



**BUILDING  
SPACIOUS  
SOLIDARITY  
DIALOGUES**

**COMING TOGETHER IN TIMES  
OF SOCIAL DISTANCING**



**inroads**

International Network for the Reduction  
of Abortion Discrimination and Stigma



**As long as space and time  
divide you from anyone  
you love... love will  
simply have no choice but  
to go into battle with  
space and time and,  
furthermore, to win.**

**James Baldwin**





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# WHO WE ARE

The International Network for the Reduction of Abortion Discrimination and Stigma (inroads) is a global network and community of practice dedicated to learning, skill-sharing, and making sustainable and measurable changes to reduce abortion stigma and its discriminatory outcomes locally and across the globe.

We envision a world where abortion care is centered around the needs, experiences, and leadership of those who have abortions, and where stigma, fear, and misinformation about abortion can be eradicated through collective culture change to eliminate abortion stigma.

We work towards freedom for past, present, and future abortion seekers by funding movements and strengthening connections within the global community of abortion advocates, artists, scholars, activists, journalists, community workers, and providers.



# INTRODUCTION

Aligned with our goal to build a values-driven and transparent organization, we crafted this document to share with our members the journey and the thought process behind the Spacious Solidarity Dialogues. A space for international solidarity, healing, reflection, and connection, that started during the pandemic and evolved into more complex mutual learning cohorts and multi-day thematic virtual gatherings for our inroads community.

The narrative shared here was authored by Aditi Pinto, inroads Member Facilitation, Co-Creation and Engagement Manager and the leading force behind the Spacious Solidarity Dialogues.

We hope this offering serves as a documentation and learning tool for our growing community, and to better communicate and reflect on how & why we gather.

**While reading, keep an eye out for quotes from the members that co-created and led these spaces.**

# THE SPARK

## Responding to a Pandemic with Spacious Solidarity

When the pandemic unfolded, and social distancing, overworked health and care workers, closed borders and lock downs became the norm, our network began to grapple with what these closures/gaps would mean for us. For abortion and social justice movements, prior to the pandemic as well, boundaries and borders have been fought and traversed, have been expanded and contracted.



**Spacious: (vast, ample).**

Would distance mean apartness and rigidity or would we be able to stretch or reach, to create possibility and connections across place?

Committed to our community and to respond to the critical needs of the time, inroads staff sent a survey to members of what we could do to come together in times of greater difficulty, unknowns and boundaries.

Members from Argentina, Indonesia and Poland asked for spaces to build spacious solidarity in times of increasing covid distancing and emerging issues: the major issue that this space started addressing, in a secure manner, was the importance of accompanying abortions in times of lockdowns, when abortions and reproductive justice was being made non-essential.

These were policed times, and times in the breakdown of everyday collective/public space. The internet existed- networks like ours too- and a hope to build softer more just worlds during and beyond this pandemic.

### **Solidarity: (state of union, communion).**

To come together now, in a new but also exacerbated crisis, could no longer be just a slogan, an act-ion or performance. It meant less preparation but more presence, mutual-ness and building relationships with our whole selves.

We needed a safe and brave space to share, listen and create something together. The times revealed that we did not need more control or force over what we already know, but we had to come together to explore and perceive new possibilities. At the same time, while the inroads network had grown beautifully and widely, this became a portal of time and space for us to grow deeper together.




### **Dialogues:**

We encouraged dialogue that comes from a curiosity for each other's journeys and experience, a space to reflect on what we have learned and unlearned, and together to build our mutual understanding and therefore strength of how to bust abortion stigma.

The proposal was not that of speech, a preach or an answer - but instead the beginning of holding spontaneous, present, question-full spaces with each other.

# THE PRINCIPLES

## The principles of the space were simple:

-  **Community Care:** Not focusing just on the session output, but also on the processes that allow for building relationships and care towards each other and ourselves.
-  **Authentic Engagement:** A space is accessible, everyone can authentically and fully engage with a space, as it is planned with inclusion and care and nobody is an afterthought.
-  **Member-Led:** The role of inroads staff is to bring together, sow seeds for, and open up channels for this member leadership, connections and collaboration, especially for those who face abortion stigma directly.

