

# WORDS FROM THE STREET

« Street work, child rights, poverty and social exclusion »

2<sup>nd</sup> International Forum of Social Street Workers

Brussels, 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October 2010

## PREPARATION DOCUMENT FOR THE FORUM

Conferences – Debates – Workshops

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2010

**The aim is to produce and to finalize recommendations which will form a tool for lobbying political leaders at local, national, European and international level.**

In terms of poverty and young people, it seems that we need to take into account two different situations at the same time :

How poverty can have an impact on respect for rights of the child ?

How non-respect for rights of the child can in itself generate precarious situations ?

This double movement must be studied at three different levels :

At the practice level : street work, concrete situations, testimonials.

At the public policy level : programs and theories, different schools and approaches.

At the strategic level : the current development model which not only makes poverty possible, but which also means it is reproduced. It is essential to draw international comparisons at this level if we want to ensure that these realities of poverty and social exclusion are made unacceptable.

For this forum, we are currently focusing on the themes of rights of the child, poverty and social exclusion. Many propositions can emerge and come into life from your experience as social street worker. Here are some key questions, but feel free to broaden and don't hesitate to work out others contents that seems relevant to you.

## I. SOCIAL STREET WORK IN PRACTICE

1. The responsibility of the social street worker to speak out for the most excluded.
2. What does the social street worker put in place in response to the situations of poverty and social exclusion experienced by drug addicts, prostitutes, the homeless, and those with mental health problems ? How are they collaborating with other social actors on the ground ?
3. It should be irrelevant to talk about "child poverty", while we should only discuss the "parents' poverty". What does one notice in family breakdown situations that bring children into poverty that they then have to withstand themselves ? How does one describe those situations ? Which actions and policies could prevent such situations ?
4. Do difficult situations at street level have as roots the poverty of families ? Which life experience matches those consequences ?
5. Could it be said that the large stigma associated with youth, especially street youth is a new cultural and social data which crosses social and economic problems in different ways : first level of stigma which generates marginalization, Challenging socio-economic situations which in turn generate other forms of stigmas. Is it possible to map these various forms of youth stigmas or at least for part of youth ?
6. Equal educational opportunities : an opportunity ?

7. Social workers and educators : same realities ? same values ? same methods ? How can we build bridges ?
8. Does mandatory schooling generate rejection attitudes or dropping off when compared to life on the street ? How do we address this issue, and how do we best leverage it ?
9. How does a social worker manage to reach out to groups which have not yet been reached by others ? What are the specific elements in the field of social street work which make it possible ? What should one focus on in relation to these things that others could not achieve ?
10. Where does individual work meet group work ? What is the link between both forms ? Are there impediments and why ? What are the pros and cons ? What about social activism ?
11. Field work : with a partner ? On your own ? Pros and cons ?
12. How do we meet these young people and how do they perceive us ?
13. Can we link poverty and social exclusion ? How is social exclusion experienced on the streets ?
14. Field work and culture. Real life experiences : the Mimouna Festival and the Schaerbeek social workers, urban culture and the streets of Brussels. the Zinneke Parade : from a neighborhood event to a massive parade.

## **II. RECOGNITION OF THE SOCIAL STREET WORK**

1. What influence does the socio-political situation have on our work ? How does the political context influence street work ? Ideally, what conditions should the political power guarantee to facilitate social street work ?
2. How can we make social street work more visible in terms of added value ? What added value does social street work offer to community harmony ? Why is social street work necessary ? What are the ethical and socio-political arguments of the practice ?
3. Social work in AMO, social cohesion, security contract/neighborhood, same work ? What are the various work approaches/methodologies/tools ?
4. Is a social cohesion model pertinent for field work ? If it is, what relevant practices should it inspire to field social workers ?
5. The identity of the social street worker : what shared ethics ? What framework for more effective work ?
6. Social street work and intervention : what limits are there from a political, pedagogical and economic point of view ? What possibilities for collaboration ? What about security ?
7. Street work within safety considerations.
8. Occupying the public arena : democratic or controlling role ? Spaces for citizens to speak ?
9. Should social workers organize a political party, what should its program be, and what would you like to achieve ?

## **III. SOCIAL STREET WORK AND GLOBALIZATION : NORTH /SOUTH REALITIES**

1. Issues of globalization and neo-liberal policies both in the North and the South ?
2. What is the role of consumption in mechanisms which lead to poverty, both locally and throughout the world ?
3. Tourism and images of poverty : "social cleansing" in the North and the South.
4. Increased poverty, what development ? Relevance of the millennium goals for development to stop poverty.
5. Poor Europe : poverty and the fight against poverty at European level.