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## I. Introduction

From 2015 to 2019, Madrid City Council prepared and developed its *Plan Estratégico de Derechos Humanos* (Strategic Human Rights Plan<sup>1</sup>). This brief innovative exercise yielded a number of lessons and pending challenges, and other cities and institutions have used it as a reference.

In this chapter, first we address the most important aspects of Madrid City Council's *Plan Estratégico de Derechos Humanos* (hereafter, the Plan), which are the participatory process and the implementation mechanisms. Particular attention is given to how the Plan sought to contribute to realising the right to the city based on the right to difference. Then, we will share some of the lessons learned since we took up the challenge of building a rights policy in the City of Madrid back in December 2015. While the Plan's implementation and the activity of the Human Rights and Memory Office (Oficina de Derechos Humanos y Memoria) were interrupted following the May 2019 municipal elections, successes and mistakes may be pinpointed, existing difficulties noted and some conclusions and pending challenges may be extracted.

Finally, we would like these contributions to inspire other cities to promote their own mechanisms and to use our experience to improve instruments meant to mainstream a human rights approach in municipal public policies.

With this Plan, Madrid joined other cities that have been actively working for years on the protection and promotion of human rights through various mechanisms.

It should be noted that Madrid City Council, like many others, has been making daily contributions to the defence and promotion of human rights through all its policies and programmes. However, for the first time, in the 2015–19 Government Action Plan human rights were incorporated as a cross-cutting axis. It was also the first time a plan had been designed to mainstream **an approach based on human rights, gender and intersectionality** (DH-GI in its Spanish acronym) in municipal policies.<sup>2</sup>

The Strategic Human Rights Plan was a brief, but innovative exercise that other cities and institutions have used as a reference.

1. See: <https://www.madrid.es/portales/munimadrid/es/Inicio/El-Ayuntamiento/Derechos-Humanos-y-Memoria/Derechos-Humanos/Madrid-ciudad-de-derechos/El-Plan-Estrategico-de-Derechos-Humanos-del-Ayuntamiento-de-Madrid-2017-2019-/?vgnnextfmt=default&vgnnextchannel=a3e14e82b1d11610VgnVCM2000001f4a900aRCRD&vgnextoid=a3e14e82b1d11610VgnVCM2000001f4a900aRCRD>.
2. The intersectional approach allows us to examine how different categories of socially and culturally constructed discrimination interact and interrelate, contributing to discrimination against specific people, in what is known as multiple discrimination.

Sections	Goals
1. A city that contributes to guaranteeing civil and political rights	Goal 1: Right to participation, information, transparency and accountability
	Goal 2: Right to security based on human rights
	Goal 3: Right to freedom of conscience, religion, opinion and demonstration
	Goal 4: Right to freedom of assembly, association and demonstration
	Goal 5: Right to truth, justice and reparation
2. A city that is committed against discrimination and violence	Goal 6: Women's right to a life free from discrimination and violence
	Goal 7: The right of LGBTIQ people to a life free from discrimination and violence
	Goal 8: Right of migrants, refugees, victims of trafficking and minorities to a life free from discrimination and violence
	Goal 9: Right of children and adolescents to a life free from discrimination and violence
	Goal 10: Right of people with functional diversity to a life free from discrimination and violence
3. A city that contributes to guaranteeing economic, social, cultural and environmental rights	Goal 11: The right of elderly people to a life free from discrimination and violence
	Goal 12: Right to health, including sexual and reproductive
	Goal 13: Right to decent and adequate housing, including the right to energy
	Goal 14: Right to receive care and rights of caregivers
	Goal 15: Right to quality education with human rights content
	Goal 16: Right to dignified employment
	Goal 17: Right to sufficient, appropriate and healthy food and water
	Goal 18: Right to culture of quality and with human rights content without discrimination
	Goal 19: Right to a sustainable urban environment, guaranteeing quality of life and mobility in the city
4. A city in solidarity with other cities and territories, promoter of a more just, democratic and sustainable world	Goal 20: Build a municipal public policy for justice and global solidarity with a human rights approach
5. A city that guarantees equal access to basic municipal services and human rights training for municipal staff	Goal 21: Right to equal access to basic and local-level municipal services that are available, accessible and high quality.
	Goal 22: Human rights training for city council staff and privately run organisations.

