

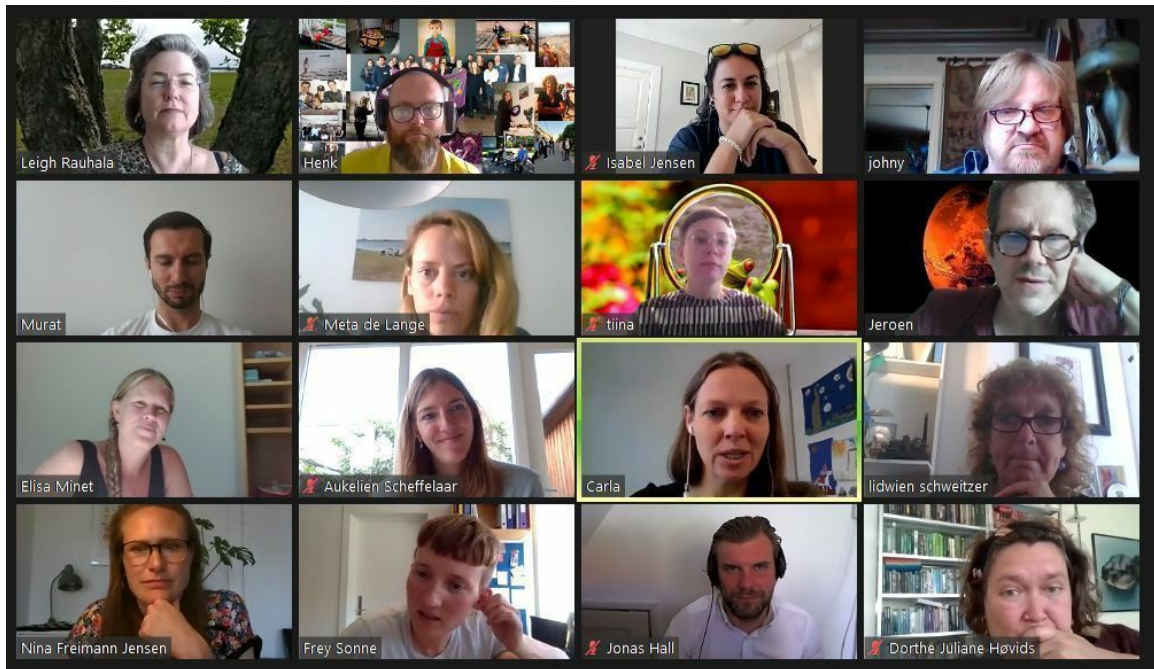


Newsletter 1/2020

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Greetings from Urban SOS

We all have had an interesting year because of the pandemic situation but although the physical encounterings have been in minimum, it does not mean that this project isn't going on! From this Newsletter you can see where we are and what has been happening around Urban SOS. This kind of Newsletter will be sent out twice a year to all of us who are attached to Urban SOS. This will be a channel to all of us to inform things related to the project. The second year of Urban SOS has officially started!



Key dates: Welcome to virtual TPM3 meeting 28 - 30 October!

Urban SOS coordinators came to the conclusion that it is not possible to host a real life meeting in the upcoming months due to the current status of the pandemic. This means both the planned meeting in Amsterdam (30 September - 2 October) and the planned meeting in Helsinki will not be taking place.

Instead, we will be hosting an online meeting on 28 - 30 October (the original date of the Helsinki meeting, as agreed upon during TPM1). The plan is to make it a meeting of 2 days, but please continue to block the three days until we are able to present a draft of the meeting agenda.

We are convinced that we will be able to meet in real life again somewhere during the project. Stay tuned for more information on the meeting and other Urban SOS info.

Photo: Tiina Lehto-Lundén



As face to face interactions, borders and businesses locked down in March we faced the dilemma of how to move forward in our data collections. We decided we would use the time to work on the more theoretical document underpinning output 1. At this point we are happy with the results in terms of sharing our ideas and process with other academic institutions and colleagues. However, this framework is still missing the practical examples from our many partners, which will make it more reader-friendly and relevant beyond academia.

As we gather more data this fall and winter, the framework text will change, and more empirical examples will be added. Over the next year, we will finalize the text and send it for consideration in a peer-reviewed journal. The text guides the structure and frameworks for the training programs for educators (output 2) and professionals in the field (output 3).

We look forward to sharing more information as we have it. For the Urban SOS partners, the latest version of the text is available at our Basecamp site. The text is the intellectual property of the Urban SOS project. Thus, you are all welcome to use bits and parts of it when presenting the project to others, in writing as well as in oral presentations. When using it in written products, please, use the following reference:

Rauhala, L., Høvids, D. J. & Lehto-Lundén, T. (2020). Urban-SOS: Notes on a Framework for Phronetic Analysis. Unpublished paper.

We have also created a two-page executive summary which is very concise about the project but without any heavy academic text. All project members are welcome to use the summary as well — it is available at our Basecamp.

