



FEANTSA ANNUAL POLICY CONFERENCE

*CONFRONTING HOMELESSNESS IN THE EU:
SEEKING OUT THE NEXT GENERATION OF BEST PRACTICES*

24-25 OCTOBER 2014
BERGAMO, ITALY

DESCRIPTION OF WORKSHOPS
AND NETWORKING HOTSPOTS



TWEET&FOLLOW USING

#FEANTSA2014

@FEANTSA

Workshops - 24 October 2014

Redistributing the power: Key steps for mainstreaming participation of homeless people.

Empowerment is fundamental in homeless services, but empowering homeless service users can be challenging on different levels. FEANTSA recently published a European participation toolkit consisting of 25 practical tools for introducing participatory methods in homeless services. This workshop will provide an overview of the toolkit, and two examples of how organisations can empower people using their services.

Embedding Housing First at service delivery level: key barriers and opportunities

Housing First is about developing programmes to end chronic homelessness, helping people straight from the street into permanent housing with support in their local communities. Experiments have been carried out in different countries, and recommendations have been made. The next step is to see how to integrate the lessons learned at service delivery level, taking a look at the challenges for service staff and service users, as well as what local governance arrangements are needed to make Housing First a reality.

Channeling EU funds to homeless services: is Europe doing enough to support the fight against homelessness?

Until now, the European Social Fund (ESF) has mainly focused on employment and training. With the adoption of the new EU budget for 2014 to 2020, new objectives were introduced in the European Social Fund, including the objective to promote active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market and society. Homeless people are now mentioned explicitly as a target group of the ESF. This workshop will take a closer look at the potential of the ESF to address homelessness.

Prevention of youth homelessness: ensuring smooth transitions into adulthood

Vulnerability to homelessness is increasing among European youth, mainly due to reforms in social benefits and due to families being under pressure as a result of the economic and financial crisis (due to unemployment and threat of eviction). While the phenomenon is still only an emerging one, prevention mechanisms are being put into place in some countries to avoid the interruption of school and other important socialising processes. This workshop will examine some of the existing practices recently put into place.

The dynamics of women's homelessness: are different responses needed at service level?

Traditionally, homelessness is seen as a phenomenon affecting men mostly. But women tend to experience more hidden forms of homelessness, finding different types of emergency and temporary accommodation to protect themselves (and often accompanying children). The economic crisis has placed more pressure on families, and recent reports show that the proportion of women experiencing homelessness is on the rise. Homeless services are having to adapt to these new needs, adopting gender-sensitive interventions.

Sustainable employability pathways for people experiencing homelessness: myth or reality?

Homeless people need work or meaningful occupation like any member of society. Programmes exist to support them, with varying outcomes depending on their work readiness (social participation, volunteering, sheltered employment, self-employment, work placements in the mainstream labour market, etc). Challenges exist both on the supply side (especially when homeless people have health and support needs) and on the demand side (raising awareness of employers on the value of employing people with past experience of homelessness). This workshop will look at different approaches to promoting the employability of homeless people.

Migration: Tacking the hidden phenomenon of homeless domestic workers.

Migrant domestic workers in Italy, particularly those who are personal elderly carers, are vulnerable to homelessness because of the precariousness of their working and living conditions. Working as a live-in domestic worker can come with many benefits, but when this situation changes (due to firing, to the elderly person passing away, etc), this can rapidly lead to homelessness of the carer if they do not have alternative housing solutions during the transition to another job. We will examine this new and emerging phenomenon, and look at some existing preventive solutions.

New forms of finance for homelessness services: threat or opportunity?

The consequences of the economic and financial crisis triggered in 2009-2010 are still being felt today, and social welfare budgets are under pressure. In some cases, States are reviewing their social welfare systems and making targeted social investments, in other cases States are reducing social welfare budgets to meet economic and monetary requirements imposed by the EU. The private sector is increasingly involved in the funding of services and programmes to address homelessness, and this workshop will look at examples from Greece (where private foundations are mobilising resources in solidarity) and the UK (where social impact bonds are being tested).

