



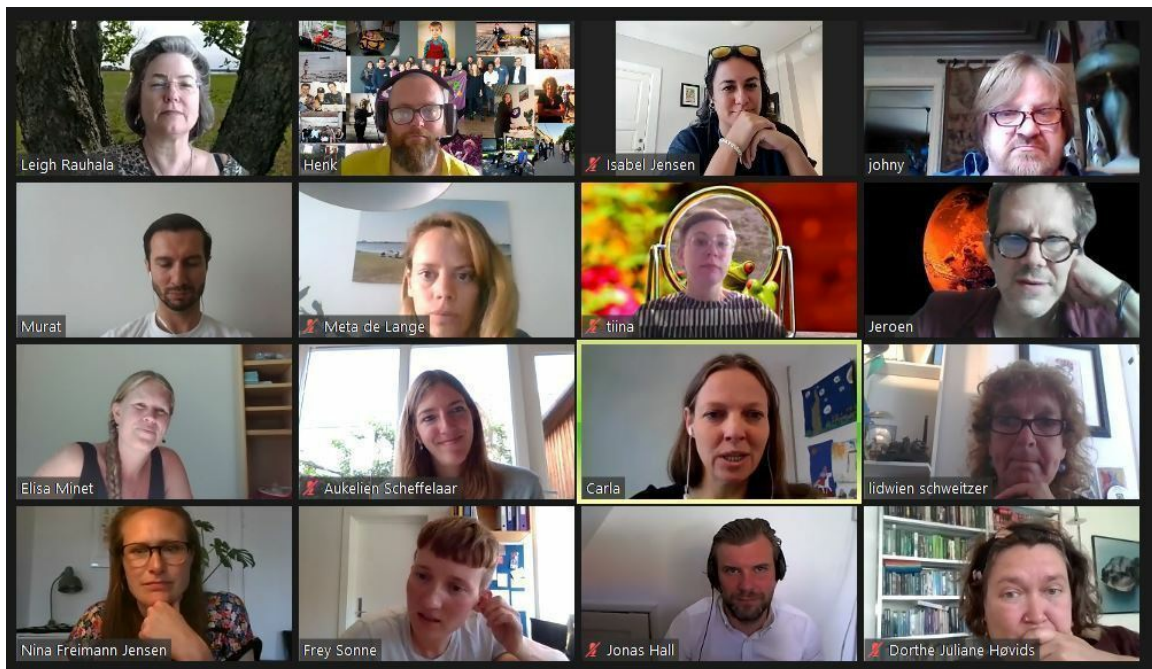
Newsletter 1/2021

If you would rather read this newsletter in a browser, [click here](#).

Greetings from Urban SOS

New year has started and the Urban SOS project keeps going on!

From this Newsletter you can see what is happening in each country around Urban SOS. This will be a channel to all of us inform things related to the project. We also encourage you to share things related to Urban SOS in your social media channels, and when you do, use the hashtag **#urbanSOSeu**. And **you can also find the project in LinkedIn**.



Key dates: Urban SOS Workshop + TPM2

- **Urban SOS Workshop (online): How to be a critical friend to policy makers?**
16 March 2021 at 13.00 - 15.00 (Helsinki time 14.00 - 16.00)
 - **Participants:** work field and associated partners (first ring), university partners (second ring)
 - Henk Pennings will send the programme and meeting link to the participants.
- **TPM2**
31 May - 2 June 2021 (in Amsterdam or Zoom), additional information coming up later

Photo: Tiina Lehto-Lundén



Urban SOS

URBAN Social work: towards a trans-disciplinary, inclusive, Sustainable future
Civic & Social Organization · Amsterdam · [13 followers](#)

Check out Urban SOS on LinkedIn

We have created a LinkedIn page for the project to keep all interested parties (social work professionals, lecturers, students etc.) up to date on the progress of Urban SOS. Through our LinkedIn page, we will keep our followers informed on the developments of the new framework for urban social work. Besides this, we will share sneak previews of some of the content we are developing, like the training course, the online game, upcoming podcasts and more. [Follow us on LinkedIn!](#)

