

# Training School ‘City counts in Europe’ in Brussels

**September 24<sup>th</sup> 2018, optional field trips**  
**September 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> 2018**

## Idea

There is a growing knowledge base concerning measuring homelessness at local and national level. This training school focuses on the different methodical approaches to measure homelessness at city level. It helps actors in this field to decide why and how to undertake a count on homelessness in their city. The training school has a strong scientific and societal orientation: practical and methodological expertise will be shared between the organisers and the participants.

## Definition of a city count of homeless people

A city count of homeless people is a point in time head count or a survey of homeless people or users of services for homeless people or a both, possibly combined with other data sources of homeless persons.

There doesn't exist a universal strategy for planning and implementing a city count. Each city has to develop a tailor-made method using instruments based on local context (city topography, infrastructure, interests of the initiators, the relevant stakeholders). To compare various dimensions of the data collection with other cities on national/federal/international level the use of the ETHOS or ETHOS Light typology can be useful. This typology was developed by the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) and is acknowledged by the European Union as the definition of homelessness.

## Programme

The programme is organised around key questions which have an impact on the strategy, selected methods and instruments of the city count and the subgroups of homelessness people who are counted. The organisers invite the participants to discuss fundamental questions about measuring on a city level and sharing knowledge concerning the practical organisation of a count. Next to the examples and lessons learned from city counts in Budapest, Brussels, Bratislava and Basel participants have the opportunity to present their experiences or ask questions if they plan a city count.

## Overview of the sessions and key questions

**Session 1:** What is a city count? Introduction to basic theoretical approaches in city counts.

Prof. Dr. Koen Hermans, Centre for sociological research and LUCAS, KU Leuven, Chair of the Cost Action

- What is a city count? (survey/headcount/combination)
- What are the other options? (administrative data, client survey...)
- Who do we count? (ETHOS and ETHOS light and how it can be used in city counts)
- What methods are available to gather reliable data on homeless people in the city and what are their limits? (observation, short interview, capture, re-capture...)



## **Session 2: What methods are used in the participating cities?**

- Introduction of the organisers from Brussels, Bratislava, Budapest and Basel
- Introduction of the participants (where they come from, which organisation they represent, whether they are preparing a city count)
- Expectations from the training school, three most important questions / challenges they have to face (or they think they would have to face) when preparing a city count

## **Session 3: What are the purposes of a city count?**

- Scientific, political and practical goals and interests
- Purposes of the initiator and the funder
  - o NGO / empowering the homeless people / Brussels
  - o Municipality/legal obligation or voluntary participation
  - o Private Foundation / financial conflict / Basel
- Ethical issues: which negative consequences of counts for homeless people can occur? How to realise an 'informed consent'?
- Consequences for the scope of the count (access to the field, selected method, legal obligation or voluntary participation, ownership of the collected data, recurrence of the city count)

## **Session 4: Who is counted is a matter of time and place? The value of co-designing the count with stakeholders.**

- Is there a homelessness sector present and what is the variety of services?
  - o Who has access to the services?
  - o Selection of participating services. Are the services obligated to take part in the count?
  - o What kind of institutions are not taking part, and why?
  - o Are there stakeholders in other sectors or public services?
  - o Scale of the city count: all or selected public places ('hotspots' or the whole territory?)
- When does the city count take place? What are the purposes for setting this day?
  - o Winter, spring, summer or autumn
  - o Day, evening or night
  - o Period of data collection: during one hour, a day or one or more weeks?
  - o How to prevent double counting?
- Consequences for the common understanding of what is homelessness (based on the categories of ETHOS/ETHOS Light typology), exclusion of or focus on subgroups of homeless persons, selected method, designing a questionnaire on the type of enumerators

## **Session 5: Why and how a survey as part of the city count? Measuring extent, profile or trajectories of homeless people.**

- Who is counting?
  - o How to identify homeless people?  
What are the pros and cons of involving volunteers / professionals / staff of the institutions as enumerators and as interviewers?
  - o How to train interviewers and observers?



