

# WE WHO FEEL DIFFERENTLY INTERVIEWS

*I was able to study thanks to my work as a prostitute ; I was able to collaborate with my family thanks to my work as a prostitute; I have what I have thanks to my work as a prostitute; I am who I am thanks to my work as a prostitute...then, is prostitution a dignifying work or isn't it?*

## An Interview with Diana Navarro

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Corporación Opción por el Derecho de Hacer y el Deber de Hacer (Option for the Right to Do and the Duty to Do Corporation), Bogotá, Colombia

**Diana Navarro:** We are in Bogotá, in the locality of Los Mártires, my name is Diana Navarro San Juan, I am thirty-seven years old, and I am the Director of the *Corporación Opción por el Derecho de Hacer y el Deber de Hacer*. I am a well-known transgender person in Bogotá. My work began not only as a result of my sexual orientation or my gender identity; what was a determining factor for my work was the practice of prostitution. There I was able to get in touch with a different reality. At present I form part of the Women's Advisory Council, the LGBT District Advisory Council, and the Social Politics and Territorial Planning Councils.

**Carlos Motta:** What kind of work does the *Corporación* carry out?

**DN:** At the *Corporación* we develop all sorts of affirmative actions aimed at achieving the restoration of the rights of persons practicing prostitution, or activities associated to prostitution, and of Bogotá's transgender population, particularly transvestites, transformists and transsexuals. We have somewhat excluded intersex people and we have focused our work on the three mentioned groups because intersex persons, besides having made some jurisprudential and legislative progress, and despite the rulings of the Colombian Constitutional Court, deserve a different type of attention and we feel that if we include them within the transgender category, as it is done here in Colombia, we are rendering them invisible and concealing a large part of their problems.

**CM:** Could you tell me about what you do at the *Corporación*? What are the issues you address and what work are you carrying out?

**DN:** We do a lot of work on political incidence. We participate in local committees working on the formulation of both district and local public policies for the development and implementation of actions, the organization of the population's participation, the categorization of existing groups.

**CM:** How did the *Corporación* originate?

**DN:** The *Corporación Opción* came into being as a result of a problem that occurred in Bogotá in 2001: a citizen lodged a writ of amparo ordering the then City Mayor, Antanas Mockus, to regulate or define exclusive zones for the practice of prostitution, which were then called tolerance zones. I was invited to participate because I had already implemented several actions, I had started to teach my workmates that they were not delinquents, that they had every right to carry out their work, that they had to do so in decent conditions, that neither the police nor any other stakeholders had any right to exert violence against them or hurt them, and this applied not only to my trans

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workmates but also to heterosexual and biological women. I attended a meeting in which a misinterpreted writ of amparo was being discussed. They said that according to that ruling, they could expel everyone from the locality of Los Mártires, and I declared myself against that decision. I filed a lawsuit. I studied Law at the University of Antioquia; I am the only transvestite in Los Mártires who has studied at a Colombian university. So I submitted to my workmates all the documentation we had and they named me their representative. That was the origin of the *Corporación Opción*. We did not become a legal entity until 2008, but we have been working since July of 2001.

**CM:** What was the situation that transgender or heterosexual women experienced at work?

**DN:** There weren't any kind of guarantees, anyone could do whatever they pleased with us, mainly the police authorities, because they could infringe our rights, ignore our rights as valid social actors. Before the 1991 Constitution, Colombia was a Roman Catholic Apostolic country consecrated to the Holy Heart of Jesus. As of the 1991 Constitution, which really began to function in 1993, we became a secular State, the Concordat was broken, but the Church continued to do what it does with everything it does not consider normal, adequate, moral. Colombian education is permeated by many of those moralisms derived from Judeo-Christianism. The perspective regarding prostitution has been an abolitionist one, as in many countries of the world; it is a question of not warranting rights; it was a situation of persecution, imprisonment, the free exercise of these activities was not allowed. In 2002, we obtained the regulation of the only high-impact zone related to the practice of prostitution in Latin America. I wrote the regulations, they were approved, and on 2 May, 2002 the set of rules for La Sabana Planning Zone Unit (UPZ) saw the light, and it was decreed that normative sector 22 of the UPZ was a zone in which prostitution was allowed.