Photo: Urban SOS project

Amsterdam update

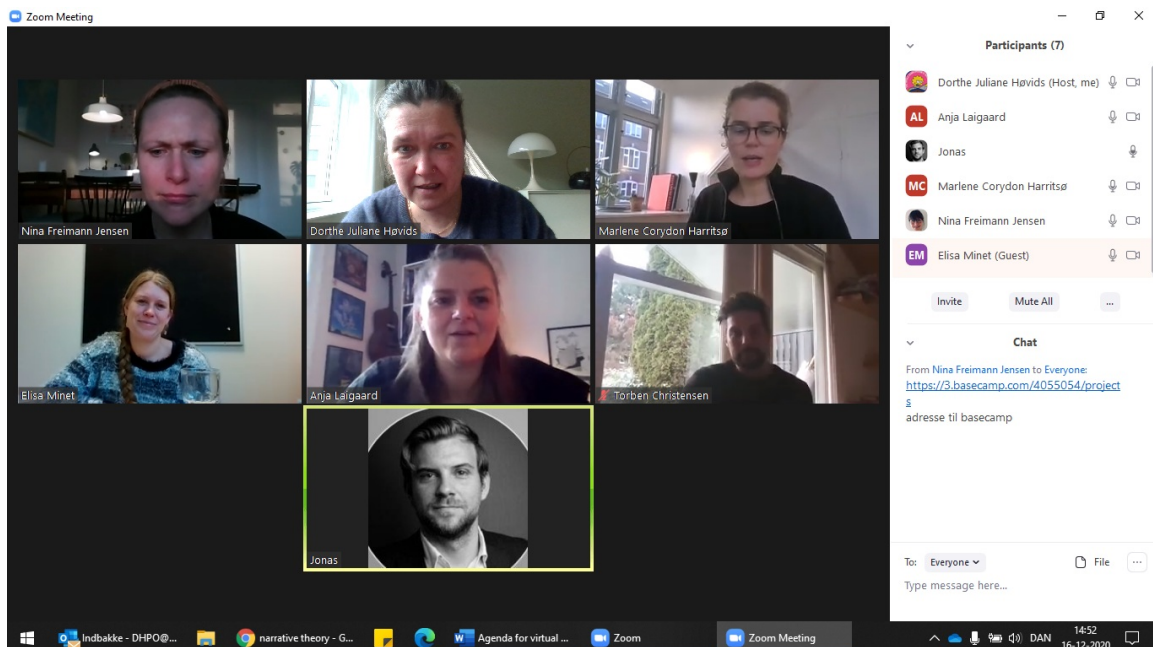
In Amsterdam we have two cases. One is about a community center in a gentrified neighbourhood. For the other we focus on the work of mental health professionals in neighborhoods. In 2020 we had an exploratory phase for output 1. The forthcoming period we dive deeper into the material to gather detailed information and client journeys.

In January we organized a session together with professionals of Arkin - the work field partner of the mental health-case. We've had a fruitful session and a lot of issues were discussed like

- the policy-ambition of working collectively with social en informal networks and the practical difficult with that
- the stigmatization and the difficulty of social integration in the neighborhood
- urban processes like gentrification and the effect on daily lived on persons with chronical psychiatric illnesses
- the continuous ongoing discontinuity of (innovation) projects en policies
- ethical dilemmas like privacy and coercion and the perverted incentives of financial structures in mental health care

We gathered client journeys, which represent some of these issues. Next sessions are with the client themselves. So in the next newsletter more about the stories behind the issues!

Copenhagen update 1/3



The image shows a Zoom meeting interface. The main window displays a grid of seven participants: Nina Freimann Jensen, Dorthe Juliane Høvids, Marlene Corydon Harritsø, Elisa Minet, Anja Laigaard, Torben Christensen, and Jonas. The chat window on the right shows a message from Nina Freimann Jensen to everyone, containing a URL: <https://3.basecamp.com/4055054/project> and the text "adresse til basecamp". The bottom of the screen shows the Windows taskbar with various open applications and the system tray displaying the time as 14:52 on 16-12-2020.

Like most of you, we have spent the last couple of months in yet another national lockdown. While two out of our three partners are still carrying out their work—you can read an interesting article by social worker Elisa Minet from the Homeless Unit elsewhere in the newsletter—our universities, schools and liberal professions are home.

Luckily, we were able to finish most of our fieldwork and data collection before the lockdown. So, during the upcoming semester, we will be writing stories and scenarios for the Urban SOS outputs. We are looking forward to being able to meet our local partners IRL to have their inputs and feedback on the stories—and hopefully to share them with the rest of the Urban SOS family when we are able to meet all of you again.

