

# THE NEWS LETTER

Issue 2 / june 2019

KA2 Strategic partnership  
Based on analyses of a research and evaluation conducted during a KA1 Erasmus project, we came to the conclusion that within all the countries that were involved LONELINESS is a shared common issue, which we all think is difficult to deal with due to various objective reasons.

Loneliness is a bigger problem than simply an emotional experience. Research shows that loneliness and social isolation are harmful to our health.



RESTORING  
DREAMS

TO TACKLE  
LONELINESS

To improve our work and methodology connected to this topic, we decided to develop a KA2 Strategic partnership, which would give us the opportunity to work together on innovative methods and tools to educate our adult learners (social workers) with competences on how to overcome loneliness on the emotional and social level. Together we would like to develop new training modules and tools to tackle the issue of loneliness together with our European partners (Macedonia, Czech, Spain, Hungary, France and Belgium)

Within this newsletter we hope to inform you about our developments during our two year project.

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union





# BELGIUM

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Our organization, the Housing first Belgium Lab, is simple and small. But we have a lot of friends and partners with who we work together.

Housing first Belgium Lab

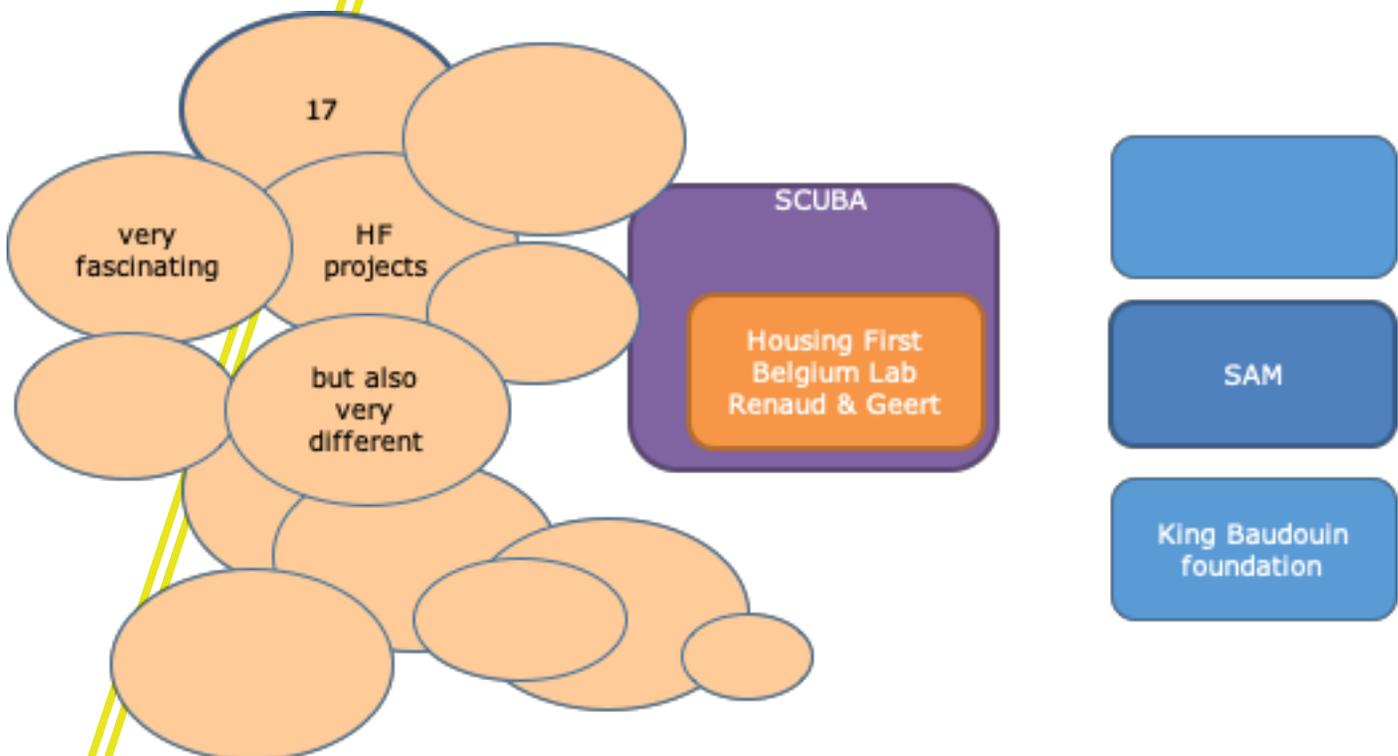
- Renaud De Backer : French speaking coordinator
- Geert De Bolle Duth speaking coordinator

We are integrated in a larger network of services whom work on a national (federal) scale, the SCUBA team (it has nothing to do with underwater adventures, but all with the fight against poverty) Within this network we have a lot of opportunities and contact to proclaim the good message of Housing First.