**CM:** This is, therefore, a consequence of the changes in the Constitution and of the work of the *Corporación*?

**DN:** Exactly. By appropriating all the constitutional changes, all the jurisprudential elements we could lay hands on, we achieved the establishment of the first high-impact zone for use referred to prostitution in the whole of Latin America.

**CM:** Does this imply the practice of prostitution in the street, or are there premises assigned for this purpose?

**DN:** In the street, in premises, in this sector you can practice prostitution anywhere you want.

**CM:** And what happens if someone abuses a person working in that zone, whether emotionally or physically?

**DN:** We have legal actions, we have already initiated disciplinary and administrative processes against government officials, or criminal processes against other persons. We now have tools to defend ourselves, because in Colombia, prostitution is in a state of juridical limbo. It is not legal, but it is not illegal, either. The Colombian Constitution makes reference to the right to free choice of profession and employment. Despite its being an economic activity, the second economic activity at world level in terms of generation of income, prostitution is not recognized in this country or in many other countries in Latin America, as what it is; on the contrary, it is considered a social

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problem. The International Labor Organization has an abolitionist perspective regarding prostitution because it states that its practice does not ennoble a person. I posed a question to an ILO official: I presented him my own example: I was able to study thanks to my work as a prostitute ; I was able to collaborate with my family thanks to my work as a prostitute; I have what I have thanks to my work as a prostitute; I am who I am thanks to my work as a prostitute...then, is prostitution a dignifying work or isn't it? Moralism is derived from the fact that we do not use the body parts that other people normally use for the practice of this work; we use our genitals. We are still tied to those Judeo-Christian concepts that refer to the morality of sex and all the abolition of pleasure for the human being.

**CM:** What is the status of the practice of prostitution outside the zone that has been assigned to you?

**DN:** It is difficult, in spite of the fact that Decree 4002 of 2004 establishes that there is a period for relocation, now we find ourselves in a limbo because District Planning determined they would not declare any more zones as high-impact zones. Only this zone, which is small, would be left to host all the establishments – which are more than 1500 – in which prostitution is practiced. More than 20,000 persons practice prostitution in this area. There is an inter-institutional work table which includes all the Government sectors in Bogotá, but in which the persons who practice prostitution are absent. Our voice has not been heard; work continues to be carried out for us, allegedly in our favor, but without us.

**CM:** Has the establishment of these zones led to the existence of less cases of abuse, ill treatment and discrimination?

**DN:** Yes, impunity has decreased and so have other things. It is a negligible decrease, but it is a step forward. The number of murders is not the same as it used to be; the criminal activities around the area have decreased. It is normal for delinquents to try to appropriate or take advantage of the spaces that offer services of entertainment or recreation for adults. But we are the first locality in Bogotá with a sizable decrease in criminal behaviors.

**CM:** What were, and are, those criminal activities?

**DN:** They range from murder to the sale of illegal psychoactive substances.

**CM:** Do you have any records of hate crimes or discrimination on grounds of gender identity and sexual orientation?

**DN:** Yes. We could witness this kind of thing the past year, in the case of the murder of two workmates by a group which wants to appropriate the micro-trafficking of drugs. They were displaced and murdered because they were trans persons; they seek to “normalize the territory”. Any person who is contrary to their requirements or the rules they are trying to impose in an illegal way is murdered or expelled. I myself am currently under threat from these groups.

**CM:** Are you under threat because you are a trans person or because you have occupied a zone that someone wants to use for another activity?

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**DN:** I am under threat because based on my transgender identity I have succeeded in conquering spaces, I have managed to participate in many ambits; people listen to me; I have conquered a *good will*, to call it something. I am District consultant for LGBT and prostitution issues; people come to me to lodge denouncements, to report irregular behaviors that are taking place and they think that because I am a transgender person I have less rights, or I have no right to do the work I do. How has he managed to do all this, how is he doing all this if, like they say, he is a fag?

