

Madrid Workshop – contribution of authorities and of NGOs

On Friday morning three groups of presentations were made. The first was by the officials responsible for Homelessness in the national Ministry, the region and the city of Madrid, the second by the Spanish representative to FEANTSA, and the third by NGOs working in Madrid.

Manuel Poreras, the Representative of the Ministry dealing with Childhood, family matters, co-operation with NGOs, the fight against poverty and the training of social work, spoke first, reporting that Spain had, at the national level, begun to develop the strategy of inclusion i.e. the fight against exclusion. In June 2001, the first action plan was designed to be two-year and in the first year it developed an inclusive working method including all social actors, including NGOs, and then began the work of transferring this plan to the different regional territories that held the power to implement then; so far 13 of the territories have a regional social inclusion plan and 4 are developing them. The second year of the plan began to focus on the areas that required most attention: structure of the household, ageing populations (unemployment, retirement, pensions), participation of women in the labour market, migration and immigrants, and the problem of social exclusion.

Housing is an important protection system but there are still people without a house. On the positive side employment is improving in Spain. But again we are dealing with an increasingly dependent population and challenges due to immigration. The male/female question is also a priority, as are the new family types.

Therefore the Plan has 10 priorities with 264 measures – the first and most important is reduce poverty by 2%. Overall there are four objectives. The first objective has two parts – access to employment (21 measures) and access to resources (17 measures). The second objective is prevention: 35 measures with three priorities including aid to families. The third objective deals with the most vulnerable groups and we have within this 10 measures for the homeless: resources network, intra-professional teams, special programmes for women and young people, minimum income, observations and to foster an observatory, ways to find them early, access to urban transport, standards for residential centres, possibilities for housing couples and families not just individuals. The fourth objective is to foster collaboration between NGOs and ourselves, social agents and the whole society.

In doing all this we will use the 18 common indicators across the European Commission.

'In conclusion... in Spain national inclusion plans are an important opportunity, a process, to bring together, public general policies, families, NGOs, the labour field, trade unions, entrepreneurs, all together for a common end ...' The plan will be published in the Ministry of Social and Labour Affairs www.mtas.es

Roberto Collado, Chief of Services at Madrid City Hall, spoke next, supported by his technical advisor Juan Antonio, on the responsibility of the Madrid City Government for over 5 million persons, 3.5 million of whom live in the City of Madrid. He reported the findings of Professor Cabrera on street sleeping: 500 persons sleep on the streets everyday, 82 of whom are men, 29% have mental health problems, average age is 42 years and over half have been on the streets for more than 5 years. Currently 30% are foreign, a third are from Eastern Europe and two thirds from Latin America. Street sleeping is concentrated in one district out of the 29, where most services exist, - over a third sleep in that district.

There has been a restructuring of social services in the area in order to fulfil our responsibilities. Our aim with the homeless is that there should be no homeless person who has no-one paying attention to their needs. We are working with all city halls and encouraging volunteers to this end. We are also increasing provision over the next 4 years:

- a) The winter shelter to open all year; winter shelter to become day centre; new direct access centre in 2-3 years; new smaller hostels/homes rather than large 300-400 beds.
- b) Recently homeless people through divorce require immediate reinsertion and we are looking at the possibility of providing housing for couples and not just temporary shelters.
- c) The possibility of using pre-fabricated shelters this winter rather than subway shelters, with dinner and breakfast provided, bus transport for users of the shelter.
- d) Changes in the Social Emergency Services. Instead of just the 2 emergency vans we will also be providing professionals who specialise with working with the street homeless.

Concepcion Dancausa from the Regional Government of Madrid explained the social exclusion plan for the region that was established following the Kingdom of Spain Inclusion Plan. One of the important measures was the right to a minimum wage. A Committee was also established to assess how it was possible to achieve our objective of social inclusion for those outside of the normal networks, the homeless and beggars, and this Committee included Professor Cabrera of the University of Comillas, local municipalities and NGOs. The plan of the Committee, led by Professor Cabrera, proposes 85 specific measures for the homeless – from this plan has been selected some measures that can be introduced as emergency measures. First we have insufficient resources in Madrid: there are 1,256 beds and about 500 also live on the streets and these services are concentrated in the central district; outlying districts do not have services. WE have proposed: a one-stop shop for services, networks for housing the homeless in areas of over 100,000 population, comprehensive programmes to prevent begging, vocational training, multi-professional teams to work on the streets, quality standards manual for homes.

Important points are:

- a) We have a budget to set up four multi-professional teams – a psychiatrist, a nurse, and a social worker; two teams in the morning, two in the afternoon, and an extra team to support the emergency services at night. So there will be 24 hours cover.
- b) There will also be 3 new centres with 30 rooms for prematurely elderly persons with special physical and psychological needs who do not fit into other shelters.
- c) We will try to increase the amount of accommodation available through public housing and housing to rent, to help the homeless move into an individual house.