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News on output 2: A train the educator program

During the lockdown we have worked on output 2 via virtual meetings. The goal of this output is to qualify educators to teach place-sensitivity and facilitate students' understanding of cities as social products rather than simply a 'context' or 'location' for social work.

During the spring, we have developed the rough structure of the training program, and we are now ready to start working on the content. Hopefully, we will be able to host a pilot of the program in Ghent in April 2021. Here, 16 educators from the four cities will participate. In brief, the content will be developed in accordance with the Global Standards for the Education and Training of the Social Work Profession adapted by IASSW. Moreover, the content will reinvigorate the historical roots of the social work profession, for example, through discussions of the work of key figures such as Jane Addams and Paolo Freire. The historical roots will be linked to newer theoretical discussions of the challenges and changes in current urban development.

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News on output 3: An online training program for professionals

As output 3 is dependent on the data from all four partner cities and most fieldwork has been paused during the covid-19 lockdown, it has been difficult to kick-start the work on this output. However, the Copenhagen team has



News on output 4: An online source learning platform

As output 4 is also dependent on the data from all four partner cities, we have focused our work on further clarifying possible content formats for the platform, including fine-tuning our work with gamification.

tried to prepare this fall and winter's work by creating a so-called treatment: A rough plan with information about the goal of the output; the options for its content and structure; and the expected use (and length) of the training program. Here are some of the initial considerations:

- Practitioners should be able to use the training program in two quite different ways: either as short cycle trainings focusing on independent urban social work themes (for example to be used at a staff meeting), or as longer trainings (e.g. to be used in continuing education programs).
- Practitioners should be able to get inspired by examples of the ways in which practitioners in other urban environments and organizations are dealing with familiar problems.
- To obtain transdisciplinary relevance, the training program must be designed to be relevant to social workers as well as people working in the periphery of social work (healthcare personnel, teachers, fundraisers etc.).

We have considered potential visual formats of the training program — and, thus, the format into which parts of the data from the four partner cities they will be converted. Short, illustrative and generic graphic novels dealing with urban themes and issues is one of the formats that we hope to explore further this fall and winter. The transnational working group of output 3 will start having regular virtual meetings later this fall; invitations for involved working group members will be sent out soon.

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As presented at TPM1 in Ghent (fall 2019) and at our virtual TPM in June 2020, a significant component of output 4 is our Urban SOS game — a printable, collaborative learning game, which takes the gamers through the four city cases while challenging their ability to deal with dilemmas, problems and solutions. The game will be supported by a variety of materials at the learning platform such as podcasts, short films, lectures, articles, graphic novel material (output 3) etc.

During the fall, a more detailed plan and timeline for developing these materials will be made and the transnational working group of output 4 will start having regular virtual meetings. Invitations for involved working group members will be sent out soon. The Danish firm **Play Circle** who developed the game concepts for our TPM in Ghent in 2019 has been chosen as external partner to develop our game. They will start joining meetings and visiting work field- and associated partners in 2021.

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Amsterdam update



In Amsterdam, we are continuing the work on the two cases: The professional in a Community Center ('De Boeg', Combiwel) and the professional in Mental Health Community care (Arkin). To get back on track after the recent Covid-19 issues and the summer break, a meeting was called between the three Amsterdam based UrbanSOS partners. The goal of the meeting was to look for the common ground in the two different cases.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a lot is going on in the professional field in Amsterdam. The corona crisis has made working on an informal and social foundation even more relevant than before, a development that is recognized by professionals of Arkin and Combiwel. One of the main challenges remains to involve the neighbourhood in the daily work.

The main scenario for both cases that was discussed during the meeting is founded on:

- National context (from welfare state to participation society)
- Paradigm (citizen power, self-organization and care close to home)
- Professional challenge (social worker as liaison officer and facilitator, focus on neighbourhood and collective)
- Urban challenges (the new 'we' as a challenge).

In the upcoming months, researchers and practitioners will join forces to further develop the Amsterdam case descriptions. Through a round of individual interviews, theoretical analysis and shared development sessions, we expect to be able to present a first draft of the thick description in January 2021.

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Copenhagen update

A letter from the Copenhagen fields — from Anja Laigaard, Nina Freimann Jensen & Dorthe Høvids, University College Copenhagen.

Doing fieldwork, collecting data, carrying out qualitative research — it sounds like something that is best done after a comprehensive enquiry into a well-defined theme. Or maybe not always? What if you are just thrown into it — or throw yourself into it? Anja Laigaard, lecturer at University College Copenhagen and social worker is new in the project. Anja's journey into Urban SOS began less than a month ago when she joined our local team. She describes her experience like this:

“It has been like entering chaos: with almost no idea about the project you're suddenly in the field meeting partners and their clients — tagging along or picking up where my colleagues left in July. At the same time this way of entering Urban SOS has been extremely helpful in terms of grasping the project and understanding, and imagining, the outputs. I've been able to encounter the issues that the project is dealing with in real life. Being present and following the partners' work is an awesome experience, and I'm grateful for their willingness to make themselves and their work available to us. It feels a bit like being in the backseat of a car and then suddenly — in a specific situation, or for a moment — you're sitting in the front seat. And from the front seat, I'm experiencing my own city from the perspective of social workers, homeless people, drug users, migrants, or lonely people. Having this multifaceted empirical backdrop allows me to link our observations, conversations and the stories we collect to the theoretical foundation of the project.”