**CM:** Does the *Corporación* have a categorical definition of being transgender?

**DN:** We depend on self-definition, on self-determination, on the person's self-construction. If you come with a beard and a mustache, wearing a suite and you tell me you are a trans person, for the *Corporación* you are a trans person. Many of us express our gender in vehement ways, but others prefer to consider themselves, construct themselves, act in a certain way but have a contrary gender. That is what the *queer* is trying to reformulate. The *queer* theory rejects the binary element in gender, it rejects stereotypes and categorizations, and we very much agree with that. Charlotte Eznedá Callejas, whose legal name is Carlos Alejandro Díaz, is Cuban; she works in the Secretariat for Health as referent in issues regarding LGBT policies and when they ask me about her they ask about Luis Alejandro and I tell them "And who is that?" "The Cuban." "Ah, Charlotte!" I always call her Charlotte because that is her identity construction, because that is her wish, and when I see her I call her Charlotte, even though that day she may have come disguised as a man. For me she will always be what she wants to be. There are gentlemen who come to seek advice; we call them closet trans and they come to see how they can construct themselves in a better way, how they can express the gender they wish to have. From the moment I cross that door, I call them whatever name they want to be called.

**CM:** I have just come from Norway, where as a political strategy, transgender persons want to make a complete transition, undergo surgery and legally change their gender in order to be protected by the law in a different way. This is a strategy to manipulate society's codes and obtain rights. What do you think about that?

**DN:** It is a totally valid strategy, but here in Colombia we are totally screwed by Act 100. Under Act 100, all those processes of sexual reassignment or body transformation are considered aesthetic procedures and they are not covered by the Social Security. Regarding that, all processes are blocked, and now, with all those decrees on social emergency, it is even worse because we had managed to get some doctors to offer the possibility of a hormone treatment for persons who want to go ahead with that transit up to the point they want to reach. Not all transgender persons want to be sexually reassigned; it is valid to appropriate a number of things from that categorization in a positive way, but here in Colombia, the authorities use this in a negative way. We participated in the campaign against the pathologization of transsexuality and we had internal debates within the group because many workmates considered that if we were considered sick persons they would have to cure us, we could have access to treatments because we were affected by gender dysphoria and I said to them: it is a misunderstanding, because what they will cure is that psychological incongruence you have with your anatomical sex, so that you may feel comfortable with your biological sex, not for you to obtain the gender you wish to belong to. Colombia's Political Constitution offers us a wide spectrum of possibilities; we can appropriate a number of things: health is a constitutional right, and so is a dignified life and the free development of one's personality. In terms of legislative advancements, Colombia is in

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the vanguard, but in terms of recognition, of the establishment of actions that may lead to people being able to exercise all those constitutional rights in an appropriate way, we are fried.

**CM:** Are those constitutional rights not reflected in the street?

**DN:** They are not reflected in reality, and now that the U Party and the Conservative Party have won, it's even worse.

**CM:** But are they reflected in Government institutions, that is, in the health system?

**DN:** No.

**CM:** What are the rights of transgender persons in Colombia?

**DN:** The right to dress as a woman if I want to and to dress as a man if I want to, that's all.

**CM:** And if I shout at you in the street or I hit you, do you have the possibility to sue me?

**DN:** The Colombian Code of Criminal Procedure incorporates an aggravating circumstance under Article 58 # 3, referred to discrimination on grounds of sexual or gender orientation. In Colombia we haven't made much progress in this respect, either. The general idea is that my gender depends on my biological sex, and we have not deconstructed that concept. The attorneys and the authorities of the courts of first instance that examine the processes do not record the motivation for this aggression. If I hit you and cause you an injury, I can be arrested if you make a formal complaint for personal injuries, but not on grounds of your being a man, a woman, a gay, lesbian, transgender or bisexual person; that remains invisible even though it may have been the latent motive. That is what I am demanding from the social movement, the appropriation of those tools, demanding that everything you say in a public hearing, in a denunciation, should be recorded; I ask this of my workmates: explain things properly, don't just say "the guy hit me".