Response: Maryse Marpsat thanked the speakers for their important and interesting contributions remarking that it is important for the CUHP network to understand the policy and research preoccupations of the policy makers and NGOs in order that we can think about the appropriate methodologies to give knowledge. We hope to publish papers that will be helpful to your needs.

There was then an interesting discussion between the NGOs present and the different public services representatives concerningL

- i. Whether the older street homeless would have to go to a shelter. That would be a big change for some of them.
- ii. How will the Town Hall teams and the Regional multi-professional teams work together, or be funded together?
- iii. How will this work if there are centres in Madrid for the immigrants and not in Barcelona – won't people move to Madrid.

- iv. How can we make the public more aware of the problem. We agree this is necessary but there doesn't appear to be any specific measures.
- v. What will be done to get people out of the homeless network – how will inclusion begin.
- vi. This four year plan is ambitious – 12 new centres, 6 or 7 street teams. But we need to evaluate this plan. Does it work.
- vii. Spain has no national survey of homelessness as has taken place in several other countries in our network. When will this happen?

Responses from the speakers

The money is in the budget not just for this year but future years to undertake this work. There are measures for insertion, for training. We also have another plan for the Mentally Chronically Ill, we need to bring both plans together.

Each City Hall determines its own work and we need to raise public awareness. We don't have a national report yet but we do have information that we can use to bring attention to the problem.

Professor Pedro Cabrera, the Spanish Representative on the FEANTSA network then spoke of the situation in Madrid and explained to the CUHP network that between Ministry, Region and City co-operation was more possible in Madrid than other areas such as Barcelona/Cataluna where political differences made such advances difficult. For example there were only 800 beds in the whole of Cataluna last year for the homeless. There are in fact only 2 university teams that have an interest in homelessness – that of Comilla and Complutense – and we work closely together.

My estimates for Feantsa put the number of homeless in Spain at 30-40000, with perhaps 11000 shelter beds. How do we explain this given the previous high rate of unemployment? First we now have 82% home ownership, compared with 52% rented in the 1950s. Second we still have a strong family system with young people living at home until their 30s.

There are other problems. A homeless person might have a minimum wage of 300 Euros whilst the professional working with them might only receive 900 Euros. Also if the interest rates rose 3-4% we might be faced with a UK situation of a few years ago, of many people losing their homes through default.

The third group of presentations were from **NGOs**

Sebastian Mora of Caritas then spoke.

In practice it is largely volunteers who deal with the homeless. Now that we are talking about increased resources, multi-professional teams, it is important to think not just about increased resources but also improving the quality of what we do.

First, social and health issues go together and we need to create individual routes into inclusion.

Second, we must not just work with individuals but with their social networks, support networks.

Third, we need an ethical agenda that encompasses confidentiality, autonomy of the individual, independence.

Fourth, as volunteers we have a political agenda separate from that of political parties: 'we speak about dealing with individuals to make them real citizens, but whether they have a home or not they are all citizens... There is not true happiness without dignity, but you cannot have dignity with unfairness and injustice. Those of us working with homeless people, drug abusers, immigrants, we have this tremendous task, for hope without injustice, for people to have dignity'.

Jose Manuel Caballo spoke from the **RAIS** Foundation

We are a non-profit organisation to tackle social exclusion with several programmes: a homeless street project, a low demand centre, a social accompanying programme for the homeless, small amounts of money, employment programmes and job search programmes.

The street outreach work has been in place since 1999 with professional social workers and psychologists who accompany people on the streets.

Jose Anierte of Solidarios spoke on the work of this foundation that was founded in 1988, with the aim of tackling marginalisation with the aid of volunteers. The major focus is on the homeless and we have 300 volunteers working in Madrid (180 volunteers), Seville, Corduba and Granada. Street work is through befriending. We also raise public awareness through presentations.

Jose Manuel Caballo of Solidarios then presented the pilot project that had been completed this year. Volunteers work four nights a week across 7 routes and get to know the homeless – professionals then accompany them on one of these nights. Together the volunteer and professional can motivate the process of change. The work takes place during the University terms because it is mostly students. We have helped different individuals into shelters, into economic activity, into health care, into minimum income. We deal with 170-200 people a year.