On the non-covid-19 related news side, we are happy to announce that the Homeless Unit, Municipality of Copenhagen has joined Kofoeds School as our work field partner—we are excited and thankful to continue the fruitful collaboration and include the Homeless Unit even more in the production of the outputs. The Men's home continues as our associated partner, but in the upcoming semester as a more 'silent partner' as Isabel, our contact person at the men's Home, gave birth in December.

Photo: Dorthe Juliane Hovids

Copenhagen update 2/3

In the fall during post TPM, in a coordinators meeting 30th October it was decided to launch continuous workshops for partners to create a possibility for partners in the four cities to exchange experiences, perspectives and inspire on another with insight to each other's practices. The themes that came up during TPM were Holistic views and Critical friends to the system/policy makers. There will be held two workshops per semester with themes introduced by the partners.

We, in the working group (Meta, Marian, Eekku, Tom, Alain, Elisa and Nina), have scheduled the first workshop with the theme How to be a critical friend to policy makers?, which will be held online 16th of March 2021, 13.00-15.00.

The goal of the first workshop is to exchange knowledge between partners on the matter of standing critical to governmental policy. What does the relationship with the partners and governments look like in different national/city contexts? In what ways do social workers influence policy? What tools and instruments are being used? What kind of mechanisms make it difficult to be constructive critics to policy makers? And finally, a content question: what are the current local or national issues that need to be put on the political agenda in your country?

We look very much forward to learn different perspectives and gain insight and knowledge about different ways of interacting with policy makers in the local contexts of social work.



Copenhagen update 3/3

Impact of a second lockdown seen from the perspective of a social service street worker

My name is Elisa and I am a social worker in the Homelessness division for Copenhagen Municipality. The work I do involves guiding and helping the homeless citizens in the Copenhagen area. The Homelessness division consists of 13 street workers and we are each assigned to a region in order to ensure coverage of the city. Along with my colleagues Maria og Bjørn I cover the west district of Copenhagen where we work on what we call "the open drug scene". Much of my day is spent out on the streets, regardless of the weather, establishes contact and helping the homeless on the street.

The situation in Copenhagen

Under the lockdowns the streets of Copenhagen are exceptionally empty and at times Copenhagen appears as if it has become a ghost town. Everything is closed: cafes, restaurants, clothing stores, and shopping centers. However, the homeless are still out on the streets despite the lockdowns. Although the cold weather has driven many to make use of those shelters available. Additionally, the Coronavirus has led many of the homeless to find places to stay and only those with the most severe mental health, the ones who are here illegally, and drug users can still be found on the street.

Places to go for the homeless

In the first stages of the Coronavirus pandemic, we were very worried about what might happen to those citizens living on the streets. We were placed in completely novel circumstances and forced to find the most effective way to look after our citizens. Fortunately, in the first lockdown we saw almost no Coronavirus infections in the homeless community. However, we have not been as fortunate during this second lockdown and over the past month have seen an increase in the number of Coronavirus infections among those on the streets and shelters.

In Copenhagen we have two forms of shelters. The first is where a citizen receives their own room with a key, temporary address, and pays a small fee to live there. The second is simply a nighttime shelter where the homeless come in late at night and leave early in the morning. The shelters have had significant problems with infections among both the residents and the staff. The increased number of infections has had a large impact for everyone especially when many of the rooms have shared bathrooms and kitchen. This has of course made it much more difficult for the homeless to stay isolated in their rooms.



Likewise, the soup-kitchens have also been affected by increased infections which has forced many to, at times, close temporarily leading to large consequences for users in these cold times. This is especially significant when these are some of the few places where the homeless and mentally vulnerable can get a warm meal and

chat.

On the “open drug scene” we have a supervised drug intake site called H17. This is a place where drug users can come and consume their substances (mainly cocaine and heroin) under conditions supervised by staff. The smoking rooms are empty since they cannot be open due to restrictions. This forces the smokers to gather outside under blankets or covered areas and smoke in close quarters. The injection rooms may only have 6 users at a time causing lines outside. Some users grow impatient and instead end up injecting out on the street. There have also been several closures when there have not been enough personnel for the center to stay open when workers must isolate before being tested or have tested positive with Coronavirus.

Copenhagen municipality had to act quickly to ensure there were enough isolation spots available to the many homeless that were infected. This was accomplished quickly and effectively at a closed nursing home. However, due to their misuse some have struggled to stay in isolation and returned to the streets where they end up in contact with others in order to purchase and consume substances.