In Belgium we have on this moment 17 different Housing First Projects, from very small and young project with only one tenant, to good working, big organizations. (see also our little story about the 5 years of Housing First in Brussels) Each of these projects are on their own, and have their own specification. We tries to keep contact, give advice, bring people together, organize formation and intervision...

Next to the HF projects we work in close range with organisations that are also supporting the Housing First case, like the SAM and the King Baudouin foundation.

If we should make a picture of it, it would become something like this:



# FIRST TRAINING MODULE

We have several modules and selftest that we can use to make people aware of their problem with loneliness. <http://www.doorbreekeenzaamheid.be/eenzaamheid.php> or <http://www.oogvooreenzaamheid.be/>

One particular story from Kortrijk may trigger others. It's an organization "De Unie der Zorgelozen" (The union without worries) who has an social artistic company that started as a group of enthusiast people who wanted to perform, to tell true stories, to play. "Break free, reach out, reconnect, tell your story" is the baseline of the group.

What started as a theater company soon grow to a larger group of people who comes together to share stories, be creative, make healthy food and eat together. There are activities in the center, but also they go out to visit other groups. Since a couple of years there's the very popular "Allez chantez" evenings (Come, let's sing) where everybody is invited to sing some old-time favorites in Dutch and other languages. The Union wants especially help the poor people, but keeps in mind that everybody is welcome. With or without money, with or without the right papers, Dutch or Arab speaking...



We see that eating together, singing together helps people who comes for the first time overcome the threshold. Once they have come to one of those evenings, they come again. Every Thursday afternoon we are open for everybody. Some like to talk, other just come over to drink a coffee or to ask something. No problem, all are welcome."

[More info : http://www.uniederzorgelozen.be/](http://www.uniederzorgelozen.be/)



## HOW IS THE PROJECT GOING?

A little word from Belgium about loneliness and our Housing First partners. In Belgium loneliness is given a lot of attention the latest months. More and more people become aware of the problem and that loneliness, like homelessness, makes people sick.

Often loneliness is seen as an individual problem. Someone should speak more to his neighbors. He should come out of his home more often...

But loneliness is often not seen, not by others, but also not by the person himself. People don't feel well, get depressed, ... before they can admit to themselves and to others that they are lonely. It's also still a bit of a stigma. Someone who feels lonely is someone without friends... There should be something wrong with him...

Loneliness is a big issue, but people don't like to talk about it. Not only our housing first clients, but also other vulnerable groups have often problems to interact with the problem of loneliness. Therefore we are glad to join this European program and are eager to learn how other countries deal with it. One of the most remarkable things we found is the link between poverty and loneliness. "Make an end to poverty and people become happier. Too much money don't make us happy, too little surely makes us worry and makes us unhappy". Those people who live in poverty have a lot of troubles and can't join society. They stay in their houses, can't afford to go out. It's a challenging issue to find solutions to loneliness. How can we help our people to be stronger? How can we help to connect new inhabitants of our housing first project with the neighborhood?

Here you find a link towards a page of one of the big health insurance companies. <http://www.doorbreekeenzaamheid.be/eenzaamheid.php> (in Dutch)

