTQIA+, diversity?

In addition to being the first intersex parliamentarian, and so far the only one, at least publicly, I am also the only one living with HIV. And I am one of the 30 trans parliamentarians elected in Brazil. And the third wave of black women entering the São Paulo City Council. Before us, councilors and black women councilors of this legislature, there were only two black councilors in the largest city in Brazil: Theodosina Ribeiro and Claudete Alves. In other words, it is a position of great pressure, a lot of contradiction and a lot of responsibility, of pain and struggle, of representation, that I am in right now. The first intersex public hearing seen in Legislative Chambers in the state of SP was the one I promoted in partnership with congressmen Eduardo Suplicy and Érika Hilton.

Actions with deputy Érica Malunguinho were also carried out by me and the **Bancada Feminista**, as well as presenting Bills such as the Day of Intersex Visibility in the official calendar of São Paulo on October 26, the Day of Awareness Against Child Mutilation on September 26, the awareness campaign against child mutilation in the municipal services and the awareness campaign against genital mutilation of intersex people. We also included intersex people in the Bill that deals with the use of bathrooms, changing rooms, shelters, public services and establishments by trans, intersex and non-binary people without discrimination in the city of São Paulo. All these were propositions that were difficult to process amongst São Paulo councilors, but which managed to place the debate within civil society and the media.

As of 2020 in this parliamentary role, I have faced both the challenge of being what **Patricia Hill Collins** calls an **outsider within**, that is, the outsider inside, of being in an institutional framework that does not even legitimize the legality of my intersex existence, which forced me to socially rectify myself as a woman (that's why I include so many intersex women and travestis in my biographies), and which, at the same time, demands a conduct of decorum, and representation not only of intersex people, but of the 46,000 people who voted for the **Bancada Feminista**, as well as the role of dialoguing with the plurality of black, trans, LGBTQIA+, HIV/AIDS, unions, human rights, homeless people, education, health and social movements, and, why not say it again, the intersex movement.

The intersex movement in Brazil, despite being still incipient and with a small reach, is something pulsating, which has this beautiful story that I have just told you, and a lot of determination and willingness of the people involved in it. And it also shows itself with plurality: the very important existence and, with protagonism of the **ABRAI**, as an advocacy entity, more institutional and assisting intersex families and people, should be seen alongside the work of allied entities such as **IBRAT** (Brazilian Institute of Transmasculinities) which has an intersex nucleus, **ABGLT**, the **National LGBTI Alliance**, **ANTRA**, **Rede Trans**, **Frente Bisexual Brasileira**, **ABONG** (Brazilian Association of NGOs), the trans and intersex clinic of **UNIFESP**, **ABRASITTI**, and also with the work of independent intersex activists who have organized themselves in more fluid collectives. I also cannot fail to mention the jurists of the **OAB Diversidade**, the **SASP** (Lawyers union of SP), and so many other entities that I cannot mention, that I may certainly have forgotten.

All this has been the great fabric that has been moving through the intersex agenda in Brazil. That, compared to our immediate needs for dignity and integrity of intersex bodies, really is a small network, and even compared to other social movements in South America, it is a small network. But we cannot underestimate it because it is great in willingness, in disposition, in a plurality of ideas and actions, and it needs to be increasingly visible in our country and in the wider Latin American community.

I conclude by saying that, as intersex people in Latin America, we need this exchange between the countries below the US and the Global North, so that we can not only strengthen each other, but also collectively connect to a global struggle for the liberation of people who are born with biological aspects outside the binary standard, and so that no one else, whether endosex^[2] or intersex, goes through the horrendous genital mutilation, and so that the estimated 2% of the population of the latter is no longer put under the tapestry of blood and scalpel that has been in effect until now. Intersex people just want to be free, and I just want, one day, to not be the only intersex parliamentarian on a continent. From here, the intersex movement can count on my willingness to fight and to use the political, material, symbolic and structural resources that Parliament can provide, even with all the existing limitations. We are together!