“Despite geopolitical differences and distances between Indonesia and Latin America, the conversation seemed to resonate among all of us (including those who were not from either regions).”

**Mel Gallo, Brazil**

“The fluent way of talking about the subject, not as something academic.”

**Sandra Cardona, Mexico**



# DREAMING AND ORGANIZING

Aditi Pinto, the inroads Member Facilitation, Co-Creation and Engagement Manager shares about the journey behind holding the Spacious Solidarity Dialogues.

## HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN DESIGNING THE SPACE?

It felt spontaneous to respond to member needs that asserted the fact that we needed more tenderness and connection in times of separation and harshness. I was also putting years of my admiration of circles, story-telling/ listening and emergent strategies into practice. A conviction that we needed to ebb and flow like the tides, create with energy, momentum for much more to grow from here.



## ARE THERE ANY PERSONAL REFLECTIONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE ABOUT THE PANDEMIC AND THIS SERIES?

There were so many binaries that came into being with the pandemic: safe/unsafe, distant/close, healthy/unhealthy, essential/non-essential. In the midst of these not so useful binaries, I began to think of the ideas of 'immunity' and 'comm-unity' which to me are an example of, what I like to call ironical connections, ideas that come together and allow for an **"emergent third"** or "both/and" ideas instead of "either/or" binaries.

I came across the writings of Eula Biss, who shares **"We are protected not so much by our own skin, but by what is beyond it. The boundaries between our bodies begin to dissolve here... Immunity... is a common trust as much as it is a private account."**

It fascinated me to sense and learn about the social-ness of immunity, especially as the pandemic unfolded, and sensed that as communities (ours of abortion stigma-busters) we need each other to build hive immunity (an idea of inter-connected comm-immunity and safety that is beyond herd or mass immunity) and togetherness. The image of hives, of bees pollinating and learning from each other, of us fighting the pandemic and lockdowns through our dialogues grounded a lot of the practice of designing, accompanying and facilitating this space into existence.



## **WHO WAS PART OF THE DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING PROCESS?**

Each pair or group of discussants had an hour of synchronous video call before the actual session, as a space to see/feel each other before the final day and set a few collaboration expectations together.

The asynchronous parts involved discussants sending each other links to their works they were proud of, questions for each other and general cheer and excitement to get to know each other.

I was involved in facilitating the pre-dialogue, collecting info. for communications + compensation + setting up registrations and sending the discussants the registrant's goals + questions to be mindful of their audience.

## **HOW WAS THE PROCESS OF COLLABORATING?**

These were the months where everyone was getting used to how much more Zoom/Online calling we would be doing. And we were doing this all together. All the collaborations were smooth, given that all the discussants were getting to know each other for the first time. We did have some tech and internet glitches, but in general we gave each other spaciousness and an understanding that everyone was probably dealing with a lot in their own contexts.



## **DO YOU WISH ANYTHING HAD BEEN DIFFERENT THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS? WHAT WORKED?**

While the whole idea was to have an emergent and not overly curated space, this does not necessarily work for everyone. While some folks love fluid, stream of consciousness discussions, others felt that there needed to be more interaction with listeners, visuals and slides up for attention/context and maybe even moderation to pull out interesting threads of discussion and take them further. As the sessions progressed, we built in visuals, moments of jamboard interactions and a web of some structure.

## **WERE THERE ANY PROCESS ELEMENTS THAT YOU FOUND HELPFUL? DID YOU LEARN ABOUT ANY NEW ONES?**

The process of receiving learning + unlearning goals from participants, making them feel like they had an active role in the space-making. In addition, the vetting process of participants/listeners, we always do to know our audience was very important to ensure a safe space for everyone.

The parallel process of building a pool of interpreters, as language justice, became such an important part of dialogue (where everyone could speak in language most comfy to them).



# SPACIOUS SOLIDARITY FOR AND BY COMMUNITY

"In my opinion, this is truly a discussion, where two people have a chat, discussing different issues, and people can jump in. It also gives a warm feeling during the discussion since other participants also share their personal experience, and people could feel the nuance of solidarity in the discussion."