Communicating homelessness without stigma

Homelessness is traditionally associated with negative and reductive images of the street, people dressed in rags, poor hygiene, makeshift cardboard homes, and more. While these extremes do exist and can shock public opinion into mobilising their community to support homeless citizens, these images also reinforce homelessness stereotypes. Reproducing stereotypes reinforces erroneous ideas like 'homelessness cannot be ended'. Combating stereotypes empowers homeless people and shows it is not an immutable situation. The aim of this workshop will be to discuss methods to communicate about homelessness in a way that does not stigmatise homeless people;

Homelessness strategies: Reconciling national frameworks with decentralised responsibilities

National/regional/local strategies to reduce homelessness are being developed by governments across Europe. The dynamics, nature and ambitions of these strategies vary tremendously. While housing and homelessness are generally the responsibility of sub-national authorities, national policy frameworks are key to provide financial and logistical support to local authorities and NGOs to implement and reach the political objectives of a strategy. This workshop focuses on certain aspects of homelessness strategies, namely the role of different stakeholders and follow-up action needed once a strategy has met its targets.

Accessing housing supply to end homelessness

Housing is a fundamental pillar of any strategy to end homelessness, together with appropriate support. Yet homelessness practitioners do not always have easy access to housing and homeless people can face a myriad of obstacles on the housing market.. This workshop will examine ways in which the homeless sector is attempting to build alliances with other sectors to increase the supply of affordable housing, with a particular look at strategies to convert empty buildings into homes and to reach out to private landlords in the rental market.

Harnessing the full potential of homeless people with health needs through a recovery-oriented approach

Unlike people who experience episodic or transient homelessness, people who have been living on the streets for many years may have accumulated multiple problems which require more intensive health and social support. Mainstreaming a recovery-oriented approach in programmes to end chronic homelessness is essential to give people the boost to leave the homelessness cycle. Different methods exist on a personal level but also on an organisational level, and some of these will be examined during the workshop.

Networking hotspots – 25 October 2014

EUROPEAN NETWORK MEETINGS

HABITACT steering group meeting (targeting local authority representatives)

HABITACT is the European exchange forum on local homeless strategies, a network of 80+ local authorities, supported by fifteen core partners. They meet annually for peer reviews on specific local homeless policies, and are interested in European cooperation in themes such as Housing First, Prevention and Internal EU migration. More [here](#)

Informal forum of national/regional ministries (targeting to regional/national civil servants)

This forum was set up in 2006 by FEANTSA to bring together national/regional civil servants responsible for designing homelessness strategies. They meet on an annual basis. They will discuss homelessness strategies and the impact of EU developments on their work.

HOPE A Network of HOmeless PEople in Europe (targeting people with experience of homelessness)

This network was set up in 2009 following FEANTSA's annual conference on the theme of participation. HOPE network members regularly participate in FEANTSA conferences – they are experts by their past experience of homelessness. More [here](#)

European Network of Homeless Health Workers (targeting professionals working in health and homelessness)

This virtual network mainly exchange information through regular newsletters highlighting existing practices and have over 300 subscribers across Europe. This meeting will discuss how to strengthen the network and build European dynamic around topics like addressing stigma and access barriers to health care for homeless people, training of health professionals on homelessness, collaborative ways of working with homeless people - peer work in health and homelessness, prevention through health - effective hospital discharges for homeless people, innovative approaches around health care for homeless people. More [here](#)

FEANTSA Youth homelessness network (targeting practitioners interested in addressing youth homelessness).

This is a newly set up network following the FEANTSA-Council of European study session which took place earlier this year. This activity hotspot will discuss how to further build the network across all European countries. FEANTSA will organize a second study session in the first half of 2015 in Budapest or Strasbourg – attend the networking meeting to learn more and share your ideas. More [here](#)

INFORMATION SESSIONS ON EU PROJECTS

ELOSH - European Core Learning Outcomes for the Integration of Support and Housing

This is a European training project, focusing on the intergration of housing and services for people experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, and people with mental health problems. ELOSH is developing a shared set of learning outcomes and a shared training pack for housing and support providers, which will be tested and adapted in 7 EU member states. ELOSH is innovating by using co-production of training with service users. More [here](#)