[6] **Endosex** person is someone whose innate sex characteristics fit normative medical or social ideas for female or male bodies. The word **endosex** is an antonym of **intersex**.



Franco Andrés Pradenas López
@intersexpacificosur





Franco Andrés Pradenas López
@intersexpacificosur





An Intersex Body

The living proof that
breaks the *cístem*

Franco Andrés Pradenas López 
@intersexpacificosur

PART I

Abla Yala, resistance and disobedience

Activism, strength and resistance, in this long and thin country at the end of the world called Chile, to say “I am an activist” even today, in general, continues to be frowned upon. The terrible military dictatorship in which our country lived more than 30 years ago continues to sink deep into the memory and hearts of Chileans. Fear to speak, of the unknown, to disagree, to give an opinion, is something deeply rooted in our society.

Little by little, those of us who were born after the dictatorship have been raising our voices. I was lucky enough to be part of the so-called “Penguin Revolution”, (a secondary movement that changed the social history of Chile) and to train as an activist, side by side with many of those who are now in the government of our country.

I always say that recognizing myself as an intersex person was the most beautiful gift of my life. This simple word gave me the peace that I always longed for, it resolved thousands of anguished doubts about my body that I never got an answer to and which caused me so much pain.

No, I was never broken, I was never badly made or had a disease because I was intersex, but my rights were violated, they mutilated my body and I suffered, yes, I suffered enormously for not fitting in.

Today, I have decided to do activism, not only in pursuit of the human rights of the LGTBIQANB+ population in general, but specifically I made the conscious and deliberate decision to focus on the intersex population, since I do not want anyone else to have to live how I do.

In Chile, intersex activism is still in its infancy, even within the diversity movements, we are still at the bottom of a long list of needs. We have only two intersex organizations in the entire territory and as much as I value the work that we do together, influencing public policies is arduous and slow. At the same time, our country is going through an unprecedented constitutional process in which civil society has had the opportunity to participate directly in the construction of the proposed text for the new Magna Carta, which is about to be voted on in a national referendum.

During this process, self-convening dissidences and diversities organized and connected ourselves within a network and, thus, the **D.U.R.A.S.** network was born, **United Diverse Entities Rebuilding Sex-Political Alliances**, with the ultimate goal of en bloc, directly influencing the writing of the new constitution. As a **South Pacific Intersex Community**, with me as a representative, we have been part of D.U.R.A.S. since its inception, we were able to work directly on the drafting of part of the fundamental rights, within which we achieved the explicit mention of the right to bodily autonomy, self-determination and sex characteristics, which were proposals ratified by the citizens by voting on norms, and then by the conventional constituents with a large majority. This is a great achievement since, if the complete text is ratified in the next plebiscite, it gives rise to the future accommodation of the entire legislative apparatus of the country, to this new legal framework, and with that, no law or regulation could override any fundamental right.

All of the above have been events that have occurred within the national territory, driven mainly by diverse and counter-hegemonic movements, movements with transfeminist and anti-patriarchal bases. These have risen with greater strength in the last decade in Chile, but many activists were already pushing for years in this direction.

In my personal case, when I started to become an activist from a very young age, formally at about the age of 15, I had the opportunity to train little by little, initially in a very self-taught and self-managed way, that took shape over the years. By 2017, I was active in **OTD Chile**, a trans organization, when I had the opportunity to travel to Paraguay to attend an international meeting of activists from South America, organized by **Akahatã** and **Mujeres al Borde**. I had the chance to meet and share with activists from different countries, to make connections and build networks, and always within the frame of self-care and mutual collaboration. The following year, I also attended the second iteration of this meeting, which not only strengthened the ties already formed the previous year, but also provided a fantastic training space which has been vital for the development, primarily, of my intersex activism.

Also as the South Pacific Intersex Community, we set up a space called **Live the I, A Virtual Meeting for Intersex People** in which we do not limit participation to people from the national territory, but which is open to everyone to whom language (Spanish) is not a barrier and to people from different areas of Abla Yala, as well as Chilean people living in other countries. The space ended up being not only a hotbed of intersex activism without borders, but also a safe space to share common and specific experiences and feelings of being intersex in a way that we had never had the chance to do before. **Live the I** is not active today, due to operational limitations, but we are already working keenly on reinstating it.