### Example lines of action

Implement a strategy on the participation of girls, boys and adolescents in municipal policies

Commission the ethical committee of the independent and impartial municipal police composed of representatives of the police and external human rights specialists, among others

Adopt a protocol for relations between the city council and religious groups and bodies for the defence of non-theistic and atheistic beliefs and of secularism and/or the lack of religious affiliation of the public administrations

Review the municipal procedure on the allocation of public space for the enjoyment of the right of assembly, association or demonstration

Creation, recovery and/or reinterpretation of certain spaces as particularly significant places of memory (graves, sites of repression and deprivation of liberty, prisons, cemeteries)

Mainstream the DH-GI approach in municipal policies, through the implementation of the Equal Opportunities Strategy between women and men

Adopt a protocol to guarantee the rights of transgender and transsexual people working in the city council during the transition process

Measures to ensure the implementation of the Neighbourhood Card

Strengthen Madrid's Local Plan for Children and Adolescents (2016–19).

Adapt municipal services to be able to follow up and demand compliance with the social clauses included in Instruction 1/2016 regarding the incorporation of social clauses in contracts concluded by Madrid City Council

Review the operating regulations of homes for the elderly with a DH-GI approach

Adopt plans to promote sexual and emotional education with a DH-GI approach, both in the educational field and in other municipal and community spaces

Increase the supply of municipal public social housing with a DH-GI approach, which reflects the diversity of needs (accessibility, security, community creation and support networks)

Promote co-responsibility in care work through, among other measures, awareness campaigns aimed especially at young people and men. Ensure the inclusion of human rights education in their own educational and cultural centres and programmes

Review current occupational risk prevention plans to ensure their proper implementation

Promote the implementation of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, adopting measures to promote sustainable, inclusive, resilient and safe food systems, and to ensure the management and use of natural food resources in the most sustainable way possible

Promote channels for residents to participate in the design of at least 30% of the programming of municipal cultural centres, and guarantee, in particular, the participation of women and people from discriminated against groups.

Air Quality and Climate Change Plan.

Implement a programme for the reception of human rights defenders

Study social needs using a human rights approach to show the existing “human rights gaps” in the City of Madrid in a disaggregated manner by district and neighbourhood and a range of variables

Course on the “Right to a life free from violence and discrimination”

## II. The Strategic Human Rights Plan: guiding principles and contents

It was also the first time a plan had been designed to mainstream an approach based on human rights, gender and intersectionality.

The Plan was conceived as an instrument for giving effect to the right to the city, incorporating human rights values, principles and norms and, in particular, the principle of non-discrimination.

We made use of the conceptual framework developed by the United Nations, which makes human rights and gender equity the foundation, objective and instrument of public policies. Specifically, we sought above all to strengthen municipal action to tackle Madrid's most significant human rights failures, inequality and poverty. Women are particularly affected, as are the most discriminated against groups: LGBTI; ethnic minorities; people with disabilities/functional diversity; the elderly; the young; people with addictions; migrant and refugee populations; children and adolescents; the homeless; and the families hardest hit by the economic crisis and austerity policies.

In short, the Plan sought to mainstream a human rights-based approach to municipal policies. It aimed to ensure that Madrid City Council complies with its obligations to respect, protect and enforce human rights in its day-to-day work, in all areas and aspects of its government activity.

The Plan was conceived as an instrument for giving effect to the right to the city, incorporating human rights values, principles and norms and, in particular, the **principle of non-discrimination**, obliging the city council to identify and take active measures to eradicate or overcome obstacles to exercising rights that derive from gender and other factors whose intersection results in multiple discrimination.