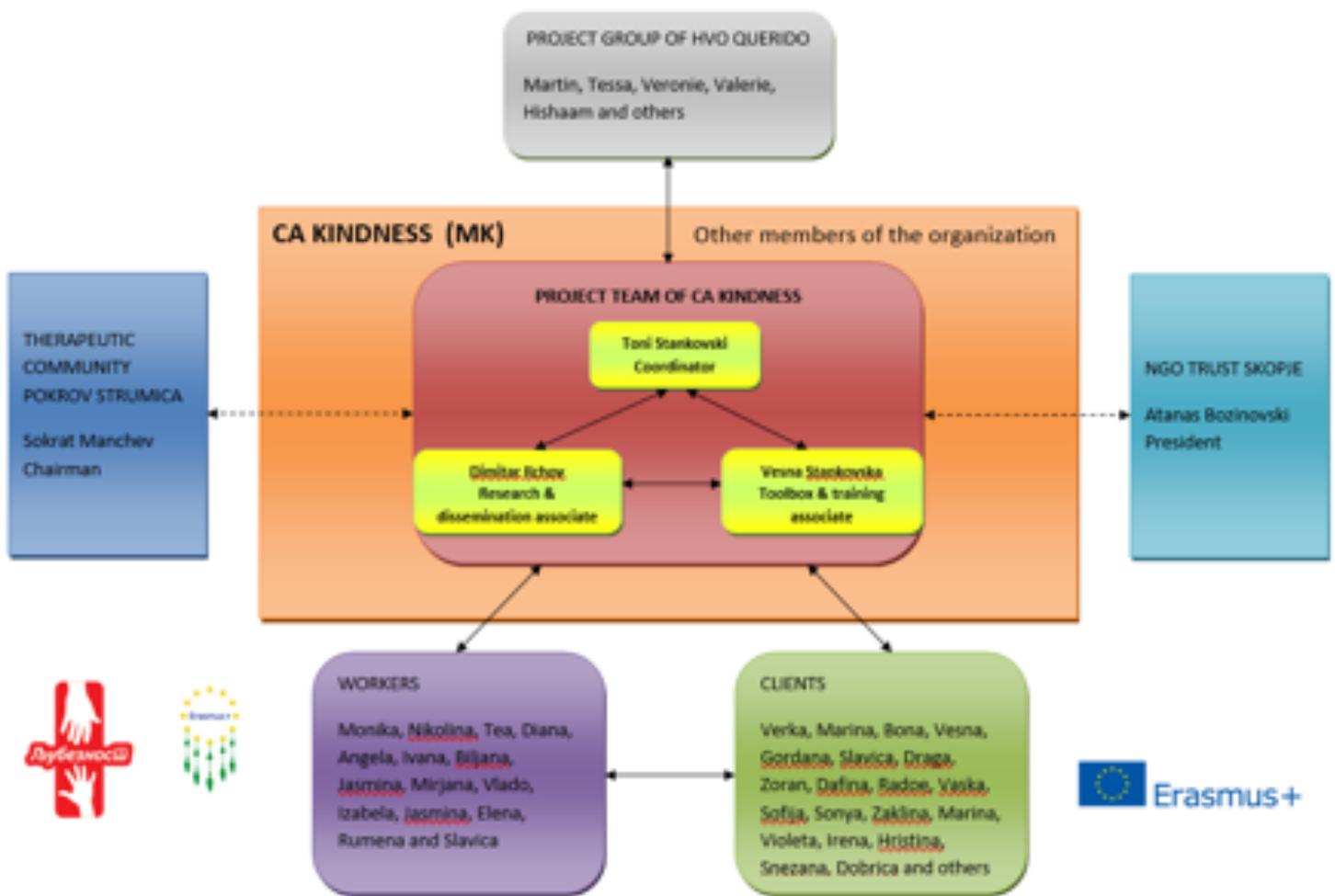
And this one has a training module : <http://www.oogvooreenzaamheid.be/>

We have already asked our partners (the 17 HF projects) who want to share their findings about loneliness. On this moment we have already 15 social workers and 26 tenants who are interested in the research. We are now waiting for the questions to start.

# MACEDONIA

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Organizational chart of CA Kindness' project team "Restoring dreams to tackle loneliness"



## FIRST TRAINING MODULE PART 3.1 FAMILY RELATIONS

One of the reasons for loneliness is dysfunctional family relationships. Often the members of one family system have problem to find the index person or the one who is guilty for the problem inside the family system during a crisis in life. The appearance of dysfunctionality or certain psychosomatic is based on the relationships between the members of the family. Because of this we think that it is necessary to help the members of the family to understand that during the crisis in life or some other problem they shouldn't look for guilt in the index person i.e. the guilty person in the family, instead they should dedicate themselves into improvement, functionality, flexibility and stability of the mutual relationships. It is one of the tools we use in order to understand the functionality and dysfunctionality in the relationships in a transparent and simple way.