- In what circumstances it may be useful to organise a survey as a part of city count?
- Who would be surveyed – every counted person vs. some sort of sampling?
  - o Self-filled / not self-filled
  - o Type of street count
  - o Relationship question – no-participate (Indirect count e.g. by informants, experts who surveyed something).
  - o How to motivate the target group to participate (Homeless people, field workers, organisations etc.)?

### **Session 6: Which questions are useful in surveys?**

- What is the implication of each question?
- What are the ethical issues contained in a survey?
- Each area of interest = set of questions – which areas are the highest priority?
- Specific areas of interest, e. g. experience with physical attacks, hunger...?
- How to ask questions on homelessness trajectories?
- How to ask questions in sensitive areas of interest – health issues, alcohol and drug addiction, regular income...?
- How many questions can be included?

### **Session 7: How to validate the results and the quality of the collected data? Feedback from all stakeholders**

- How did we record the data and what statistical tools did we use to proceed them?
- Did we collect feedback from volunteers? From homeless people? From our partners? What did we learn from that which might be useful for the participants?
- Is the quality of the data validated by field workers, academics, stakeholders?
  - o Accurate numbers or estimations?
  - o Evolution and trends?
  - o Representative for other periods or moments (snapshot)
  - o Representative for the whole city
  - o Possibilities to transfer results to other cities, regions or at national-level - scope of the study, representativity of the results?
- Are there synergies possible and relevant stock data?
  - o combine data / other data sources / how to
  - o tracking people

### **Session 8: What is the 'best' dissemination strategy?**

- Product: Report, maps, fact sheets, video, political brief...
- Public relation: Chances and risks when preparing a press release
- Impact on policy makers
- Impact on support services for the homeless and other vulnerable people
- Impact on related policy domains (e.g. housing, health care, support for addicts , immigration, youth care)



### **Closing session**

- Let's come back to our expectations and challenging questions from the beginning of the training school: do we know how these were approached in the three cities? How we could approach them in our own contexts?
- Open discussion to answer remaining questions and share views ...

### **Field trip:**

Three options will be presented to the applicants with the confirmation of the inscription.

### **Timetable of the training school**

<b>Monday</b> 24 September	<b>Tuesday</b> 25 September	<b>Wednesday</b> 26 September	<b>Thursday</b> 27 September
		9.00 – 10.30 am Session 4	9.00 – 10.30 am Session 8
		10.30 – 11.00 am Coffee break	10.30 – 11.00 am Coffee break
	11.00 – 12.30 am Welcome speeches Session 1	11.00 – 12.30 am Session 5	11.00 – 12.30 am Closing session
	12.30 – 1.30 pm Lunch	12.30 – 1.30 pm Lunch	12.30 – 1.30 pm Lunch
1.30 – 5.00 pm Field Trip	1.30 – 3.00 pm Session 2	1.30 – 3.00 pm Session 6	
	3.00 – 3.30 pm Coffee break	3.00 – 3.30 pm Coffee break	
	3.30 – 5.00 pm Session 3	3.30 – 5.00 pm Session 7	
	<b>Social Event</b>		

## Presenting the organisers

All speakers have expertise in city counts and are members of the EU-Cost network 'Measuring Homelessness in Europe' (2016-2020): [http://www.cost.eu/COST\\_Actions/ca/CA15218](http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/ca/CA15218)

### **Brussels**

The '**la Strada**' support center was set up by the different Brussels governments as an observatory, a networking tool and an information and awareness raising body. La Strada is at the service of the social and political actors and has the following objectives: provide concrete information and analyses about the homeless (care) in the Brussels Region, focus on the needs of the target group, formulate policy recommendations, and strengthen consultation within the sector and with neighbouring sectors

**Nicole Mondelaers** is responsible for the organization of the Brussels 2-yearly roofless and homeless counting and the analysis and editing of the report. She participates at research projects such as Mehobel 'Measuring homelessness in Belgium' (Belspo, 2016-2018).