To do this, the Plan's drafting process had specific objectives that served as transversal axes:

- a) Promote mechanisms for **active and effective citizen participation**, especially of women and the most discriminated against groups, in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of municipal policies.
- b) Contribute to improving the development of Madrid City Council's capacities to respect, protect and guarantee human rights: the city council as "**guarantor of rights**".
- c) **Strengthening the capacities** of rights holders to **demand and claim** that their rights are upheld.

Finally, this relationship with the implementation of the right to the city based on difference is better understood if we take into account the guiding principles underlying the Plan: 1) the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights; 2) participation, accountability and the enforceability of rights; 3) the social function of the city, urban property and the natural environment; and finally, and more directly, 4) the principle of equality and non-discrimination.

The principles of equality and non-discrimination are peremptory norms of international law that oblige the city council to place the human rights of all the people who live in its city at the centre of its structures, services and policies, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, ethnic or national origin, position or social status, nationality, civil status, family status, affiliation, birth, age, disability, health

status, place of residence, administrative status, sexual orientation or gender identification, or membership of any group, among other possible considerations.<sup>3</sup>

Both principles oblige the city council to act decisively to realise equality between men and women in all spheres, as well as to identify the obstacles certain sections of the population face in the exercise of their rights, particularly the most discriminated against groups.

In summary, the Plan obliged Madrid City Council to use all available means, including “temporary special measures”,<sup>4</sup> to eradicate all forms of discrimination that may, directly or indirectly, be suffered by anyone living permanently or temporarily in Madrid to guarantee the respect for, protection of and effectiveness of their rights. With respect to the contents, very briefly, the structure can be seen in the table below, with the sections, goals and strategic objectives for each goal and line of action.

### III. The Plan as the fruit of a thoroughly participatory process

Direct citizen participation in the decision-making processes that affect people’s day-to-day lives was a firm commitment of the last Madrid City Council team. From the start of our mandate we strived to implement participatory instruments and processes. Our aim was for a substantial proportion of municipal policies to be decided directly by citizens, thereby responding to a model of democracy that made the **fundamental right to political participation** more real and effective.

This became a fundamental issue when we discussed implementing the right to the city based on the right to difference. Without broad participatory processes and collective construction, no advance is possible on implementing the right to the city, on social cohesion as the backbone to the city, or on the construction of cities that are the authentic expression of the “social mixture” or diversity in each of our neighbourhoods. We highlighted the importance of the participatory process, emphasising that participation should be opened up to all groups and individuals in the city, in order to gather, as far as possible, their requests and needs, both for the purposes of making diagnoses and for drawing the sectoral lines of action themselves.

As noted, the Plan is the result of an extensive participatory process that was launched in December 2015 and in which the government, political groups, the various city council departments and their staff were involved (internal participatory process), as well as associations, human rights organisations, NGOs, and social and citizen movements (external participatory process). A total of 2,000 people and 400 organisations participated in the drafting process, in the over 100 meetings and workshops held, or through the surveys carried out and the questionnaire on “*Decide Madrid*” (Madrid Decides).<sup>5</sup> Once the Plan’s initial design was ready, it was published on the “*Decide Madrid*” platform and people were able to include proposals and vote on them. Thus, each citizen was invited to have real participation in the Plan from its beginning to the final text.

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3. The main grounds for discrimination prohibited by international human rights treaties.
4. Term used by human rights committees; equivalent to expressions such as “positive” or “affirmative action”.
5. The platform (<https://decide.madrid.es/>) now has 350,000 registered users, includes direct democracy processes such as citizen initiatives and participatory budgets, and other processes such as citizens’ debates, votes, surveys and specific participatory processes on matters such as urban developments and regulatory approval. Madrid’s citizens have an open, connective platform through which they can directly decide on the most important issues in the city. The platform’s success and being free software have made it the largest online citizen participation project in the world. Any government can install, modify and use it for free, as cities in countries such as Argentina, France, Italy, Mexico, Peru and Colombia already are.