Fieldwork and data collection

In Copenhagen, we are 3 researchers / educators (Nina, Anja and Dorthe) working with data collection. We have done fieldwork on-and-off since February, completely disrupted by the lock down from mid-March to end-June, but luckily, we were able to resume some of our fieldwork in June and July. This fall we are working intensely to be able to finish by January 2021. Our fields are equivalent to the 3 participating social work organizations: our work field partner Kofoeds School [a settlement style organization] and our associated partners The Men's Home [shelter, counselling, healthcare, drug intake facilities and more] and The Homeless Unit, Municipality of Copenhagen [case work, counselling and outreach].

All three of us are present in all three fields; taking turns or joining each other to participate in or observe our partners' work, depending on the context — of course, due to our other tasks such as teaching, supervising and coordination, we are not present all the time; in this sense, our fieldwork is not ideal in a classical anthropological sense. But each quarter we plan and find days or weeks where we can be present in the field. Luckily, all our amazing partners have been extremely willing to make their work available to us — and while we started out by having just a few contact persons in each organization, many employees in each organization are now involved; more or less used to having the 3 of us roaming around observing, participating and asking questions.

Outcome of fieldwork

What we have done so far is anthropologically inspired work: observing, participating and talking to people; often without a predefined focus. After a while, patterns, dilemmas, challenges and stories related to the themes of Urban SOS have become clearer and clearer — within and across the three fields. In the beginning it was sometimes difficult to pinpoint the direct relevance of the activities we participated in to Urban SOS (especially to all the fancy words and theories). But what we learned over time is that almost everything our partners do is somehow relatable to Urban SOS: When we participate in cooking classes and shared meals at Kofoeds School, conversations develop around themes such as food prices, sustainability, commonality, loneliness, gentrification, poverty, housing, access to social infrastructure etc.

When we observe the work of the podiatrist at the Men's Home, it becomes clear how painful it is to be homeless in a city where many walk for 12 hours or more per day to maintain a living or find a quiet safe place to rest — often dealing with diseases like diabetes or cold sores, which makes walking extremely painful. And when we join an outreach worker from The Homeless Unit on his morning round to check on Roma men sheltering in the foot of a skater ramp, the very visible effects of gentrification, inter-European migration patterns and poor social policies become painfully clear.

Plans for this winter and spring 2021

During this winter and the spring of 2021, we are facing our next step: the raw data (fieldwork, notes, drawings, conversations and a few interviews) must be transferred into our joint writing of 'the Copenhagen case; made ready to share with all of you. During this process, our partners will be involved in discussing our findings. Later, the existing material will be supplemented by follow-up interviews, collection of soundscapes, stories and testimonies — all materials that can be used for podcasts, articles and other materials to put on the online learning platform. We are looking so much forward to sharing all the interesting stories, dilemmas, challenges and perspectives with all of you — and, of course, just as much to hear yours!



Ghent update: Bachelor project social work in the city after corona

In the spring of 2020 the world has been confronted with the Corona pandemic, with a severe lockdown in most of the countries as a result. The effects and consequences of this pandemic are and will be huge and it will take time and efforts to recover from this trauma.

Social work will be confronted with people in need on a large and new scale, new needs and problems will surface and new ethical questions and challenges will rise. This will be the case in all of the countries.

The idea is that students from different countries of the Urban SOS partnership will work on the same (bachelor) project, and study these challenges for social work during and after the Corona pandemic. The international bachelor project could, in this way, be considered as a spin-off of the Urban SOS Erasmus project, using some of the methods and insights of the program and using some of the contacts.

Photo: Pixabay

Ghent update: Jordy-case - the local government joins in

In Ghent CAW (centre of general wellbeing) , the main Belgian partner in the project, is working out a new approach toward young adults who have left the care-institutions at the age of eighteen. We find that there is not a good match and link with adult care, since these young adults want to be independant and don't fit in.

Unfortunately the lack of care has strong negative effects on these 'independant' young adults and Jordy, a young boy who died alone in his tent, has become the symbol of the problem. The Urban SOS project is working on this case and we are happy to inform you that the local gouvernement recognizes this specific problem and is joining the task-force to deal with the challenge to find a suitable approach towards this specific target-group.

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Helsinki update

Team Finland has met regularly remotely in spring and in autumn. There has been some changes in the personnel among our partners. We are welcoming all new people part of the Urban SOS family.

Data collection linked to Output 1 is still in progress because of the lock down of the society in spring. In Metropolia (UAS) we are recruiting teachers to take part of the Output 2 pilot and we are also writing an article that is linking Urban SOS to covid-19 (working title: Urban spaces in the time of covid-19: analysis of values, lived experience and power). The publication should be by the end of this year.

Photo: Markku Lempinen



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