**CM:** Does the work of the *Corporación* include community orientation?

**DN:** We have made great progress in this respect. In Bogotá we already have a district network of trans persons that we are empowering, strengthening, and we are offering them tools. The past year I had the chance to execute a project in the framework of the strengthening of social organizations for the IDEPAC, the goal of which was to create the district network of trans people. Based on that network, we finally have incidence on projects. We have already embarked on a project of visibilization and training in human rights for people to be trainers of trainers, for people to create their own tools, from a qualitative and a quantitative point of view, to compile all that information. We are going to hold a number of festivals, a number of inter local and district events. At the national level, we have already dynamized the processes in the coffee axis, we succeeded in sitting a Government Secretary with us and committing him to the population; in Popayán we did that fifteen days ago and we are planning to do the same thing in eight more cities. We will do so with funding we receive from a Dutch foundation called Mama Cash.

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**CM:** You lead me on to the next question. Is there a work network at the national or regional level in relation to these issues?

**DN:** We are just beginning. We have worked intensely, but on sexual orientation. I say this colloquially: it was much easier to work among ourselves when in Colombia they only called us fags and dikes. But when we started using the acronym LGBT, which we use incorrectly because we shortened it, we categorized ourselves, we created divisions among the groups. In organizational and participative processes and the like, lesbians are stronger because they have had access to many things. Although they began with all these processes, gay persons lagged behind. Bisexuals are still very much hidden. It is much easier for a lesbian, a gay, a bisexual to go unnoticed or to be in hiding, like I say, than for a transgender person. We are not interested in going unnoticed, we are interested in being recognized in our full dimension. When you apply for a job, they don't ask you what your sexual orientation is.

**CM:** Do they ask you about your gender?

**DN:** No, as a matter of fact you apply and they take it for granted that this is a man, he dresses as a man, he has short hair, he is a heterosexual male. They take that for granted, that you are heterosexual.

**CM:** And if a person dressed like you arrives, what happens?

**DN:** I have done that exercise many times and I have done it in one of the two areas in which we have the greatest possibilities. We called 25 notices that were published in the newspaper and at the end, when I already had an appointment, I said: I am a transvestite, is there a problem with that? Oh, no, they answered, people are not used to that here and they hanged up. We are a laughing stock. When I presented myself at the University of Antioquía, the secretary of the Admissions Department called me and said: by mistake, the photo of a lady appeared on your form, we don't know why, how can we correct that? I said "No lady, it's me, I am a transvestite. Is there a problem with that? No, not at all, she said. We talked and I obtained a place at university.

**CM:** Do you have the possibility to change your name, to change your gender legally?

**DN:** We can change our name but not our gender.

**CM:** That means that officially you are Diana Navarro?

**DN:** I have not changed my name because I have a political position in this regard. What is the point of my name being Diana Navarro San Juan in my ID if the male gender variable is going to continue appearing? They are not recognizing me in my full dimension. I don't think it is worthwhile. Many of my workmates feel attracted by that and they think it is a step forward, but I don't consider it thus, I consider that the variable of sex must be eliminated from IDs. In the new IDs, in the billion ID quotas, it has already been eliminated, But in the old IDs, it still continues to appear, so we, the people who obtained their IDs before the year 2000 continue to have the same problem.

**CM:** The change in the IDs was due to this issue?

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**DN:** No, it was because it was considered that population was too numerous and there were many numbers on IDs, you had a number on your ID, on your passport, in your judicial past, in your social security, there were thousands of numbers for everything. Then the agreement was reached that we should have a single number for personal identification, the NUIP, and we cannot continue to use the variable of sex, neither male nor female.

**CM:** Did you obtain benefits as a community?

**DN:** Exactly, an indirect benefit.

**CM:** Can you tell me about the situation in the social sphere, the restrooms and all those matters in which binary gender is predetermined?

**DN:** In some cases we have had problems, but in universities, in theaters or shopping centers we have already achieved that respect. There's still a lot to do.

**CM:** Can you use any restroom you wish?

**DN:** Normally I use the women's restroom. But in a cemetery where we were attending the cremation of the body of a workmate, my workmates asked if they could use the restroom and they tried to prevent their access to the women's restroom; I had to stand up and tell them: No, sir, they go to the women's restroom because they are trans women. When have you seen a woman urinate in a standing position? It's a permanent fight, a constant fight; one cannot drop one's guard ever, for any reason. Pedagogical processes must be constant. In this respect we have been careless; one thinks that because we have a public district policy for LGBT persons, everything is done. No, everything is still to be done; work at the national level is pending, because it's not possible that there should be a public policy only in one city in Colombia.