Abla Yala, also known as Latin America, remains today one of the most inhospitable territories for human rights activists. A large majority of the countries in the region have gone through military, political and economic dictatorships in the last century that still leave the population traumatized. If we refer to the towns and their people, the story is even worse, but if we focus on the people with diverse sex characteristics and gender identities, then the story becomes painful, stained with tears and blood that does not stop flowing.

If we only think about this, perhaps from the outside it might seem that history is not that different between north and south, but this is not the end of the road. Up to now, our lands have also been severely marked by the European invasion, what Europeans called “colonization”. "Colonization", a fact that, to this day, continues to reproduce increasingly undeniable violence against our people, our history, and also our bodies. Yes, violence, because the native peoples of the region continue to be disparaged, the ancient ways of living suppressed, of which little is left in many areas, steamrolled by the imposition of new beliefs, gender roles, morals and even correct or incorrect ways of feeling, relating to, and recognizing ourselves. The peoples of the Global South have had our dignity stripped from us and, what’s worse, this situation has been maintained, with systems such as capitalism and neoliberalism that are nothing other than systems designed to enrich one at the expense of the othered, and we are the othered.

Activism, therefore, is an act of absolute disobedience that resists oppression based on resilience and love.

The challenges we face are not insignificant: establishing and defending rights that were taken from us long before we were born is undoubtedly a monumental task that requires dedication, conviction and strength, but also love, self-care and respect, both at the individual level, as well as within the collective. Recognizing ourselves from a place of self-love, empowering and validating ourselves, is not only a personal task, it is also a powerful political act in which we not only validate ourselves as individuals, and therefore resist and rebuild ourselves after surviving in our territories, but also throws the door wide open so that future generations have references for their identities, people of flesh and blood who have shown, with their stories, that a dignified life is possible, that not just surviving, but living is, and will be, an increasingly lived reality. By opening the doors to them, they can tear down the walls.

PART II

Starting to warm up

Today, in Chile, as has already been mentioned, we find ourselves at a crucial historical moment, a moment in which we can win a lot or lose what has been achieved and have to start over. Whatever the result, some changes are already happening. An interest in sex and gender issues from the government and the business community is increasingly evident, as activists are receiving call more frequently. We are aware that many of these calls are nothing more than **pink washing**, but despite this, generally we receive them with open arms, fingers crossed, and biting our tongues to obtain an often undervalued visibility, but this is a double-edged sword. As our visibility increases each day, so too does our vulnerability. The levels of violence, already very high towards our population, have increased, mainly in medical care settings and on the streets.

Today, we are not only the activists who wear scarves or colored symbols, who empower ourselves and name ourselves as intersex, as trans, non-binary, asexual, pansexual or dissidents themselves. Today, the younger generations also raise their voices, and they are doing it at a younger age, and they are the ones who are more exposed, they are the ones who are having to grow up in environments of violence, denial or in absolute secrecy. Hate crimes, attacks, and all kinds of violence have sharply increased, as fast or even faster than we are achieving our rights, and everything we achieve is at a very high cost of the blood, sweat and tears of our population. This is why it is worth asking: “What now? What is next? Have we achieved something? Is it worth all the effort?” And for me, at least, the answer is loud and clear: yes.

Yes, because for each day of work, of increasing visibility, educating others, even answering questions from someone unknown on the internet, for each act of activism, one more step is advanced, one small step in this enormous effort that is the achievement of **all** our rights, those that, by existence belong to us; our human rights. Nobody said it would be an easy, short or friendly path, but it is the one that I consciously and decisively began to walk so many years ago and that I don't think I'll have enough energy to finish in this lifetime. Because socio-cultural changes are not the responsibility of just one country or one person, they are the responsibility of all of us: we form them collectively and it depends on each of us to do our part.