EMIN - European Minimum Income Network

This is a two year project (2013-2014) funded by the European Commission, that has the aim of building consensus to take the necessary steps towards the progressive realisation of adequate and accessible minimum income schemes in EU Member States, in line with the European Commission's Active Inclusion Recommendation of 2008, the Europe 2020 strategy and in the context of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion. More [here](#)

Promoting protection of the right to housing - homelessness prevention in the context of evictions

Led by the School of Law of NUI Galway and Human European Consultancy, this research is investigating the right to housing in national and EU law, the legal frameworks governing evictions, as well as the extent of evictions across EU28 from mortgaged, rental and other properties. Patterns of evictions across all EU Member States will be analysed in the context of the economic crisis, welfare systems, legal practices and protections, and other factors. The project will collate and evaluate early intervention and preventative measures that can mitigate evictions across the EU.

Invisible EU migrants

The Invisible EU Migrants project, funded by the European Program for Integration and Migration, aims to encourage EU institutions to take action to secure the EU law rights of vulnerable and marginalized Union citizens. More [here](#).

Street to Home

This is a project funded under the DAPHNE III programme, with a partnership of researchers from five countries across Europe (UK, Germany, Bulgaria, Spain and Norway) looking in detail at the support needs of vulnerable women in their countries, namely investigating how an integrated approach to housing provision and social support can reduce the threat of violence against women. More [here](#).

ROUND TABLES OF EXPERTS

Mainstreaming homelessness in the EU structural and investment funds (targeting ESF/ERDF managing authorities, and professionals working with EU funds).

This session will discuss existing homelessness programmes funded under the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and what type of programmes could be eligible under the new ESF/ERDF 2014-2020.

Sharing key tools for shaping public perceptions of homelessness (targeting journalists and communications professionals).

This meeting will aim to create links between communications professionals, arts professionals and journalists, in order to share experiences and come up with a list of good practices. In addition, the group will brainstorm about Europe's role to support communications on homelessness.

Higher education partnerships to tackle homelessness (targeting higher education institutions).

A discussion forum on the role of higher education institutions in building knowledge, skills and capacity to tackle homelessness. The discussion will focus particularly on concrete opportunities for European cooperation. A cluster of universities, including York (UK) and Trinity College Dublin (IE) will present its interest in exploring the scope for an EU project on digital teaching and learning on homelessness.

Domestic violence and homelessness – strengthening links across policy areas (targeting practitioners working on domestic violence and homelessness)

This discussion will follow on from the presentation of the “Street to Home” project, highlighting key links between domestic violence and homelessness. The group will also assess the potential of creating a European dynamic, European network, or new European projects.

CREATIVE SPACES

Building a European partnership of foundations on homelessness (targeting foundations)

We know that several Foundations across Europe work as a priority issue on homelessness/severe housing exclusion. We think it is useful to bring them together in an informal setting to discuss the potential for transnational cooperation on homelessness and potential pooling of ideas/activities at European level.

Housing First: Making it a reality (targeting practitioners wanting to implement HF)

This will be an open discussion on the successes and challenges of Housing First pilots in Europe so far. There will be an update on existing European projects on Housing First, and a discussion on how these might be useful to make Housing First a reality in European countries where there is support for this model.

Coalition-building to prevent youth homelessness (targeting practitioners working on youth homelessness)

This is an opportunity to meet and discuss with other professionals working to prevent young people from becoming homeless, as well as those working with homeless youth. We are keen to involve people working directly in homeless services, policy-makers, and professionals in other, related sectors including housing, health, youth care, etc. We will also launch FEANTSA's toolkit on preventing youth homelessness.

Building a regional homeless strategy for the Lombardy region – first reflections (targeting organisations active in Lombardy)

The aim of this hotspot is gather stakeholders active in the Italian region of Lombardy, and consider the potential of developing a regional framework for homelessness action.