**CM:** What is your relationship with *Colombia Diversa* and what work does *Colombia Diversa* carry out in favor of the trans community?

**DN:** All around the world, we trans women have triggered achievements through visibilization. The simple presence of a trans in a given space implies political resistance, but we have lagged behind. *Colombia Diversa* has made progress only in the case of same sex persons. I do not see any other aspect in which it may have transcended. It lacks articulation, respect at work, greater recognition of diversities, because there is still much discrimination within our groups.

**CM:** Are you in contact with the leaders of *Colombia Diversa*?

**DN:** In some spaces we participate jointly.

**CM:** Isn't there a project for making progress jointly?

**DN:** No, there isn't a real articulation; they submit reports; they compile the information. That is why we are beginning to implement some organizational work. Last year, the *Corporación Opción* executed a project with the sponsorship of Astraea for the organization of a national encounter of trans leaders and leaderesses which was attended by 23 trans men and women from all over the country, because trans men are still very much invisible.

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**CM:** In the course of this interview you have repeatedly made reference to trans women and never to men. What is the situation of the community of trans men?

**DN:** Based on the diagnosis I made at the national and district level, I could conclude that trans men are in a situation that is as difficult as that of trans women, or even more difficult. We can become visible and we have an inherent resistance; the female gender is very strong, very rebellious, very hardworking. Trans men are in a completely disadvantageous situation, many of them have achieved a body transformation that facilitates their blending with the rest of the population, but they still have the same problems that we have: in the assignment of identity documents, in access to health services. We have begun to integrate trans men in our work because it is necessary that their voice, too, be heard.

**CM:** Are there any leaders among trans men?

**DN:** There are groups; there is a group of trans children and adolescents; we know some in Pasto, also in Cali and here in Bogotá there are others, but the movement has not had the necessary strength to render it visible yet. We are trying to get them to organize themselves, to carry out part of the organizing of trans persons, to fight for their own interests just like we had to do at the beginning.

**CM:** Therefore, there isn't a relationship that is, let's say, theoretical or aimed at the implementation of policies?

**DN:** Exactly, and as here public policies have taken care of fragmenting populations, there isn't a real social articulation, and that leads to every person being concerned with their own small interests instead of practicing the solidarity that would be expected for the whole of Colombian society to have access to the exercise of their rights.

**CM:** A question regarding the representation of trans persons in the media and in the sphere of culture: what is that situation like at present by comparison with the past?

**DN:** There has been some progress, not much. There have been several moments; here we were presented on TV as the drag queen, caricaturesque, ridiculous, as clowns. We were only hairdressers, florists, seamstresses, make-up artists, with very caricaturesque and exaggerated attitudes. This also forms part of our group, but it is not the whole group. Then there was a change and those figures are not presented any more; now it's the criminal, the delinquent. With the presentation of a soap opera, *Los Reyes*, our fellow trans activist Endy Cardeño began to build many imaginaries, not only the prostitute, the hair stylist, the seamstress, but a person who, in her interiority, can practice any profession. In the United States, Ru Paul has her own television program, but regrettably it doesn't reach Colombia. Those spaces have contributed to prevent the media from caricaturizing us, from stereotyping us, and we have been able to make some progress in the deconstruction of those imaginaries. We still have all the way to go, because for instance, despite the fact that we have a trans person as research coordinator at the Humboldt Institute, many of the persons who have managed to emerge or be successful have forgotten those who have not had the same privilege.

**CM:** You lead me to pose a question that is of great interest to me: Colombia is in its essence a society divided by class and by the economic situation, and I suppose this



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must be a strong issue within your community. Is there unity with people who have access to economic means and education?

**DN:** No, unfortunately there is no unity. From early childhood we are sold the sophism that we must practice prostitution in order to obtain an important capital, get a sponsor, go to Europe where we can make a lot of money through the practice of prostitution. We begin to undergo surgeries, to buy houses, material assets, in the belief that this will guarantee our insertion in society. I obtain cooperation from heterosexual persons more easily than from trans persons who are economically stable at the moment.