The concept system is used to clarify that it's a group of people who react and function between each other as members of a system. Neither the people, nor the problems exist in vacuum. On the contrary, they are both intertwined with the wider systems of social environment out of which the family is the most fundamental. The family is the primary and in the most cases the strongest system in which one person belongs. The physical, social and emotional functions of the family members are deeply connected, according to which the changes in one part of the system echo in its other parts. Furthermore, the family interactions and relations have tendency to be highly reciprocal, repetitive and in the form of a sample. Excess samples in the Genogram gives us the opportunity to build tentative predictions.

Description of the tool:

The Genogram is one of the most original techniques in family therapy that has wide application regarding family diagnostics in research and education. It is a format for drawing a family tree which notes the data for the family members and their relations through at least three generations. The Genogram is:

- Describing the information about the family graphically in such a way that it allows for fast gestalt of complex family patterns and is a rich source of hypothesis.
- Showing how the clinical problem can be linked to the family context.
- This makes the evolution of both the problem and the context through time.

In short, the genogram provides a clear insight into the structure, dynamics and history of the family system over several generations, in a vertical and horizontal section.



## HOW IS THE PROJECT GOING?

The implementation of the project on a national level is so far going according to the plan and without any major setbacks. Until now, we have provided 14 workers and we are in search of another 6 to achieve the required number of 20. We have been looking for workers among the members and the volunteers of CA Kindness, the friends of the members and the volunteers and from our partner organizations. As for the clients, we already managed to provide the required quota of 40 people. Finding clients was fairly easy and straightforward because the workers themselves introduced us to potential clients, due to each of the workers knowing a few people who are experiencing loneliness. If some of them fail to pass the test with the loneliness scale and therefore do not qualify as clients, our association can at any time acquire additional clients as a replacement from the people in our user database who we constantly visit and help. In this period, we are initiating direct contacts with the clients and introducing the workers and clients with each other and with the details of the project. The members of our team coordinate among themselves all the time and hold regular meetings to discuss different issues and to agree on the current activities and other obligations arising from our participation in the common project.

Regarding the dissemination, the primary channel of communication of information is the facebook page “Osamenost / Loneliness”, while direct contacts with third parties and “word of mouth” communication come as secondary. In addition, we intend to print a limited edition of the monthly newsletter and to pass on some of it to our partners, while the rest will be placed on a prominent place in our offices where every visitor can freely take a sample for himself.

The Osamenost / Loneliness page was created on February 21st, on Facebook, the most popular social network, it has 514 likes so far, and its posts have a maximum reach of up to 30,000 people.

Here is a link to the page: <https://www.facebook.com/Spravu-vanjeSoOsamenost/>.

So far there have been 22 posts on the page, with the most popular post having 64 shares and 22 likes. A link to the facebook page of the project “Restoring dreams to tackle loneliness” has been posted on our page. Every post and picture on the page is with a topic related to loneliness or to our project.

So far, we did not write our own newsletter, but we plan to do so in the near future and we will publish it on The Osamenost / Loneliness facebook page along with the Macedonian translation of the international newsletter for the project.

# SPAIN

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

As you know, our program has more than 50 funding sources and those could be partners. We also coordinate interventions with NGOs and social services in 20 Spanish municipalities. We also collaborate with international partners

## FIRST TRAINING MODULE 1 AWARENESS / TRANSFORMING NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE

Fleeing from loneliness has become almost a social mandate in our societies. This flight starts from the fear that we have to feel alone and this fear causes us to establish addiction, dependency or toxicity.

It is not selfish to seek relationships that provide us, but for this it is necessary to know what it is that gives us, since it is something personal and unique.

Therefore, we can take advantage of the state of solitude to know ourselves more, to know what our beliefs, our values, virtues and defects are. In this way, we will learn to live better with ourselves and, in addition, we will know how to distinguish what kind of relationships are those that add us, contribute us and benefit us.

Tools: Create your personal SWOT Internal analysis: Weaknesses and Strengths. External Analysis: Threats and Opportunities.



## HOW IS THE PROJECT GOING?

We are organizing a technical conference for our workers and clients in which we will hold a workshop on Soledad to bring the knowledge of Erasmus to the people who participate in the workshop.

Next Wednesday we have a meeting with Plena Inclusión, which is an organization that represents many organizations that work with people with intellectual disabilities in Spain and will develop a project on loneliness.