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The process began with the participatory performance of a **diagnosis** of: 1) the main human rights violations in Madrid; 2) the specific obligations of the City Council to address such violations; and 3) its strengths, weaknesses and challenges when trying to meet these obligations.

This diagnosis provided a documentary and factual basis for drafting the specific measures in the Plan, which was the result of the internal and external participatory processes mentioned above. Academic assistance helped give the Plan the scientific rigour and quality a document of this calibre requires; and widening participation ensured the acceptance of the voluntary networks and citizens involved in its design.

Among the main findings of the diagnosis were the existence of **major obstacles to guaranteeing social rights** and the **absence of a civic culture of participation, transparency and accountability**. Both issues highlighted the limitations and obstacles various groups encounter when exercising their rights in their city. The diagnosis directly challenged Madrid City Council to establish multisectoral lines of action that guarantee the principle of equality and the right not to be discriminated against. The Plan must be understood as a fundamental tool for building a city that takes a rights-based approach to **managing its diversity** in all its municipal policies and in all its agencies.

#### IV. The mechanisms for the implementation and evaluation of the Strategic Human Rights Plan

The Plan considered the creation of a series of structures for its set-up and implementation, on the one hand, and their management by citizens and human rights organisations, on the other. The principle of citizen participation, which was present since the beginning of the Plan, also became particularly important throughout the whole accountability process for its effective implementation by the city council.

Initially, after the Plan was approved, an **Office of Human Rights and Memory** was created at the Third Deputy Mayor's Office (Tercera Tenencia de Alcaldía). Its purpose was to coordinate and promote the Plan's measures. Implementing them was the responsibility of the various departments of Madrid City Council.

Secondly, the **Human Rights Bureau**, a collegiate body for monitoring the Plan, was created by the City Council. The bureau was chaired by the Third Deputy Mayor's Office and included a representative from each of the departments and from city council bodies with responsibilities in matters related to the Plan.

One of their notable duties was the approval of the **operational programmes** prepared by council departments for the three years of the Plan's validity.<sup>6</sup> Once approved, these programmes – which contained the activities each department committed to performing to comply with the Plan's lines of action – were published for the purposes of transparency and accountability by human rights bodies and citizens.

To properly evaluate and monitor the Plan's implementation, a **system of indicators** was designed (relating to structure, effort and result) based

6 See: [https://www.madrid.es/UnidadWeb/NxC/MemoriaDerechos/Derechos\\_Humanos/ContenidosGenericosDDHH/ficheros/AnexoIIIProgramasOperativos.pdf](https://www.madrid.es/UnidadWeb/NxC/MemoriaDerechos/Derechos_Humanos/ContenidosGenericosDDHH/ficheros/AnexoIIIProgramasOperativos.pdf).

on the obligations derived from state and international regulations in this regard.<sup>7</sup> The Human Rights Bureau proposed this system of indicators, which was subsequently taken on by human rights entities.

As the principle of citizen participation underpins all phases of the Plan, by necessity it also had to form part of its evaluation. In this sense, the **Human Rights Forum**,<sup>8</sup> was created as an instrument for citizens and the groups that defend human rights to participate in the Plan's implementation and evaluation. The aim was to give the City of Madrid a continuous channel for social movements to participate in the implementation and achievement of the Plan. The forum worked through plenary sessions, as well as the panels and working groups that were created to facilitate and improve their work.

As a **communication channel** between the City Council and the human rights defence bodies, the forum contributed to the creation and implementation of the system of human rights indicators and actively participated in the annual reporting tasks related to compliance with the Plan. Similarly, their participation was foreseen in preparing the final evaluation report planned for 2019, which will not now be carried out, as was briefly stated in the introduction.