**Ika Ayu, Indonesia**

"the open/flexible structure, that people were encouraged to turn on their mics and share/ask questions"

**Camila Ochoa Mendoza,  
Sweden/Venezuela**

# COMMUNITY MEMBERS

This space was possible thanks to the 19 fearless inroads members that held and made each session a reality!



Genesis Luigi (Venezuela/México), Maja Dimitrijevic (Serbia), Aditi Pinto (India), Omodele Ibitoye (Nigeria), Sara Garcia Gross (El Salvador), Renee Bracey Sherman (USA), Regina Fonseca (Honduras), Ika Ayu (Indonesia), Na Young (South Korea), Sara Walsh (Ireland), Michelle Gallo (USA/Mexico), Mickreen Adhiambo (Kenya), Rose Wakikona (Uganda), Kristine Chan (Philippines), Isabel Pérez Witzke (Argentina /Venezuela), Jasmine George (India), Camila Ochoa Mendoza (Venezuela/Sweden), Daniela Tellez del Valle (Mexico), Natalie B (Poland), Sulaiporn Chonwilai (Thailand).

In line with inroads values of equity and community care, we honored the work and wisdom of our community by offering compensation for their time, effort, and offerings to all the member discussants that co-created the Spacious Solidarity Dialogues.

# DIALOGUES BY THEMATIC AREAS

Click in each theme to find full details, takeaways, and recordings of the dialogues!

## CARE: ACCOMPANYING SELF-MANAGED ABORTIONS AS DOULAS, HOTLINE WORKERS AND ACOMPAÑANTES

These dialogues took place on Feb 24, June 2 and June 16 2021.



## REPRO JUSTICE: LOOKING BEYOND LEGAL CHANGE TO SOCIAL DECRIMINALISATION.

These dialogues took place on March 24, April 7 and April 21 2021.



## SHARING: CENTERING THE VOICES OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE ABORTIONS FOR NARRATIVE CHANGE

These dialogues took place on March 4, May 6 and June 30 2021.





# LEARNING AND EVOLVING



**BUILDING NETWORKS  
OF SOLIDARITY**



“Being in community and learning from people who are experiencing very different situations yet all of us are united by systems that hurt us all.”

**Karen Thurston, USA**

“The conversations about the uselessness of the law and the criminal justice system, the power of building networks of solidarity”

**Emma Campbell, Northern Ireland**



“Everything, it felt like a live podcast. Talking about storytelling, specifically, resonated so much with my lived experiences.”

**Isabel Perez, Argentina**

The participants, panelists and interpreters filled out evaluations that were helpful in gauging experiences and planning ahead. It was clear that the mixture of structure and fluidity, with room for emergencies, but not operating on time scarcity or urgency had worked well at this moment of time.

In the evaluations, members had indicated their level of interest in continuing these conversations in deeper dive formats.

While the SSD had sowed seeds of conversations, to understand the experiences, challenges and practices of members around abortion stigma-busting in their contexts, it also became clear that now needed more consistent, deeper, workshop,- style, participatory learning cohorts to go deeper into some of the questions brought up here.

Members indicated keen-ness that future learning spaces centre issues such as disability, queerness, self-managed abortion, migration and social decriminalisation.

**Soon after the dialogues inroads staff began to pull together members from this space and others to generate the inroads learning Cohorts, intentionally created using these member needs.**



# GRATITUDE



Our deep gratitude goes to all the magical co-creators building solidarity spaces to strengthen our collective power, to the funders and donors that believe in our community work, and to all the inroads members committed to understanding, challenging, and dismantling abortion stigma to build a healthier, safer, and more just world.

Together we are creating a future where we have the tools to transform systemic, legal, medical, and interpersonal levels of stigma so that people can be free to experience abortion on their own terms.

## CREDITS

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# JOIN US

All the powerful ways you can stay connected & support the movement!

**Join** | If you are an individual or group working on abortion access and stigma reduction, apply to be part of a free global network that provides opportunities and resources to help learn, connect, collaborate, gather, and fund stigma-busting efforts worldwide.

**Donate** | Every donation allows us to nurture a network of over 1700 abortion advocates and community organizations working on busting abortion stigma in 109.

**Stay informed** | Subscribe to our mailing list to receive stigma-busting updates every month!