In case you are interested in the newsletter, we are sending you a summary of the presentation made by Fernando Vidal, the President of the Board of Rais until this year, at the International Forum of Solitude held in Madrid in November 2018.

Fernando Vidal Fernández.

Director of the University Institute of the Family. Comillas Pontifical University.  
“Humanist Perspective”.

In this stage in which we live, explained Vidal, “loneliness is systemic. Today we are witnessing a systemic production of solitudes, of emptying, for which it is not necessary to be isolated to be alone “.

In this time of modernity, said the speaker, “we live what Bauman calls ‘the great disengagement’: During the last 30 years the community fabric has frayed. Nowadays there are more and more possibilities of relationship thanks to social networks but the community is losing space. Maximum sociability is possible - through new tools, new technologies - and yet our society does not guarantee the minimum community “.

Vidal highlighted 10 issues, which ethically settle the question of loneliness:

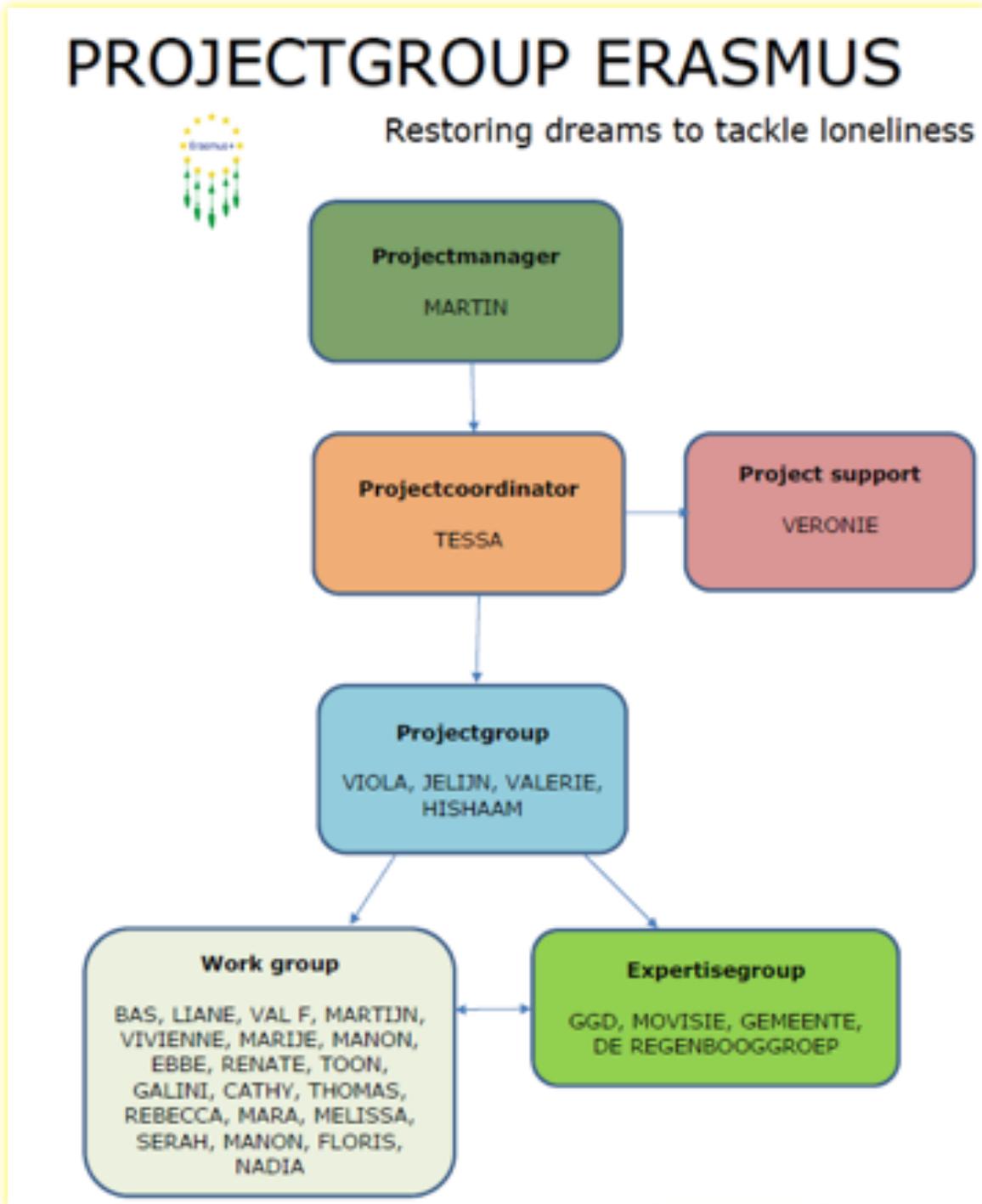
- Idea of reconciliation: every time we feel more guilty of many things and yet there are fewer and fewer processes of forgiveness. Sometimes unwanted loneliness occurs because of conflicts for which we do not have those processes of forgiveness.
- Participation: we need to generate more social participation.
- Gratitude: we live in a society in which gratitude is not a public value. Loneliness also occurs because we are not happy with each other.
- Memory: that allows us to forget others.
- The human scale: in a world of large markets and media, the person is getting smaller and smaller. We must establish spaces of human scale.
- Urban segregation: we have lived for a few decades, and still live, in which, on the one hand, the gentrification and on the other, more and more closed spaces are established on the outskirts of cities.