Finally, prior to the participation process, for all the actors involved within the City Council and the voluntary networks and human rights bodies, the Office of Human Rights and Memory had to produce the **annual follow-up reports**<sup>9</sup> for the activities carried out (2017 and 2018). These reports met the objectives of: 1) reporting on the degree of implementation of the planned initiatives; 2) serving as a tool for the City Council to assess the scope, suitability and quality of the initiatives carried out; and 3) introducing improvements for future planning.

As the Plan became ineffective before the planned deadline, the **final evaluation report** by the Office of Human Rights and Memory will also not be produced. It would, once again, have benefitted from the active participation of all the sectors involved at the City Council.

## V. Lessons learned and pending challenges

As mentioned, three years after this initiative was launched, some lessons may be drawn from both the drafting and implementation processes. Fundamentally, we will indicate some of the difficulties identified, which are surely shared by other ongoing initiatives, and to mention some of what we consider to have been successful parts of the endeavour and others that on future occasions we would avoid or reformulate.

**The creation of the Office of Human Rights and Memory.** The Plan emerged in response to the question "How can Madrid City Council improve its performance in order to continue contributing to protecting human rights in the city?" In 2015, the change of municipal government led to departments being restructured. A new Department of Social Rights and Equity was created with its own powers to perform all the policies in fields that touch upon the rights of the elderly, childhood, functional diversity, housing, employment and social services, among others. One possible option was to roll out human rights policy from

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7. The system of indicators for monitoring the Strategic Human Rights Plan was the result of work by the Human Rights Forum and was approved by Madrid City Council's Human Rights Bureau at its session on April 20, 2018. It is an exhaustive system, which distinguishes between different levels of indicators (structure, political effort, outcome and enjoyment of rights), and which will serve not only for the monitoring reports on the Plan, but for the City Council to improve its government policy indicators and its data collection, management and publication system.
8. The Human Rights Forum is a permanent body for articulating civil society participation in the monitoring, evaluation and control of the human rights policies implemented by Madrid City Council. For more information about its functions, composition, participation and operation, see: <https://www.madrid.es/portales/munimadrid/es/Inicio/El-Ayuntamiento/Derechos-Humanos-y-Memoria/Derechos-Humanos/Madrid-ciudad-de-derechos/El-Foro-de-Derechos-Humanos-del-Ayuntamiento-de-Madrid/?vgnextfmt=default&vgnnextchannel=fdcf70a997a21610VgnVCM2000001f4a900aRCRD&vgnnextoid=fdcf70a997a21610VgnVCM2000001f4a900aRCRD>.
9. See: [https://www.madrid.es/UnidadWeb/NxCl/MemoriaDerechos/Derechos\\_Humanos/PublicacionesDDHH/InformesPlanEstrategico/FicherosInformesPlanEstrategico/InformeSeguimientoPEDH2017.pdf](https://www.madrid.es/UnidadWeb/NxCl/MemoriaDerechos/Derechos_Humanos/PublicacionesDDHH/InformesPlanEstrategico/FicherosInformesPlanEstrategico/InformeSeguimientoPEDH2017.pdf).

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that department. However, our goal was not only to develop social and equity policies from a rights perspective. As already noted, our main objective was to mainstream that DH-GI approach for all municipal policies and actions. To that end the Office of Human Rights and Memory was created, which reported to one of the mayor's offices, but lay outside of any particular department, with delegated powers for the Plan's promotion, implementation and evaluation. On the other hand, along with the delegated powers in the human rights field, powers were delegated for the design and direct execution of public policies around democratic memory. We believe that creating an office to promote council departments' compliance with the Plan (with exclusive powers for implementing the measures included in the Plan and with budget provisions assigned for this purpose) was a success.