For this, we need to get to know one another, to look at each other's faces, to know who we are, to form alliances, to work on them and take care of them, because of how valuable they are. Because it has always been the same communities that have historically supported one another who have been, and always will be, there to help one another in times of need, and to join together to celebrate our achievements. Knowing one another and knowing our experiences, collective and individual needs, the intersectionalities that occur among us, and the paths that cross, will allow us to travel on this journey of activism together. This journey in which we often put ourselves at risk, in which we also need one another so much, not only as individuals, but to learn how our struggles run in parallel. As other companions walk their own paths, it gives light and shadow to our own journey, which helps us to better color this blank canvas. Why a blank canvas? Because, even though diverse activisms are not new, intersex activism in the Global South is a relatively young movement, and there are not many successful precedents or specific training spaces that we can simply and easily access to improve our work and, why not say it, often our passion.

The struggle of intersex demands has never been simple or insignificant, but in regions like Abla Yala, especially in recent years, the situation has become increasingly complex. The onslaught of anti-rights groups has hit us hard, causing us, in various places, to lose the little progress made in previous years. Specifically in Chile, the greatest achievement of anti-rights groups against the LGTBIQANB+ population was the presidential candidacy of its greatest exponent, José Antony Kast. This leader of the extreme conservative right in our country not only presented a presidential candidacy for the last elections, but also reached the second round to challenge the presidential chair. Even when his defeat was overwhelming, the direct effect that this had on our population it has been an enormous increase of terrible, hateful attacks in recent months. At the same time, multiple diverse networks have also emerged that are increasing in strength every day. In the face of articulated hatred, we practice self-defense and self-care.

We are continuing to strengthen activism, care networks and advocacy, not only legislatively, but in every area to which we have access, to improve the quality of life and care for intersex people as well as the LGTBIQANB+ population in general.

The COVID-19 Pandemic resulted in the health needs of intersex, trans, lesbian, asexual people and other subgroups of the LGTBIQANB+ acronym being placed last, and those of us who needed access to healthcare most, in particular public health, were, on the most part, already in debt, with many of us still in debt today. This prompts us to push harder and harder directly with the ministries of health and responsible authorities, not only to restore what little we had before, but also to achieve the long-awaited dream of dignified, quality intersex health care with a focus on rights. For this, we are currently working on creating a specific regulation in conjunction with MINSAL authorities in Chile to salvage the situation resulting from the health circulars of 2015 and 2016. In 2015, a ministerial circular was first launched (without the option for legal enforcement) that prohibited genital mutilation in intersex babies, but, given the political pressures at the time, the following year a new circular was launched that, without invalidating the previous circular, gave the green light to all medical professional to perform medical interventions if they believe it "ethical" perform them.

Not all is lost, since not all of us are tired... We, the intersex people from the Global South are ungovernable bodies. We, the intersex people from the Global South want to be free and autonomous.



Hana Aoi
@vivir.intersex





The mirror of experience

Notes for an intersex phenomenology

Hana Aoi 
@vivir.intersex

[1] Note this article was
originally written in
Spanish


In the following pages I will try to condense the importance of the word intersex and of representation based on the stories and cultural references produced by intersex people themselves; in the consolidation of a diversified strategy that is committed, not only to political action itself within the institutions of the States, but by affecting the culture and the imaginary. That which, up to now, continues to invalidate the horizon of possibilities of a body with a sex differentiation unique from the models idealized by a naturalized sex dimorphism, on which all kinds of violence and human rights violations are based. Starting from my experience in activism and academic reflection, I hope to leave some suggestions on how to consolidate a multidisciplinary critical corpus of being intersex in Spanish,^[1] starting from - but not reduced to - the experience.

In the field of identity politics, the journey of those of us who meet in the term 'intersex' is often misunderstood. It is a signifier related to experiences that remain invisible, despite the fact that intersex activism has been struggling for at least three decades to make itself heard in a world in crisis. In addition, these are experiences marked by silence, and even more so, by the scarcity of language and representations that allow their subjective expression and collective articulation. Intersex is a term that, despite vague interpretations and profane confusions, remains a cult term that demands attention for which political action does not grant the time. In the introduction to *Bans*, Mauro Cabral Grinspan highlights the need to thematize being intersex in the languages of our hemisphere. This need still exists, to the extent that intersex people in Latin America make an appearance, with increasing determination, in public spaces and in the political arena, giving an account of our experiences and demanding our rights.