This segregation means that we do not live with varied people, but we look for people like us to live and this ends up creating a divided society.

- Public conversation: our societies have lost the ability to talk. A society without conversation is a society that leaves you speechless, and if it leaves you speechless, it is easy to leave you alone.
- Need to reach another type of perspective for social intervention, which does not generate dependencies, but that is able to strengthen the subject, to put it in the middle and give the public resources to generate the type of community that makes the person own their own process.

# THE NETHERLANDS

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## FIRST TRAININGMODULE: PART 4.2 POSITIVE HEALTH

“Positive health” is introduced in 2014 by Machteld Huber. Core of this is model is that health is more than just a physical and mental state of being, it is a dynamic “ability to adapt and to manage own direction for the physical, emotional and social challenges in life”. The concept of positive health challenges professionals to look at health from a broader perspective. With this model you look at six different dimensions cast in a spiderweb. One can give oneself a figure on every dimension, fill it out in the spider web and connect it with each. The completed spider web can be a starting point of a conversation with a professional. For this project we translated this model to our work to use with our clients.



### GOALS:

- \*Acquainted with the six dimensions of positive health
- \*Being aware of your own positive health
- \*Being aware of the close mutual coherence between the different dimensions
- \*Reflect on your own strength and wishes to change

### RESULTS:

- \*Client is aware of their own positive health

## HOW IS THE PROJECT GOING?

In the beginning of may we had our first kick-off training about loneliness! On the university of Amsterdam they organised a conference “Ending homelessness” for social workers, peer workers, researchers, policy workers, students and teachers (+/- 300 people) where we gave a workshop about this topic connected to homeless people. It was a great experience to put our first gained knowledge into practise!

A facebook-, linkedin- and twitterpage has been created, where we share our knowledge and experiences and keep everyone up to date. Together with our project team we are working on the different modules and collect a lot of information. We found 20 social workers who want to be part of the project and the next step is to find clients.

In the middle of July we will organise our first meeting where we mix the social workers with the clients. The main goal of this first meeting is to introduce our clients with this topic and to see if they can give their knowledge to the project as well. We want the clients and social workers to be on the same level and they will both be participants of this meeting. As a start, we will match the social worker and the client and discuss their own social fears.



More updates on the project you will find in our next newsletter!

# HUNGARY

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

project coordinator: Anna Sipos  
project support: Boróka Fehér  
project group: Edina Farkas, Anna Sipos  
expert: Hunor Makkai

work group (for the research):

1. Tamás Bakosi
2. Zsolt Pankotai
3. Ágnes Kornélia Szőke
4. Ágnes Balogh
5. Mónika Bálint
6. Éva Kis-Kovács
7. Krisztina Nagy
8. Katalin Ubrovskyné Mozsik
9. Szilvia Fabók
10. Eszter Juhász

Budapesti Módszertani  
Szociális Központ  
és Intézményei



Usually we work together with several partners in the homeless services, mostly NGOs, like: Habitat Hungary, Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat, Baptista Szeretetszolgálat, RÉS Alapítvány, Twist Olivér Alapítvány, Diótörés Alapítvány. We also work together with institutions with rehabilitation in their profile, like: Nyíró Gyula Kórház, Ébredések Alapítvány, Szigony Alapítvány. We can easily disseminate the results of the loneliness project there.

