

Paris workshop, March 7, 2003

Meeting with associations and agencies providing for the homeless

Presentations by three French associations/ organizations (see Powerpoint files)

Various associations and agencies were present including: Centre d'action sociale de la ville de Paris (CASVP); Compagnons de la Nuit; Fédération nationale des associations de réinsertion sociale (FNARS); Mission d'information sur la pauvreté en Ile-de-France; Caisse nationale d'allocations familiales (CNAF); Association des cités du Secours catholique; Samu social de Paris; Médecins du Monde – Mission sans domicile fixe; Observatoire du Samu social de Paris. Catherine Gégout of the Council of the City of Paris was also present.

Three organisations made presentations at the meeting. Presentations were made in French, with Maryse Marpsat translating, and overheads were in French and English.

I. The first presentation was given by Francois Brégou from FNARS – Fédération Nationale des Associations d'accueil et de réinsertion sociale.

FNARS is a network of associations, created in 1950s, to help the most destitute. FNARS' membership includes 750 to 800 associations and public agencies and 2,200 institutions and services (emergency services, shelters, support, day services, insertion services including buildings, and a help line, etc.). FNARS's membership includes 80% of relevant associations. These services record 600,000 individuals who are helped and runs 45,000 beds and 12,000 persons are employed.

FNARS represents the members of its association in public authorities, local governments, FEANTSA and is in partnership with the Union Nationale des HLM (French public housing institutions).

The main areas of analytical work that is undertaken are:

1. Evaluation of programmes and measures
2. Observatory of social experimentations undertaken by the associations
3. Task Forces
4. Individual research studies, surveys, sampling
5. Seminars

FNARS also assures the training of social workers and volunteers, the counselling of its members and the information for its members and for the public including a guide to the law for individuals.

The main issues it is concerned with at the moment are:

- a) Right to Housing – the realities behind the right to housing, its juridicial application, and can it be a '*droit opposable*' (the possibility of people who have no housing to make a suit to get a house), and under what condition of implementation? In particular, FNARS works with the government in a task force to make a report on the Universal Housing Coverage.
- b) Youth Exclusion – what prevention measures can address the issue of 'wandering youth', and which institutions share the responsibility of this problem in relation to schools, family and public policies?
- c) Family and social policies – is family policy adapted to today's realities? What is the link between the inadequacy of family policy and the social exclusion of homeless people?
- d) What is the meaning of the concept of Social mixing ('*mixité sociale*') in neighbourhoods and cities? How can it be implemented? Is it relevant? Sometimes there is a contradiction between social mixing and the right to housing but the right to housing must come first
- e) Immigration and '*sans abrisme*'. What integration policies can address the number of refugees, asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers, as well as racial discrimination in access to housing? In the past 2-3 years, for lack of beds in specialised hostels for asylum seekers, they have had to occupy beds in shelters for the homeless which couldn't cater to their particular needs.
- f) Social policies: are they suitable to address the income of the homeless and how to evaluate social work and practice?

- g) Housing demand, housing needs and the typologies of persons and schemes. This is partly the work of the 'Observatories' in Europe and in France but if we want to have a global view we need to create observatories in the European regions which don't have any because it is not the same in all welfare regimes.
- h) How to co-ordinate emergency services ('*d'urgence*') and insertion policies.
- i) What should be the relation between the state and the associations.
- j) What effect will the ageing of population have on social policies towards homelessness?
- k) How to connect homelessness services and mental health services? Which role for the NGOs? Some homeless have to be sent to psychiatric hospitals, some homeless services have to develop emergency skills?
- l) How to co-operate with researchers in order to capitalise on different approaches.

Ranking the research questions that FNARS are interested in we find:

- 1-5 The top five research areas are around Youth Exclusion; Adaptation of social policies and practice of social workers; Right to Housing; Immigration and homelessness; Mental Health Issues
- 6-8 Three other research areas are evaluation studies; the prison population; typologies of people using services.

II. The second presentation was given by Jean Caël of Secours Catholique, CARITAS, France and Jean-Louis Dauteuil of the Association des Cités du Secours Catholique

Jean Caël

Secours catholique belongs to Caritas international network. The European co-ordination is undertaken in Brussels.

Secours catholique was developed from 1946 from the social concerns of the Catholic Church. It has 106 Departement delegates, 72,000 volunteers (that is the principal characteristic of Secours catholique), 4,000 local teams and 800 employees. In 2001 1.6 million people were given a service, and the budget was 117 million euros of which only 7% was from public grants, the rest from 1 million donors, that assures a relative independence from the public sector.

The mission of Secours catholique includes different actions, from the distribution of services ('giving out') to the support of the destitute people ('giving with') ('Secours catholiques is a pedagogy', according to its founder)

Action Services in France have developed a different perspective in the years from 1946:

1946-8: it was rather a food agency

1948-56: Is the period of 'campaigns' including a dwellings campaign in 1951 and a homelessness campaign in 1954.

1956-66: It concentrated on international poverty in a perspective of "micro-achievements" in opposition to the big governmental or international programs

1966-76: It worked on 'new' poverties (of loneliness and isolation through the consumer society, etc.). It emphasized 'doing with' rather than 'doing for'.