It is necessary to demystify the word intersex, while giving it its own collective meaning. And to note that intersex is not a proper term; we have expropriated it from medical treatises and conversations in clinical spaces. It is a politically charged term that coexists with the new nomenclatures that often undermine it. Importantly, it enables a resignification at a subjective and collective level: stating oneself as intersex supposes an awareness of the historical, social and cultural structures and processes that determined the context in which we were made intersex. Without overintellectualizing this process, it supposes a reflexivity, a subjective recognition of the embodied and situated experience based on diagnoses, complex and painful memories, scars, flesh and experiential mutilations. It is about subjective knowledge that, following Donna Haraway, allows us to aspire to objectivity. Said knowledge arises from the recognition of the stigma in one's own experience, through that of others. The connections of that identification in the stories of other intersex people, such as those that have been shared through **Brújula Intersexual**, pioneers in the plowing of this field of meaning, weaving the knowledge of being intersex, and gestating an incipient, but growing, legitimacy.



Hana Aoi
@vivir.intersex

 Vivir y Ser
Intersex



For me, the case of the Mexican intersex community of which I am a part represents an exceptional example of a political trajectory that recovers the experiences lived in the personal realm, in the private sphere of life, and sublimates the latent and silenced discomfort in a testimony or tangible artifact capable of affecting those who were unaware of our existence. These experiences also become the seed of a community of people and knowledge. This community allows political activation through interventions with pedagogical purposes, to educate or sensitize key actors, and in the forging of alliances, but which take on a performative aspect that feeds an awareness of the need to take these interventions further. It also makes it possible to identify the common edges with other ongoing social struggles. The disciplinary regimen of biopolitics that enabled, hindered and made impossible certain horizons, certain experiences and certain desires, marked us in a specific way that needs to be declared for something to change. Our community of knowledge, of people, of stories, opposes the discourse of normalized truth, which reduces our lives to an anomaly of sex differentiation, reiterated by those who refuse to recognize their prejudices and their privileges as such. But in this process, we have been occupying more and more spaces and, although they are far from definitive achievements, we have managed to influence some public policies and produce data and research that serve as a cornerstone for refined and expanded efforts. How to achieve it, without the agency of the intersex word?

I offer below a testimony of another kind, of what has been the rise of a subjective political consciousness that has taken me down unexpected paths. This subjectivity is the result of countless conversations, musings, periods of depression, but also of great creativity and enthusiasm within a community of people and knowledge, which provide authenticity and strength to an increasingly clear and urgent demand towards the Mexican State and its heterogeneous society.

My arrival to the intersex movement is the day I met Laura Inter. By that time, we had been in communication for several months, mainly through social networks. It is neither repetitive nor exaggerated to emphasize the importance of these platforms and the exponential access to the Internet in the very growth of the intersex community, because in the absence of bonds of trust and openness to the truth on the part of medical institutions, and of the same families gripped by stigma and guilt, even today it remains difficult for many intersex people to get to know their own stories or to be able to articulate them with a social, historical and cultural context beyond a diagnosis and a false pathological understanding of their own bodies. In my case, at least, that was the framework within which a reasonably educated, college-educated person managed to do research on the Web and eventually connect with another intersex person who was in a position to enable this process of becoming aware.

In this context, **Brújula Intersexual**, more than a compass [*brújula* meaning *compass* in Spanish], has been a beacon and a harbor on the path of many intersex people like me. When I met Laura, she introduced me to other people, and invited me to participate in an awareness event for Conapred, the government agency in charge of fighting discrimination in Mexico. It was the year 2016.