**Budget allocation and structure.** As mentioned above, implementing the contents of the Plan was the responsibility of each department, and we have remarked on the success of its promotion and implementation depending on the Office of Human Rights, which performed the role of "monitoring" compliance with it. Our experience showed that it was essential to have our own budget line and a minimal administrative structure intended exclusively for the operation of the office and the achievement of its own objectives. The budget allocation had two fundamental objectives: 1) It allowed the office to conduct its own activity to promote human rights and raise awareness about them. As such, it allowed us to organise events, conferences, workshops and other such activities as part of the city council's global commitment to the defence and promotion of human rights. Having resources allowed us to organise activities around the international Human Rights Day, campaigns against racism and discrimination, and to support the activities of other departments or social organisations. 2) Implementing measures in areas we might call "residual powers", that is, competences not expressly allocated to other departments. Specifically, this allowed us to act in the field of rights of freedom of conscience, religion, opinion and expression and, above all, rights to truth, justice and reparation. These powers were expressly delegated to the Third Mayor's Office for the planning of initiatives and their implementation by the office itself.

**Diagnosis and participation.** Undoubtedly, this prior process of preparing a diagnosis which was open to the groups in the city and the local administration itself was decisive in drafting the Plan. The findings that emerged from the content have enormous value for constructing public policies with a DH-GI approach. All this abundant and complex information, contributions and documentation allowed us to identify the main areas where human rights are lacking, and to analyse their causes and consequences. Finally, it was fundamental to understand the institutional capacity and municipal resources we possessed (regulatory, material and human), as well as the services, programmes, policies and good practices. Hence the importance of extending the participatory process to the monitoring and follow-up of the implementation of the initiatives in the Plan. For that purpose the Human Rights Forum was created, a sectoral forum for human rights organisations working in the City of Madrid. To date, over 150 entities make up the forum, and are highly involved in it, albeit always relying on the resources and personnel of the organisations themselves.

9. See: [https://www.madrid.es/UnidadWeb/NxC/MemoriaDerechos/Derechos\\_Humanos/PublicacionesDDHH/InformesPlanEstrategico/FicherosInformesPlanEstrategico/InformeSeguimientoPEDH2017.pdf](https://www.madrid.es/UnidadWeb/NxC/MemoriaDerechos/Derechos_Humanos/PublicacionesDDHH/InformesPlanEstrategico/FicherosInformesPlanEstrategico/InformeSeguimientoPEDH2017.pdf).



**Report on municipal powers.** Another essential element prior to drafting the contents of the Plan was the preparation of a technical-legal report on the framework of competences. This was a key issue when addressing the proposal for specific lines of action. For this reason we chose – correctly, in our opinion – to establish initiatives that fitted within the city council's direct areas of competence along with promotion activities directed towards other public administrations, which allowed us to indirectly influence the promotion of residents' human rights. This issue is specified in the Plan, with two sections distinguished in the lines of action, "direct City Council competence" and "to be promoted to other administrations or institutions". The latter took place, fundamentally, in the fields of intergovernmental and interinstitutional relations through diverse channels and in the activity of the city council's plenary session through the proposals or motions made by the political groups. They were subject to follow-up just like all the lines of action but, obviously, it was not possible to establish mechanisms for monitoring the fulfilment of the measures promoted to another administration or institution with competence for its implementation and execution.

**Harmonisation with other cross-cutting plans and programmes.** Since 2015, Madrid City Council has implemented a number of plans, programmes and strategies ("Madrid, ciudad de los cuidados", "Estrategia de Alimentación Saludable y Sostenible", "Plan Local de Infancia y adolescencia", "Plan Impulso de consumo sostenible", Proyecto MARES, etc.). The mainstreaming that defines the Strategic Human Rights Plan means its goals, objectives and lines of action come into connection with such plans. Effective coordination between plans ensures their successful development and implementation. This experience has taught us the practical importance of harmonising these plans and establishing mechanisms for cooperation. Taking this into consideration is vital for future experiences. In our case, the Department of Territorial Coordination and Public-Social Cooperation launched a coordination mechanism for the various municipal plans and programmes. Despite the complexity of the plans and the difficulties we faced in the departments devoted to implementing their projects it continued to function.

