

# #SURVIVORS19

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Survivors19, an artistic project that denounces consideration of age as criteria to determine equal access to health care**

- [Survivors19](#) is a non-political and non-religious project developed by a group of professionals with backgrounds in art, creativity and communication from different places around the world. A project that aims to provoke debate and critical analysis about the decisions that have been taken and that continue being taken at a global level, in the health crisis generated by Covid-19.
- Five real survivors of Covid-19, aged between 76 and 97 years old from some of the areas of the world most affected by the pandemic, join voices to create a manifesto that aims to give a voice to the biggest group of victims of this crisis: the elderly.
- At [www.survivors19.org](http://www.survivors19.org), we want to collect petitions of support to vindicate equal health care access based on the principal of intrinsic dignity as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Today more than 300 people have signed the petition.

Madrid, 12 May 2020.- The ethical debate concerning the medical decisions taken in critical situations up until now in a framework that is essentially healthcare and political. But the magnitude of this debate that concerns the lives of millions of human beings cannot be limited to these two areas.

That's the premise from which **Survivors19** was created, an independent project led by a collective of artists and creatives, which aims to give a voice to the biggest group of victims of this health crisis, the elderly; and provoke social debate and critical analysis concerning the decisions that have been taken and which continue being taken during this health crisis, in different places around the world.

**Giuseppe Villani**, an entrepreneur from Módena who is 76, **Jorge Mijangos**, a retired engineer from Madrid who is 80, **Young Joo Hwang**, a retired who is 97 from Cheongdo in South Korea, **Dulce Ferris**, a volunteer in healthcare groups who is 84 from Pouso Alegre in Brazil and **William “Bill” Kelly**, a retired

firefighter and second world war veteran of 95 and resident of Yamhill County Oregon; are the protagonists of this project.

Through them and their stories of survival, the project articulates for vindication in favour of the right to health and life for what is called “the most vulnerable group” in this crisis, people aged over 70, among whom form 88% of over **286,000** coronavirus victims registered today around the world, according to data from China CDC and Instituto Superiore de Sanità.

A non-political, non-religious vindication that is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and which has been joined by many voices critical of the management of the crisis, such as **Kornfeld-Matte**, an independent expert from the UN on the rights of the elderly, who in a message signed by over fifty UN observers criticized the fact that in countries with healthcare systems overwhelmed by high levels of contagion, triage procedures to decide who receives treatment in intensive care units, younger people are frequently being given preference.

### **An artistic project to start a social debate**

“More than 30 individuals and companies from the creativity and communication fields have joined forces to turn this project into a reality, moved by the moral need to help with what we know how to do: communicate” comments Eva Santos, a creative and part of the collective that has developed the initiative made up of creatives, artists and professionals from the world of communication. “Weeks ago we decided that this story needed to be told and that now was the time to do it, not in a few months, because maybe now, there is still time to generate a global debate and help save lives” explains Santos.

The research work to tell these real stories from different places around the world, was developed thanks to collaboration in media and communication professionals respecting the laws related to lockdown in those countries.

“In this search we came across some amazing stories, some of them very heartwarming and others very painful but, above all, what we found was the enormous need of this collective to be heard and to feel that they are not alone in this situation” comments Mauricio Rocha, a creative and member of the collective.

The project manifesto comes with a website - [www.survivors19.org](http://www.survivors19.org), which aims to be a petition for the vindication of equal healthcare access based on the principle of intrinsic dignity as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. “The aim behind this petition is to consult society’s feelings in different countries around the world concerning this subject. If the support for the denouncement is massive it will be tangible proof that this question deserves to be taken to the relevant authorities and we will assume the formal commitment to do so”, says Santos.

The deontological debate concerning medical decisions in critical situations is complex and multifactorial. With this initiative we aim to centre the debate not only on the measures adopted during the Covid-19 emergency but the importance of analysing how we reached the point where these measures have to be taken in the first place. How to avoid that this happens again and the importance of not allowing the exceptional to become the normal.

This project is dedicated to all Covid-19 victims and their families.

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