It needs to be emphasized that not all intersex people engage in activism, even if they become aware of how the historical and cultural context shaped our life experiences. The people I met, along with Laura, were people who were committed to a certain type of activism based on education and raising awareness in society. I decided to accept Laura's invitation as a result of the enthusiasm produced in me by having met flesh and blood people with experiences in common with mine. Training at Conapred, however, was challenging due to the intense anxiety I experienced when sharing my experience and my demand for a change in institutions and in society to prevent stories like mine, like ours, from repeating themselves. That anxiety was a key to further problematize the particular perversion of medical interventions of genital mutilation and normalization of our bodies: a phenomenological perversion. Of course, as a systems engineer I did not have the frame of reference to name this feature of my being in the world. However, as I met other people, such as Eva Alcántara, **Adiós al Futuro** [Goodbye to the Future] and Mara Toledo, who contributed critical and embodied perspectives to our community of knowledge, I began to understand that the anxiety that accompanied me for years in all areas of my life was also originated in medical spaces and by the same hands that mutilated my body. In the end, and after the fruitful exchange of experiences and knowledge in the awareness workshops in educational spaces and with allies of our struggle, after my participation in the international forums in Amsterdam and the Latin American forums in San José, after having organized events to raise awareness of our problem and thanks to all those exchanges of knowledge, I made the decision to study a master's degree in women's studies, which would allow me to acquire the formal theoretical knowledge that I needed to consolidate those ideas that had been brewing in my mind.

I speak of phenomenology in the sense that our bodies are the most important interface of our experience in the world. Being intersex is not the diagnosis with which our bodies are described, but the result of attempts to erase all doubt about our sex. Following on from what Iain Morland has said, the surgeries aimed at eradicating these doubts irreversibly condition our bodies to perform gender through what they can do, but also by definitively preventing what they can feel, and altering the way we have to feel.

The senses, and the meaning that we give to what we feel, are not a simple individual occurrence, but a material and quantifiable consequence of medical interventions, non-consensual and almost always unnecessary, and originated in prejudices about sex and sexuality that we have inherited from past centuries and that we continue to naturalize. That experiential distortion produced by embodied prejudices is the very thing that Sara Ahmed describes as **queer phenomenology**.

I propose that we now speak of the phenomenology of being intersex: that which is produced by the collision between the social expectations of a sex dimorphism on which the disciplinary order of Foucauldian biopolitics is naturalized, and the response to "undisciplined" bodies, from the intersex medical mechanism described by Eva Alcántara, whose origin and destination is the society that demands the normalization of our bodies; but also, that we talk about the subjective phenomenological possibilities to negotiate and re-orient our life horizon, as Ahmed herself suggests, from the affective and bodily dissonances resulting from the collision of our bodies with social expectations. Not only do we live or are this body, but this body is and lives where is carried our desire and the inertias that swirl, own and yield to the context. Understanding the complex web of interrelationships that give rise to our experiences, beyond the appearance of our genitals or the anatomical configuration of our bodies in general, may be the only way to produce definitive changes in the social and cultural understanding for the future. I am not suggesting in any way that it is the only valid proposition, but I believe that any activism strategy has to incorporate a proposal that seeks to take root, or else it will be laid to waste by all the threats of the ecosystem in which we are politically active.

In this sense, I insist on fostering spaces for critical thinking about being intersex, in parallel with the political struggle itself, and appealing to experiences as a mirror to study what affected and marked our bodies and our relationships with the world, through a bodily, intersex evolution, which we did not initiate or desire, but which, once outside, once the discomfort is made aware, demands a re-orientation towards more kind and fair horizons of life, in a convulsed world where the only thing that can endure the vagaries of history is the connection with the unpredictability of nature that we insist on resisting. That is, in simple words: embrace diversity and weave our networks from there.

Only in community is it possible to resist and flourish.



Global South intersex movement

Birth of the intersex movement in Peru

Bea Is 
@peru.intersex

The mandatory measures of social isolation in the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic led to the intensification of cyberactivism by various organizations, especially those that lacked safe and respectful spaces towards bodily diversity. In this sense, **Perú Intersex** arises, the first **Peruvian Association of Intersex People** that would constitute a new stage of my activism in this field, but not the beginning of it, because the contribution of my personal life in this journey was fundamental.