### **Bratislava**

**Institute for Labour and Family Research** is a public institution which was set up in 2004 by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic to collect evidence in fields related to the agenda of the ministry. Since 2015, the institute has started its activities in the research on homelessness, with an aim to contribute to the public debate on preventing and ending homelessness in Slovakia.

**Darina Ondrušová** and **Gábor Csomor** are researchers representing the institute in Action COST CA15218 'Measuring homelessness in Europe' (2016-2020). Darina was responsible for organisation of Bratislava city count in 2016, in which Gábor was also involved. In 2017, Gábor has co-operated with FEANTSA as a national expert in preparing the report on family homelessness.

### **Budapest**

**Menhely Foundation** (Shelter foundation) is one of the first providers established in Budapest. Beyond running shelters, it is member of the February 3 Working group, which has been conducting the yearly homeless count (actually a survey) in Hungary for 20 years. **Zoltán Gurály** is the key lead expert of the count and runs a transitory home for homeless people struggling with addictions funded by a faith based organisation.

**Metropolitan Research Institute** is a Budapest based independent think tank dealing with housing exclusion, urban development and social inclusion policy development. It has been active in the field of designing inclusive housing policies for the last few decades at local and at national level. **Nóra Teller** has worked as a sociologist at MRI for 17 years and has dealt with housing exclusion research among others in the framework of the European Observatory on Homelessness. She is also co-editor of the European Journal of Homelessness.

### **Basel**

The census in the city of Basel took place in spring 2018. It was the first attempt in Switzerland to approach the subject quantitatively. In doing so, a combination of street census at night and survey of users of the offers for homeless people (food kitchen, meeting points). The results from Basel are to be prepared for a Swiss census in the coming months.

The **Institute for Social Planning, Organizational Change and Urban Development** is part of the School for Social Work at the University of Applied Sciences. **Jörg Dittmann** and **Matthias Drilling** are interested in a professional position on homelessness. In Switzerland, we see little interest in measuring homelessness. For politicians, an exact figure would be a reason for action. Instead, the issue is rather taboo and the institutions in the field of homelessness are repeatedly bound to strict conditions by subsidy contracts. The Christoph Merian Foundation, which is involved in the social sector of the city of Basel, provided most of the funding for the census.



## Practical information

### Supporting organisations, facilitators, and speakers:

Dr. Darina Ondrusova, Institute for Labour and Family Research, Bratislava

Gabor Csomor, Institute for Labour and Family Research, Bratislava

Prof. Dr. Jörg Dittmann, Institute of Social Planning, Organizational Change and Urban Development, School of Social Work, Basel

Prof. Dr. Matthias Drilling, Institute of Social Planning, Organizational Change and Urban Development, School of Social Work, Basel

Nicole Mondelaers, La Strada, Support center for the homeless sector in the Brussels Region, Brussels

Nóra Teller, Metropolitan Research Institute, Budapest

Zoltán Gurály, Shelter Foundation, Budapest

### Target group:

Academic researchers, city administration, representatives of NGOs, national and local policy makers, students (master/PhD)

**Maximum number of participants:** 25

### Registration:

Due to the limited places, we encourage you to send a short motivation letter (max. 1000 characters) to the local organizer by email. In the selection process, representation of applicants from different countries and cities will be considered and priority will be given to applicants with experience in homelessness counts and surveys, homelessness research, and homeless service delivery and policy.

Please send your motivation letter and formal application to [nmondelaers@lastrada.brussels](mailto:nmondelaers@lastrada.brussels)

### Costs:

Travel and accommodation costs for participants will be covered by EU-COST according to reimbursement regulations

More information: [http://www.cost.eu/COST\\_Actions/ca/CA15218](http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/ca/CA15218)

### Venue:

La Strada, Support center for the homeless sector in the Brussels Region, Verenigingstraat 15, Rue de l'Association Brussel, 1000 Brussels

<https://goo.gl/maps/Et7LioftR512>

**Deadline for the motivation letter and formal application:** June 15<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Confirmation of inscription:** June 30<sup>th</sup> 2018