**CM:** What happens with high-class trans people? Is there any communication?

**DN:** No. There is an exaggerated classism, and that is serious because we are doing our work with an outward orientation and very little with an inward one. I would dare say that the only two organizations that work along that double track, outward and inward in the trans sphere, are the *Corporación Opción* and *Trans Colombia*. We want *The Other* to respect us, to respect our rights; we want the State to guarantee the exercise of our rights, but our fellow trans don't know what those rights are. The right to the free development of one's personality, the right to have a decent life, the right to work, the right to have a decent house, but they are not only the fundamental rights; also the economic, social and cultural ones, all those rights. We must also have access to those rights, not only to the right to go anywhere and not be ill treated, ridiculed or attacked for being what we are; we have all the rights a human being has, all, and in that field we have made no progress yet.

**CM:** What is the next step? I am under the impression that we find ourselves in a situation that is a little basic yet.

**DN:** Yes, we are just beginning. We have an important tool, the public district policy that guarantees the rights of LGBT persons, but there is still a lot of work to be done before it can be implemented, before it can be taken to any corner of the capital. Based on the work we are carrying out, with the Diversity Department, we are recognized as having some rights, the right to work, the right to security, to life, to culture and to education. Participation has increased, but all our specificities have not been recognized yet, and it is very unlikely that they will be. We have begun to teach people the basics so that they can be more outright, defend themselves on their own, organize themselves, and defend not only their own rights but those of the whole group. We do not overlook political incidence due to the knowledge we have, due to the tools we have acquired, the name we have developed here in Bogotá, we do not neglect other spaces that formulate policies, because here a law, a decree, a norm dynamized many things.

**CM:** How does the *Corporación* obtain its funding?

**DN:** The *Corporación Opción* has had funding from Astraea United State's Lesbian Corporation for Justice on two consecutive occasions. Thanks to those contributions we were able to develop a series of projects together with the District Institute for Community Action Participation of the IDEPAC, the result of which was the creation of the district network of trans persons. *Mama Cash* granted us 23,000 euros this year, which allowed us to buy equipment and this year we will be able to devote ourselves 188% to this work; since we do not need to worry about anything else.

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**CM:** Is the national government completely disconnected from the work you are carrying out due to lack of interest in it?

**DN:** The national government is interested in co-opting the work of social organizations. Let me explain: we do the work, we implement a series of agreement tables and we sign a decree that is often incorrectly signed, we generate an incorrectly sanctioned policy and that is the government's job. In terms of funding, there is no policy, President Álvaro Uribe even considers us delinquents because we make denouncements, we do not remain silent.

**CM:** Does this apply to transgender persons or to the persons who do the work?

**DN:** To us who practice prostitution, to transgender persons, to the LGBT. We participate in all the shadow reports, in all the visits from the United Nations High Commissioner and we denounce, we offer evidence of the processes that are unfinished. Because last year the United Nations requested a report on human rights from the Presidency, and they said: here everything is pretty, everything is beautiful, here they can get married, here we initiated the debate of a bill on the marriage of same-sex couples, here the Constitutional Court said this and this. No, sir; not everything is all right, not everything is beautiful. Look at so many murders, so many lawsuits with no rulings, so many missing persons, all this conflict. What bill? If it has been debated on four occasions and it has been defeated. What legislative progress? Here we cannot get married, we can only have recognition of our *de facto* marital union based on a ruling from the Constitutional Court. It wasn't the Government, it was the Constitutional Court that pronounced a ruling putting those rights on a par with the rights for heterosexual persons, based on the right to the free development of one's personality and the right to equality. Then we said: no, that is a lie.

**CM:** Do any of the presidential candidates address this issue, or nobody addresses it?

**DN:** Not really. Despite the fact that the alternative Polo Democrático, the political party of which I form part, has a positive discrimination quota for the political participation of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders, Gustavo Petro, the party's official candidate, has not pronounced himself, he had an unfortunate meeting with some fellow trans, in which he said he assumed no commitments with anything, he simply wanted to listen.