 **Bea Is**
@peru.intersex

En 2018, when I was 23 years old, I made the decision to migrate to Buenos Aires, Argentina to pursue my university studies. At that time, I did not know the term "intersex" and much less understood why my body had developed in an unusual way. In this constant search to know why my body developed differently, I met **Brújula Intersexual**, where I interacted with well-known intersex activists such as Laura Inter, who, with her support, helped me to understand my corporality and its unusual development.

Also, with the knowledge of other people similar to me, I was able to understand the vital importance of personal testimonials. In this way, while I was developing my studies and working, I was also able to cooperate in the creation of informative posts to raise awareness about being intersex.

In 2019, I published the historical review of my intersex journey on the web portal **Brújula Intersexual**, which I titled "**Looking for myself by Bea is**". This publication meant being the first intersex person in Peru to share their experience, so my article on the web led to my continued participation in various spaces speaking about being intersex. Consequently, with the purpose of making visible the reality that intersex people live, from my experience and perspective. In 2020, as part of my activism and presence in the intersex collective, I was invited to participate in the **Second Latin American and Caribbean Intersex Conference**, which was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In this event, I was able to meet more people with similar testimonies to mine, which somehow boosted my interest in creating a space for intersex people in my country.

At the end of 2020, with the support of Laura Inter - whom I admire and hold in great esteem - the hard work of building the foundations of what is now known as the **Peruvian Association of Intersex People (Perú Intersex)** was undertaken. The main work of Perú Intersex has been to connect with other LGTBIQ+, disabilities, feminist and human rights activists and organizations in order to generate articulated work that allows us to inform and raise awareness about the reality of intersex people in Peru. Parallel to this work, our official digital platforms were created on the main social networks, through which we continuously provide basic information about being intersex.

With the reestablishment of in-person social spaces, on behalf of **Perú Intersex**, I participated in information fairs and workshops in which I taught people about our collective through informational and promotional materials such as posters, as one area of work for our organization is mainly focused on informing, raising awareness, sensitizing and creating an intersex community. This is done alongside the creation of safe spaces for dialogue between peers, and strengthening and empowerment in the face of the adverse realities that intersex people face. The connection between peers at the national level is of vital importance for the recognition, education and knowledge of human rights in the collective, and to raise our voice against the attacks on those rights.

In this sense, with our information and visibility campaigns, we have managed to make connections in some government spaces, such as the **Municipality of Lima**. From this connection, a conference on Human Rights was created with the **Amnesty International Diversxs project**. In this space, the first workshop on Being Intersex was held on June 12 in the municipal theater of Lima. Likewise, we have been able to connect with the **Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations of Peru** to participate in a video regarding Pride Month, where we share what being intersex is and what we demand of Peruvian society. We hope to continue with this work in an articulated way to ensure that the Peruvian State focuses its gaze on our intersex experiences. Thus, in this way, together we can create a more friendly and respectful society towards our body diversity.

However, one of the limitations for our organization is the limited resources available to carry out the different activities throughout the year. It is of vital importance for our activism to have funds that allow us to reach more people and/or distribute more informative materials. However, we are often limited by this factor, as well as by the lack of opportunities to access grants and monetary support, as most intersex organizations in the Global South are not registered. This is due to the demand for time and resources that we often do not have.

Even in the face of this adversity, various policies have been promoted by civil society that serve as a starting point to ensure the human rights of LGBTIQ+ community in Peru. However, anti-rights movements have undermined such efforts, as, with the support of figures with high public positions, Peruvian conservatism has rejected the LGBTIQ+ community based on fundamentalisms that categorically deny its existence and the basic human rights of the people and groups that make up its diversity. In addition, in a country that often applauds and encourages the mockery of the supposedly “strange”, it is a challenge to generate activism against the prejudice towards those who see themselves as different from the rest. According to a survey carried out by **IPSOS Perú**,^[1] it was found that 1 in 3 Peruvians had suffered discrimination in 2021.. Of this group, it was found that the most discriminated population were LGBTI people and people living with HIV. Unfortunately, a large part (44%) does not take action after being discriminated against, with only 12% making a formal claim or complaint.