## FIRST TRAINING MODULE

This information will follow soon

## HOW IS THE PROJECT GOING?

We found a new partner, Edina Farkas. We started to work together on the project modul yesterday, I will send you one module next week. We are brainstorming right now about the training module. Hopefully I can send you some results next week.

We have 10 social workers for the research - I plan to recruit more as soon as the questionnaire is ready. During the recruiting process I presented the project in three of our shelters. I prepared a short article for our facebook, it will be published soon.

<https://www.facebook.com/BMSZKI/photos/a.359053244176938/2224318737650370/?type=3&theater>

# FRANCE

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

This is our current organisation, that can be modified.

Project coordinator: Angela Prati

Project group: Linda Bouter, Mathilde Ferrier

Work group : Sylvaine, Emilie, Philippe

External organisations: ABEJ, Un chez soi d 'abord Lille, Un chez soi d 'abord Toulouse, Un chez soi d 'abord Paris, Un chez soi d 'abord Dijon, DIHAL (Délégation Interministérielle à l'Hébergement et à l'Accès au Logement ).

## FIRST TRAINING MODULE

\* One of the 3 modules that will form the training module is aiming to gather informations, research articles on the topic : « improve the contacts network and the social position (family, resourceful relationship, friendship) ».

One related tool we use is the clients reunion. This reunion place once a month in a community place (an associative cafe, the users' house...) and reunite clients and professionals. The clients can share their support experience of the Housing First. It's also a moment to discuss, share and meet people. It also allows the clients to organise moments together, as news meetings, holidays projects, well-being moments (sport, relaxation, cinema, spa...).

During the last clients reunion in Lille on the 26th of April 2019, we presented the ERASMUS + project and received a very positive welcoming from the clients as an expected proposition. Several clients accepted to participate ! Just have a look to the last picture : Mathilde Ferrier is explaining the ERASMUS + project to the Housing First users in Lille, France.



## HOW IS THE PROJECT GOING?

Our french team is still in construction, with the support from the association Aurore

We planned a meeting in July 2019 with the French World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Mental Health (WHOCC Lille, France) to find research support

We've been working on disseminating informations and recruiting social workers who want to involve. So first we've been creating our communication tools : google drive, gmail and facebook and fill them in with news and research articles linked with the topic of loneliness. Second we've sent a letter to each French Housing First team to explain the way that we propose them to participate by focusing on 2 clients and follow the work until the training module. Until now, 7 french social workers have already express their interest to be part of the project. We are confident to find 13 social workers more for september 2019.

# CZECH REPUBLIC

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Coordinator : Karel A. Novák  
Trainingmodules / toolbox : Josefina Schneiderová  
Research : Marek Mikulec  
Logistics / finances : Františka Dvorská

Very important person is of course who is giving us logistic and administrative support.

We are trying to utilize existing, bit fragmented, our members' know-how for creating particular tools. In this process the project team closely cooperate with concrete member organization which is "owner" of the idea. That means project group is made up of named persons responsible for the coordination and coauthors of the particular tools.

Work group will be recruited from the member organizations social workers.



# FIRST TRAINING MODULE / RESTORING DREAMS

This tool will be very pretty complex and we suppose the final version will be done in August, so there is the first draft.

Restart project

Goals

- The goal is to help clients to pick up and old hobbies of their which they've dropped during the time they spent on a streets and help the clients to integrate them back to their life.
- Level up clients ability to structure their free time
- help client to reflect the meaning of a free time as a space for development new abilities, connecting with a new community and building up the feeling of solidarity with a society by raising self-esteem and supporting clients strengths.

Another Possible benefits

- Integration into community
- increased self-confidence
- meaningful way of spending free time
- improvement of client x social worker relationship

Tools used to implement restart into social work

- a workshop for a social workers focused on usefulness of working with the free time topic, recognizing that client is struggling with the topic, practical examples and tips on leading and interview about the topic of a free time

Tools used when working with client

- Interviews focused on finding clients hobbies from the past
- leading an interviews with clients using the methods of a small talk, searching for clients resources and a preferred future
- giving client the support he needs for reestablishing those hobbies.
- When clients finds out a goal he would like to work on we support him on achieving it by using a small steps to success.

