



#WhatWENeed 2022

Spotlight interview with Silvestre Barragán

Transcript

My name is Silvestre Barragán, I live in Bogotá and I'm an artist. I'm very interested in creative expression, but especially how creative practices can push social movements forward. I have been in the transfeminist movement. Now I'm ready to engage with mad activists.

A.L.C.E. means 'Abolition of Punishment and Confinement Logics' (*Abolición de Lógicas de Castigo y Encierro*). We are a mixed organization that works in two ways. One is about base-building, where we have a Mutual Support Group and we are currently building a Mad Popular School. This is important, well, because there isn't a mad movement in Colombia. Everything is led by service provision or by organizations according to diagnosis but there isn't a strong social movement. That's where our interest is. That's why we thought of the Mad Popular School as a way to politicize and generate articulation and a movement. That's what we have as base. Next, we have a group of attorneys, coordinated by Andrea, who is the other part of the coordination. She's the co-coordinator. And the goal is to engage in advocacy using the law. Intervening in public policy and taking cases and understanding how it works. We're mapping public policies and how to advocate. That's how we're organized. We're babies. We have been around for a year in planning and implementation.

Well, I identify as a survivor of psychiatrization. I am a trans person. And this identity has played against me in psychiatrization. While it's what gives me a sense of life, it's the reason I have been subjected to psychiatrization. I have not always been trans, but when I identified as lesbian, I was psychiatrized and tortured for it. As I get embedded in the mad movement, I recognize that there are many identities and it depends on how people live them; Also part of the movement in history in which we're in and given that it's a very young movement, at least in Colombia and in the region. So there are people who identify as users, former users, I don't know, something that

interests me is the concept of neurodivergence and the mad movement. They're like two faces of the same scenario, like we are subjected to violence but it's a different kind of violence. And that should also be part of a reflection and ways to build movement and alliances. At this moment I'm interested in the multiplicity of voices that unite the mad movement. In other movements the struggle is around a single identity, but here we're talking about a plural identity, and we can organize for the struggle.

Well, first of all we're very happy to now be members of TCI. We admire your movement and all of your trajectory. We're very hopeful to learn from you. It's very exciting to me personally and to ALCE to be part of a coalition with countries from the Global South. I believe this is important in the fight by mad activists because issues like coloniality and matrices of oppression work differently in the global south and they are in higher tension with respect to places of domination. Therefore I think it's very powerful that we organize from the global South and think how those tensions continue to intervene on us, oppress us and make us sick. I attended the webinar you held last weekend and I was very happy to hear you talk about trans people. So for me it's very hopeful to find a movement that really takes into consideration all these factors that for sure are part of the mad struggles and that should be there. There are many spaces of mad activists where it is thought of psychiatrization as separate from social justice or reality as it relates to matrices of oppression. So I find it very hopeful that there is a coalition that really thinks about structural problems to intervene from the mad struggles' perspective.