Taking the EUROsocial II programme as a starting point to launch a European-Latin American dynamic on homelessness (targeting practitioners with an interest in Latin America)

EUROsocial II is a European Commission Programme that aims to reinforce social cohesion in Latin America. The social protection pillar of the programme also covers technical assistance to better homeless policies in some countries such as Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Some other countries - as Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, San Salvador – are approaching the issue. Representatives of the governments of various countries, invited to the FEANTSA conference by Eurosocial, will use this creative space to explain the situation of the countries on the matter and how EUROsocial has brought them into contact with innovative practices in Europe. A reflection will follow on potential areas for further cooperation between Europe and Latin America in the field of homelessness.

LOCAL PROJECT VISITS

Associazione Comunità Immigrati Ruah Onlus - www.cooperativaruah.it

This organization was founded in 1990 in cooperation the Bergamo Caritas diocese and the San Vincenzo Patron, with the aim to address social emergencies linked to migration. Over time, this organization has opened different services on the one hand to support the migration pathways of individuals, and on the other hand to support employment and settlement in Bergamo. Since 2009, these services have been provided by the Ruah cooperative. Services range from low-threshold services to training and employability services, with intercultural dialogue to create a common basis for mutual respect. The organization is driven by the vision of achieving social inclusion on the territory of Bergamo and to promote cooperation between public, private and third sector organizations. The visit will focus on dialogue with residents of the services, and an example of an employability service based on recycling of all types.

Associazione Opera Bonomelli onlus - www.operabonomelli.it

L'Associazione Opera Bonomelli is an organisation which works with people suffering from different types of poverty and social exclusion : persons experiencing homelessness, persons evicted from their homes, people living alone, unemployed people, and people with substance abuse problems. The organization aims to create support pathways to build new opportunities for a dignified life. The main services to implement these pathways are temporary accommodation with support which offer help to recover self-sufficiency and capacities to build an individual life project. In addition, the organization works in the social context of the city in order to create the conditions for community integration through work, housing and social networks. The visit will focus on the service called "Nuovo Albergo Popolare" with a presentation of different projects under way (Housing First, communal housing, social agriculture, employability support, social cohesion projects).

Caritas diocesana - www.caritasbergamo.it

This organisation provides a wide range of services for Italian and foreign citizens, with or without a residence permit. It is particularly active in the support of people experiencing homelessness and people generally suffering from economic, relational and social disadvantages. The visit will focus on one of their key low-threshold services ("Porta dei Cocci") which combines a day centre, night shelter, temporary accommodation, employability support and micro-credit facilities.

LOCAL PROJECT VISITS

Centro Servizi Bottega del Volontariato - www.csvbg.org

This centre was founded in 1997 with the aim to facilitate the creation of social, civil and cultural projects to promote and support voluntary/community-based initiatives, according to Law 266/91. The organization offers free of charge services of information, promotion, advice and training to organisations of volunteers, and is financed thanks to a special fund created by a Bank foundation. Projects vary from promotion of social cohesion in the province of Bergamo and also in quarters of the city, to new ways of volunteering, to promoting volunteering in different social services (including homelessness services, and namely the Housing First project in Bergamo). The visit will take place at the centre and be an opportunity to discuss these different initiatives together with staff.

Fondazione Casa Amica - Casa a colori - www.fondazionecasaamica.org

Casa amica is an organisation which has promoted social housing in the province of Bergamo for the last 20 years. This organisation emerged from a need to house families of immigrants at a disadvantage, and now also works with Italian families following increasing vulnerabilities to homelessness as a result of the economic crisis. Their social housing is provided in the context of local welfare policy context in Bergamo, trying to reconcile objectives of social mix and social inclusion. The visit will focus on housing units for single mothers in the Longuelo quarter.

Patronato San Vincenzo

Founded in 1927, this organization provides different services from basic outreach to professional training for youth in families which are at a disadvantage or non-existent, homeless youth or youth who are in precarious living situations because they are away from home for study or work. They also work with homeless adults, ex-offenders, travelers, people with substance abuse problems, people with AIDS, third country migrants. The support offered is not only temporary but aims to find permanent solutions for each individual. The organization is also a partner in the local Housing First project of Bergamo, and provides professional training to youths and adults, with a particular focus on school and family-related problems. The visit will be to the headquarters of the organization where conference participants can receive more information about the activities of the organization and talk to service users.