Realidades Association spokesperson explained their work. They are a group of professionals with an interest in social exclusion who research and intervene in social exclusion matters. There are three activities:

- i. Individual psycho-social attention and arranging homeless people to receive the minimum income.
- ii. Day centre activities from 1993
- iii. Housing Facilities

We think it is important to develop intra-agency co-operation and a single point of information for homeless people. Housing shortages must also be tackled; from 1994 we have been developing shared accommodation; housing is now very expensive and there is little to rent and there needs to be a public answer to this. We believe stable housing will motivate people to change. There are very cheap pensions where no-one knows the owner and this does not help stability.

A further problem is that the profile of the homeless is changing. There are more drug users; problems of mental health are also not receiving enough attention. Finally, we need volunteers but we also need to have a very professional approach.

12:50 – 13:30 CUHP network contributions and general discussion

Following these three different types of presentations members of the CUHP network from France, Netherlands, UK reported on developments that might be of interest to the Spanish NGOs and policy makers present.

France – Jean Marie Firdion reported on a) changes in homeless populations in France compared with the 1950s and b) the national survey of INSEE of shelters based on the INED methodology. He also reported the growth of precarious jobs affecting young people, women and men over 50 years and the development of the Minimum Income and universal sickness. Other policy changes towards domestic violence, new issues in relation to immigrants and asylum seekers, and further problems with mental health given the closing of the large institutions.

Therefore the emergency sector faces a new type of client and the Law against Exclusion supported the creation of mobile teams to deal with asylum seekers, young runaways, women survivors of domestic violence, over 50s without work, long-term street dwellers. A new integration of services and a winter plan.

Netherlands – Lia Van Doorn explained that about 30,000 are homeless, and similar to those in Spain and England, median age is 40 years and largely male. In 1990 responsibility for homeless services was placed in 40 bigger cities, who have to develop a policy and fund the services from devolved funds from central government. Advantage to decentralisation is that people know the local area, disadvantage is that some local areas had no intimate knowledge of the problem.

There is now more emphasis on measurable results.

UK – Joan Smith reported that there are differences in the UK situation because different groups are included among the homeless. First homeless households have a right to housing under the Homeless Legislation if they have dependent children, or are elderly, or are vulnerable young adults – they apply to local authorities – more than 100,000 households each year. Second, single homeless people, women survivors of domestic violence, those with specific problems (mental, physical health) may be offered hostel places. These hostels are run by NGOs and Housing Associations in the UK – since 1977 homelessness was seen as a housing issue in the UK. This year there is a new funding regime – Supporting People – that pays hostels for the support they provide and also pays for floating support when someone has a new tenancy. Third, there are rough sleepers. These homeless people are much more like the people you are working with. From 1993-2000 working with Rough Sleepers, particularly in London, was a top priority for the government. The Outreach teams are run by NGOs, but always they are paid workers, paid by the NGOs, and often with qualifications. There are discussions about a new qualification specifically for homeless workers.

Hungary. Eszter Somogyi presented the situation in Hungary that has changed drastically since 1989, when there were no openly homeless people on the streets. Currently it is estimated that there are 20-30,000 'literal homeless' (street and shelter homeless), of whom half live in Budapest. New institutions were created – street shelters (7-8000 bed places), 11 rehabilitation (300 places), 4 nursing homes (100 places) and day centres. Half the services are run by NGOs, local government contracts out the services to NGOs. This system cannot manage other groups of homeless people – young people, homeless families, couples, physical or mental ill health. There are no preventative policies. There is now a Commission of Homeless Affairs. There needs to be a new strategy that encompasses housing policy.

Discussion: Several points were raised:

- i. Immigration is of importance across several countries now.
- ii. It is necessary to link the problems of health and homelessness and housing, England is a place to look at.
- iii. The criminalisation of poverty is another problem – zero tolerance policies turning began into criminals.
- iv. It is wrong to target the homeless with emergency services; the homeless don't have so many emergencies but need to be worked with over a long period of time. Someone needs to co-ordinate the different services for them.
- v. Floating support has been put in place in England under a new funding stream, so that when homeless people get settled there is someone who stays working with them. NGOs are being funded by the government for this. Again, as the Netherlands representative has pointed out, there is a large audit of this work to prove value for the person.
- vi In Spain we also need to train the police
- vii The French outreach teams are run by NGOs but there are ethical issues – what of those people who do not want intervention, who refuse. What of night shelters who only have someone for one night – how can that intervention be more constructive.
- viii. All responses must be individualised and allowed the time necessary. It is important to welcome people but then what happens? What resources are available.

ix. Trust is important with homeless people but working in Rotterdam we find that homeless immigrants don't trust us, we are from a different culture. We have to use interpreters from their host country.

The Open Session was closed by the Chair, Manuel Munoz of Complutense University, who thanks, on behalf of all, the interpreters. Manuel Munoz reiterated the importance of the rights of the homeless and referred to a chapter on this in a contribution they had made to a book on Human Rights and Psychology.