1976-86: The concentration was on institutional activity. Local organisations were used to make an impact on politics rather than working top down.

1986-96: To provide a voice of the poor, not to speak instead of the poor.

1996: Onwards the work has developed along three axes:

- work with poor people ('*une logique participative*')
- transforming society
- brotherhood based on the Gospel.

Social attitudes to homeless are an issue for CARITAS:

- A crisis of living together. There is a NIMBYISM (not in my backyard).
- The partial responses given by the society
 - partial relating to the time : for instance, there is the 'winter cold' schedule for homeless services, but what will happen after the winter ?
 - partial relating to the space: homeless people don't want to be housed in big shelters anymore.

- partial relating to the methods: Avoiding making emergency ('chronic') methods becoming permanent, and preventing people just moving from one centre to another.
- partial relating to the political scene: Subsidiarity is important, i.e. a well balanced partnerships in relation with the level of competences of services.

Secours catholique works on the foundation of a global response:

Homeless people are not 'extras' to society but they participate in the construction of society and should have access to rights like every citizen, access to choice like any human being.

Secours catholique has made statistical reports and their results match those of the 2001 INSEE survey.

The statistical perception of the homelessness phenomenon of Secours Catholique and its analysis:

1. Start from homeless people themselves:

- Goes towards people living on the street
- Associates with people on the street and aid the development of the measurement tools that concern their lives
- Not to start from preconceptions of the lives of people on the streets.

2. There are several research issues from the Secours Catholique's perspective that are important in relation to homelessness:

- The mental health of 'wanderers'
- Social integration of those coming out of prison
- Type and number of available places
- Foreigners: Asylum seekers, migrants, failed asylum seekers (without papers), workers... especially the non-French speaking.
- What is the course or trajectory of those who escape homelessness and rebuild their lives.
- The measurement of actual access to rights.
- Evaluation of services because the measurement of success can be used politically and also tell services what work.

Jean-Louis Dauteuil

In 1990 Secours Catholique split its services. In fact, the State, after the second war delegates to the NGOs a part of the social work because there are more flexible, dynamic and they have more possibilities. The first answers to these issues had been made by the Christian NGOs. So, a part of the State funds went to the Christian association. Because of the separation, in France, between the State and the Church, the State asked to the Christian NGOs to separate the services with a social task from the Christian part of the association. Other Christian organisations, like the Salvation Army, did the same. This independent organisation of Secours Catholique which provides shelter and other services is *the Association des Cités du Secours Catholique*.

The Association des Cités du Secours Catholique is sitting between FNARS (a national network) and Secours Catholique (which has its own network). It overlaps with both and works with both. The action of the *Association des Cités du Secours Catholique* seeks to be front-line services that work in innovative ways, a paradigm for the public action. The modes of work are various and include: social integration shelters, help through work centres, social residences and apartments. There are 12 sites, three quarters of them are located in the region of Ile-de-France (the larger region of Paris), that include services for the homeless, mental ill-health, women with children, single men, young people, sick people and their families. They are funded 50% by public funding and in 2001 employed 450 and 13,000 persons helping.

A third presentation was then given by Mrs Teyssède from a public agency, the *Centre d'Action Sociale de la Ville de Paris (CASVP)*.

The Social Assistance Subdirection of the Paris Public Assistance was first established in 1849, 53 years after the creation of the Charity Offices in France (1796). In 1995, was created the CASVP (Centre d'Action Sociale de la Ville de Paris).

The CASVP is a public agency depending on the Municipality of Paris which regulates social action within the city. It is managed by a Board of Directors (Conseil d'administration), meeting at least every three months, which President is the Mayor of Paris and includes members from the Paris council (15) and from NGO's and other social work institutions (15).

The CASVP has 6,700 employees, and among them 5,700 are civil servants.

This presentation concerns the service where Mrs Teyssèdre works: the Solidarity and Insertion Service, and more precisely, one of the 4 *Permanences d'Action Sociale* (a place to meet with social workers) which have been set by the Paris social services.

The Solidarity and Insertion Service is divided into:

The Social Prevention Bureau and Insertion Devices, including the Social Prevention Section and the Minimum Insertion Income Section,

The Insertion through Housing Bureau, including the section dealing with the Solidarity Funding for Housing (FSL), the Insertion through Housing devices section, and an emergency section,

The Analysis, budget, and prospect section, divided into a CHRS (Social Housing and Insertion Centers) section, and several other types of housing section.

As far as homelessness is concerned, the Solidarity and Insertion Service is responsible for 7 CHRS, one of them dealing with emergency cases, 4 *Permanences Sociales d'Accueil* directed towards young men, men over 26 years (for two of them), and women, and a psycho-social and medical drop-in center.

What does this agency expect from social research?

A production of operational data for those working on this field, that is:

Longitudinal surveys (over 3, 5, 7, 10 years) on people using the services in order to draw typologies of users, like:

- who are the service users,
- how many times did they move in and out,
- how they use the services,
- and what happens as they move from the street or dwellings to our shelters, or from our shelters to dwellings or to the street.