It is a challenging group when the substances always come first. Therefore, there has been a fair amount of uncertainty as a social worker when we are not always aware of who may or may not have been infected. Additionally, it is often difficult to maintain social distancing measures when you must help with phone calls and other conversations in public spaces.



The banks are closed - What now?

The closure of in person services at all Copenhagen banks has led to additional challenges for many of those we serve since some does not have a credit card. To remedy this, we have established a “Corona bank” for the most socially vulnerable citizens. That is to say, the Copenhagen Municipality homelessness division has given our citizens their social benefit and afterwards called their banks and had their money transferred to the municipal account. This has required quite a lot of work but has been a large benefit to our citizens even though it has only been 3-4 times a month they have been able to receive money.

The homeless have not been considered in the vaccination plan

After the outbreak of infections among the homeless there has been a large amount of focus from the NGO’s, media, and the street lawyers, about vaccinations to the most socially disadvantaged group on the streets at the open drug scene. They have not been included in any of the plans on the part of the politicians.

The users in west Copenhagen are now at the front of the line and will be vaccinated in the next round in February. There has been a lot of debate as to how this should occur when many of our users do not have a form of identification, or are unable to be referred by a doctor, or even have difficulties with getting to the vaccinating places. Now the solution is that those of us who know the citizens of West Copenhagen or users of the open drug scene, should be able to go around the queue with the citizens and get them vaccinated. Afterwards H17 will make a vaccination card with a picture. It will be an enormously demanding task requiring cooperation of many partners to accomplish successfully.

We now look forward to the end of winter and for when vaccinations start to become effective so that we can once again be close together with our lovely citizens of Copenhagen.

This was a short report from the Copenhagen Municipality social worker.



Ghent update

The article below illustrates a positive effect of the lockdown: homeless people were taken from the streets and helped to put their lives back on track. This is the story of Pierre and Jacky.

"That job, I'm gonna find it!"

'I've been homeless for 8 months in Ghent. When my little chalet on the waterpark collapsed I lost everything. I could go nowhere and I don't like to bother other people. So, I landed out on the streets. I have swam in heavy waters but I can tell you, life is rough when you're out on the street. Sometimes I could find a place in the nightshelter, other nights I slept under the starry, but cold, sky.

To be alone wasn't the hardest, I like being on my own, but you have to stay alert and you cannot trust just any person. I tried to avoid people who were addicted to drugs or alcohol.

When the corona crisis started my doctor contacted me. It seems I'm a 'patient at risk' because of my heart surgery.

Thanks to the help of Marina from the Public Social Welfare Office, and Evita of CAW (workfield partner Ghent) I was given a new roof above my head and so I came to stay here in this care hotel 'Leeuwenhof'. First I got a temporary stay and now I have moved to a studio on the first floor. This is my own place, together with my dog Jacky, my new 'compagnon de route'. I really like it here. I have the feeling that I have everything I need. I can take care of myself, do my own cooking and 'the wax and the puddle'.

I'm also working now and that feels good, both mentally and physically. The pain in my legs that I used to have, seems to have disappeared. As a district worker working for the job centre I do some chores in the neighborhood. I am however still looking for a steady job. That job, I'm almost 100 percent sure that I'm gonna find it (laughs).

If there is one thing that I have learned it is to never give up. People like Marina and Evita can help you on your way but you have to be prepared to take some steps yourself. Giving up is never an option!

Photo: Ghent project team

Helsinki update 1/2

Urban SOS Metropolia project workers Leigh Anne Rauhala, Tiina Lehto-Lundén and Heli Määttänen wrote an article [Urban spaces in the time of Covid-19 \(pdf\)](#). In the article they give a social interactions perspective on the current Covid-19 pandemic, with a focus on social services in the urban context.



Helsinki update 2/2

Naapurituottajat had their event Kallioland in November 2020. Despite of covid situation, we were able to create an interesting and enjoyable atmosphere with visual art, music and culture. We had a restricted number of audience and the event was also livestreamed to Kalliola's YouTube channel. This short video gives you a glimpse of what the production was like – both behind and in front of the curtain! The music of this video is composed and played by Finnish latino band Mirkka & Madrugada, which was also performing in Kallioland. [You can watch the video in Naapurituottajat Facebook.](#)

Photo: Jaakko Miettunen



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