**Development of indicators.** The system of indicators was developed after the Plan's approval and implementation. Without dwelling on the content of the indicator system itself, it would have been better to have developed the indicators in parallel to the development of the Plan itself, that is to say, alongside the construction of strategic goals and objectives. This would have allowed us to follow up the Plan sooner after the development of the Plan's own policies. Constructing a system of indicators afterwards, using the same participatory premise that also underlay the creation of the Plan itself delayed the first evaluation of the Plan until the end of 2018.

**Information collection system.** One of the greatest shortcomings we encountered was the absence of an information transfer system between departments and the Office of Human Rights. Acquiring disaggregated and systematised information remains a challenge. Quantitative and qualitative data are not enough to grasp the progress made or the obstacles to the Plan's fulfilment. In our experience, a deficient filing system has been reproduced that has saturated the departments and has created a difficulty accessing this information and the lack of specificity and precision, as

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Implementing measures in areas related to “residual powers”, allowed us to act, above all, in the field of rights to truth, justice and reparation.

well as contrasting information, in the data provided by the departments and bodies involved. Undoubtedly, one of the challenges we should immediately face is designing a system for collecting, processing and publishing data from Madrid City Council. In places such as Mexico City, a system has been specifically created for the monitoring and evaluation of the human rights program.

**Dialogue with council departments.** The importance of having focal points in the different departments and agencies of Madrid City Council involved in the Human Rights Plan is closely linked to the content of the previous section. First of all, permanent interlocutors must be appointed that are involved in the promotion and implementation of the measures set out in the Plan for which they are competent. Preferably, these focal points should be permanent, allowing operational dialogue between the office and the corresponding department. This does not mean “directive” dialogue, dissociated from the functions attributed to the Human Rights Bureau as a collegiate body for the city council to monitor the Plan. As proof of this, Delegate Councillors sometimes represented their departments at some of the bureau’s meetings. Secondly, they should be interlocutors with specific training in the Plan’s contents and a degree of human rights knowledge. An optimal scenario, but one that would be difficult to achieve due to budgetary and personnel issues – at least in Madrid City Council – would be for these focal points or interlocutors to be integrated into the structure of the Office of Human Rights.

A final point on this issue: this dialogue played a fundamental role in the design of the Plan. In other words, the internal participation process, which included returning the contents of the activity that corresponded to each department to that department, was decisive in the result. The goals and lines of action produced may be seen as a success, as the departments responsible for implementing them have fully signed up to them through bilateral meetings and the continuous exchange of proposals between the department and the office.

**Human Rights Forum.** When assessing the merits or successes of the Plan, special mention must be made of the creation of this forum. Though it has been mentioned before, in our experience the launch, for the first time in our city, of a body for civil society participation in human rights policies was a genuine milestone. The forum seeks to deepen the citizen participation philosophy that characterises the human rights approach, and become the direct channel for dialogue between the city council and the human rights defence organisations and groups that make it up.

**A DH-GI-focussed budget.** In the future the Department of Economy and Taxation should draw up a DH-GI-focussed budget. Efforts have been made, but it has not materialised. Nevertheless, the budgets do consider gender impact, which we consider to be a positive step.

**Human rights training.** One of the most important parts of the Plan as a cross-cutting obligation is human rights training in the city council and privately entities. For the first time, training initiatives have been included in the Annual Plan that aim to promote the development of a human rights culture among public employees (and the staff of organisations and companies that provide public services), especially those with responsibilities in services related to the human rights of the citizens of Madrid.

## VI. Conclusion

With all its errors and successes, some of which have been described in this contribution to the debate, this Plan embodied the city council's political commitment to making Madrid a human rights city. Human rights are not something distant or beyond our borders. They take shape on a daily basis in our streets, neighbourhoods, districts and work places. Respecting and promoting them not only forms part of our city and democratic model, without human rights they cannot be understood. Hence our commitment to making **Madrid a model rights city** even if that effort has, temporarily, been paused.

We chose to establish initiatives that fitted within the city council's direct areas of competence along with promotion activities directed towards other public administrations.