Additionally, it is believed that representations of diversity are brought to our country through colonization, which is completely incorrect. There is evidence that [sexual, gender and bodily] diversities existed long before colonialism and that they were applauded and celebrated at that time. This is represented in Ancient Peru through the coastal iconography of pre-Inca northern Peru. The **huacos** and ceramic and clay articles contain scenes that could well be considered homoerotic. Archaeological records have found multiple *huacos* from the Moche culture that represent scenes of homosexual sex.^[2] Historical and archaeological studies have categorized colonization as the historical process of sexual repression in all colonized countries. Quite the contrary to what is argued against sexual diversity.

As an organization, all of this motivates us to continue the arduous task of raising awareness and informing through various spaces and platforms, as well as ensuring the continuity of connection spaces with society and the LGTBIQ+ community, since it is of vital importance to create alliances and improve collaborative work between intersex organizations and civil society. Consequently, it enables increased strength and a greater impact within the conservative opinion of those who try to make the community invisible. Not only considering the importance of intersex diversity in certain periods such as June, October or November, where the development of pride in the LGTBIQ + community unfolds, but to illustrate that, as human beings, our problems and adversities occur throughout the year. It is about increasing visibility about the fact that, specifically, intersex people experience discrimination and stigma constantly.

^[1] IPSOS (2020) II **Encuesta Nacional de Derechos Humanos:** Población LGBTI.

^[2] Kauffman, Federico. (2001) **Sexualidad en el Antiguo Perú.** Lima, Quebecor World: Perú.

On a macro level, I notice that the intersex movement in South America is constantly growing, thanks to the various activists who have worked hard so that more people with variations in sex characteristics know about their intersex experience from a respectful perspective. Despite the different challenges that we have had to face, I consider that the most important thing about this aspect of the intersex movement is its constant support for each other, that is, working together. The connection between intersex organizations has been one of the factors that has strengthened the intersex movement; the importance of being able to promote our work together, disseminate material from our collectives and generate new spaces strengthens our work.

Looking towards the future of intersex activism, we hope to be able to reach more intersex people throughout the national territory and that -as a result of self-acceptance, self-love and empowerment - we can promote the emergence of new activists who revolutionize our movement and, above all, undertake to promote a new society that is more respectful towards our intersex community.

We hope that, from areas of political influence, we can work together in the generation of circulars, recommendations and other documents that can help us connect with the relevant health professionals. In this sense, we create alliances of awareness and joint work to develop more dignified and humane treatment for intersex children in Peru and in South America. This is more feasible through joint work in approaching, supporting, and implementing necessary measures that address the root of the problems for our group.

The intersex movement in the Global South has taught me that, when you want something with all your heart, it can be achieved. For example, Brújula Intersexual is one of the first intersex groups in Latin America, from Mexico, that enabled access to information about this community, that was concentrated in works in the English language, by spending years translating information for people who do not have access to the English language.

In addition to the love and affection that is hidden behind all the work carried out in our activism, it is this which is the engine that drives our intersex collective. Even in difficult contexts such as the pandemic, our commitment continued, by adapting to new forms of socialization and expanding the scope of the organization through digital platforms. In other words, we have the ability to adapt to continually growing as a movement.

One of the teachings that I embrace the most is the inner strength that we have developed as activists in order to continue working to create a better society, and I see this through the birth of more intersex organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean.

We, the intersex people of the Global South, are human beings capable of being loved and of having a full and happy life without the need for our bodies to be normalized. We intersex people from the Global South want our bodily diversity and human rights to be respected.



Bea Is
@peru.intersex

Asociación Peruana de
Personas Intersexuales

Intersex Bodies | Global South Alliances

Memoir

We, the
intersex
people
from
the
Global
South

Latin America
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intersex@gate.ngo