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# HOW IS THE PROJECT GOING?

Several social service providers and municipal social workers declare the will to participate in the project activities, but nowadays it is little bit abstract for them so we are working on the tools and would be grateful to have some from other countries to have something which could be shown like a potential benefit useful for their clients.

Beside the presentation in workshops and conferences we published the information in Platform newsletter. The wider dissemination we plan in stage when some real tools or research results will be done.

The greatness of the small things – het verhaal van Dafina, een vrijwilliger uit Macedonie)

When you look through the years of your life, you realize that each year is a pearl even the most painful one, because everyone wants to participate in the happiness, but wants just to observe in the sadness.... And that's when you realize that everything is grey and transparent, it is given to you just for a second and than its taken away from you, because the tax for happiness is too high... Sometimes the ones you love the most are those who burn you to the ground, and the ones who you don't know are those who pick you up from the ashes.

And here begins the story of our friend Dafinka who faces all kinds of challenges, ups and downs in her life, and passes through the strange labyrinths of life. When she was three years old her mother died. Her entire childhood is filled with painful memories and indescribable pain. Her life becomes even harder because of the fact that she is left alone with her three brothers, one sister and her alcoholic father. Their family house becomes the house of horror. Often times they were physically and mentally abused by their drunk father. Her saddest memory from the childhood is when she remembers how the kids from her village were waiting for the ringing of the church bell, because the church bell only rang on funerals and weddings. So, sad and hungry they went on the cemetery so someone can feel sorry for them and give them food. When she was 16 she came in Skopje to educate her self. Enchanted by this big city, young and naïve she fell in love with the man who made her life even bitter...But when she was 17 she decided to marry him. And then all her big dreams, plans and love turned to ashes. She once again survived the replay of her childhood. Her spouse presented a cloned version of her father, her life forced her to go through the same nightmare over again, her biggest love became a tough alcoholic.

And then suddenly a light beam appeared throughout her dark tunnel of unhappiness. One day her husband had beaten her to unrecognizability, but luckily her brother appeared on her door who at that moment helped her and took her from that dark house, she only took her child with her and a few pieces of clothing. But her happiness didn't last for long, because during the divorce the the court gave her child to her husband. Her life lost its mean-



ing again. But than it suddenly turned another page. She met Bogatin, her future husband. her best friend, eternal support, reason for happiness and enormous joy. She married him after five months of dating and soon after they got a child. With Bogatin she had the best years of her life, and then suddenly her life started becoming meaningful, the gray canvas of her live becomes more and more colorful. They build together wonderful memories, they went together on different trips around the world, and they never give up from one another through the ups and downs in their lives. Even in that practicular moment when she was diagnosed with cervical cancer and she had to go trough all those , painfull operations and therapies, in order to eventually lose her voice.The only support, understanding and unconditional love she had received was from her spouse Bogatin who was by her side until the very end. Just like that famous sentence we very often hear ...Till death do us part..



But death did part them after 43 years of marriage ....two bodies-one soul. After this tragic event her existence lost its meaning. She started sinking in despair, hopelessness and loneliness, she was left alone with her pain. The only comfort she felt was on the cemetery on her husbands grave. She continues surviving through her life of loneliness thanks to the antidepres-sants.

She suddenly met one “Kidness” volunteer and she decided to participate in “Real acts of kindness” activities. So she decides to participate in those activities herself. She begins to participate regularly in Saturday meal sharing and also joins the faculty of adults „ Third Age “ ,she also takes part in the preparation and distribution of food for homeless people during the week, various recreational activities such as chess games, culinary skills etc.Thanks to her dedication and activities she part took, her antidepres-sant therapy gradually started to reduce,.. She regularly goes on trips with her peers, enjoys socializing and gradually her life gets a different meaning that proves that there is no age limit for accomplishing her own potentials, but the wish, the motives and the mechanisms of man overcome all boundaries. The selfless sharing of the unwavering hope of achieving the desires and faith in people and in ourselves always have a positive outcome.

And that’s when we realize that in the happiness you have to be the happiest, in the sadness you have to be sad, but also to be happy and calm in the mean time and maybe sometimes even angry and desperate ... because after all the end doesn’t exist because the point changes the beginning after the end...and you learn.. you learn same lesson on other way..you learn endlessly...





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