**CM:** In a country that lives such a brutal atmosphere of political violence and social inequality as Colombia, will the issues involving gender identity not be perceived as an unimportant item in the agenda?

**DN:** Yes, unfortunately, because this does not involve only the fact that you sleep with another man, another woman, or a man and a woman, or that you want to dress like a man or like a woman. Minimizing the problem, it has been perceived in this way. We have no access to health, we have no services with a differential perspective that renders them adequate for our specificities and our needs; we haven't got that. I was telling a senator: What the hell do I care about a right to the free development of personality if I have no access to medical care, I cannot transform my body to adapt it and be faithful to the feminine or masculine ideal I aspire to, which is not a simple whim, which is not a simple invention, it is a need of mine, and a need that requires a psychological, medical, interdisciplinary accompaniment. I don't have those differential services, I don't have them. How am I going to develop my personality freely if I don't

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have the right to health, if I don't have the right to work because I dress like a woman being a man. How am I going to have the right to the free development of my personality if I do not have access to decent housing. I live like a queen because I live in an apartment in which the hygienic-sanitary conditions are adequate and which meets certain standards. But if we make a tour of the places where many workmates live, we'll find that they live in rooms of 2 by 2 meters, in which a bed barely fits, with disgusting bathrooms in awful conditions. Many of my workmates go to rental firms to rent an apartment and they are denied this service. In my case, because of the credit record I have had for years and because I have not wanted to change my name, I submit the form with my legal name.

**CM:** What is your legal name?

**DN:** William Enrique Navarro San Juan. With my legal name, with the financial background I have through my credit card, my savings account, of all the loans I have been granted, that I am still granted, with my credit background, I submit all the documentation without my being present; I send it through my secretary, or by mail, by any means, and the application is approved. Once it has been approved, when I appear, they have to hand me the keys, after a contract has been signed they can no longer do anything to you, but many of my fellow trans do not have that access, so they depend on third parties that even exploit them for them to be able to have access to somewhat decent living conditions.

**CM:** Diana, we are finishing this interview; tell me about issues of sexual health. Do you have any information on indices of AIDs and other health disorders?

**DN:** Simply not, sexual education and reproductive sexual health are not based simply on sexually transmitted infections or HIV-AIDS, but we have been categorized in such a way that they are diseases attributed exclusively to us. I arrive at the doctor's with a pain in a nail and he asks me: Have you already taken the AIDS test?

**CM:** Not only the transgender community; homosexuals too...

**DN:** Of course! Have you already taken the AIDS test? Do you use a condom? As if the whole of the sexual and reproductive health issue boiled down to that. Here district reports by locality on the prevalence of HIV infection are presented annually, and the persons who practice prostitution are the ones with less prevalence. Not only because we are aware of the problem, but because we know that if we catch any disease we cannot continue to be productive. The year before last, when I took all those trips for the construction of the meeting and the formulation of the work proposal with trans persons, I told my workmates, teach me to put a condom on, and they didn't know how to do it. Likewise, the use of lubricants is not included in these trainings; we are told we cannot use *Vaseline*, we are told we cannot use oil-based lubricants, but we are not told what we can use, nor do we have access to the lubricants. The national government thinks that by distributing condoms it will achieve that Millennium Development Goal. Sexual education classes do not work at school. They are pervaded by those Judeo-Christian moralisms I was telling you about. What they teach you at school is that you have a penis, a pair of testicles, and what they are used for, nothing more. They do not teach that there are possibilities of having sexual relations at an early age, that our sexual awakening takes place at the age of ten, that by the time we reach age fourteen we have the possibility to interact. We are not taught responsible sexuality; it is demonized. There are no real, conscious sex education

# **WE WHO FEEL DIFFERENTLY INTERVIEWS**

classes that teach us all that gamut of possibilities, that teach us to respect our own bodies, to respect other persons' bodies, how to obtain pleasure from our bodies without hurting ourselves, without hurting other people. There isn't a sexual education class, they just tell you wear a condom, use a condom so that no infection is transmitted to you and so that you don't die.

**CM:** Thank you very much and lots of luck with this. I think you are carrying out a titanic task.

**DN:** Oh my God!