Training social workers to address the problem of indoor air pollution: lessons from experience

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Congrès européen “La santé environnementale et les vulnérabilités sociales”
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Espace Environnement

- Non profit organisation
- Multisectoral background and expertise
- Promoting sustainable development, improvement of the living environment, citizens' participation, responsible citizenship
- Active in the field of land- and town planning, heritage, mobility, green spaces, waste prevention, prevention of indoor pollutions
- Working methods: research, dialogue, participation, partnership, information and advice

Located in Charleroi, Walloon Region, Belgium

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Objective of the project (since 2001)

Contributing to the prevention and to the remediation of health problems linked to indoor pollution

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Our methodology: bringing ideas back from the field giving concerted food for thought and develop concrete actions

Questions/concerns/experience

Activities

Creation of tools: information leaflets...

Healthcare professionals

Scientific community

Public authorities

Seminars, conferences, working groups

Documentation +

Social workers

Experts meetings

Building professionals

Animations

Occupants

Answers

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Discussions with underprivileged people (« Écoles de consommateurs », local public social centres)

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Concerns of underprivileged groups

- Humidity - mold
- House maintenance
- Heating processes
- Air renewal
- Owner/tenant relationships
- Lack of financial and technical means to improve housing

Concerns in link with lifestyle of occupants
(Air renewal, house maintenance, heating processes…)

Concerns in relation to the quality of housing
(Humidity, mold, insulation…)

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2007 : creation of a pilot training scheme over indoor pollution dedicated to home social workers

**Why ?**
- Spreading the information to a wider public
- Using local actors

**For whom ?**
- Target public: home social services, home care services...
2007: creation of a pilot training scheme over indoor pollution dedicated to home social workers

Objectives of the training?

◆ Discovering indoor pollutants and their risks for the health

◆ Giving advice in the field of prevention and/or remediation in order to:
  
  ➢ help social workers and nurses to relay them to the underprivileged people they are looking after;

  ➢ hope that social workers and nurses will also put them into practice in their own everyday life.
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**2007 : creation of a pilot training scheme over indoor pollution dedicated to home social workers**

**Partners**

| Espace Environnement | • Project coordination  
|                      | • Meeting with social workers  
|                      | • Scientific expertise  
|                      | • Creation of power point presentation for training  
|                      | • Coproduction of the trainer guidance handbook  
|                      | • Support in the assessment of the project  
| SAM I - CRIPI        | • Scientific expertise  
|                      | • Support in the initial creation of the training  
|                      | • Coproduction of the trainer guidance handbook  
| CERES                | • Methodological support  
|                      | • Support in the creation of PPT presentation  
|                      | • Writing of the trainer guidance handbook  
|                      | • Assessment of the project  

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A power point presentation

A trainer guidance handbook

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5 pilot trainings

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tr>
<td>Liège</td>
<td>CPAS (Service maintien à domicile)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charleroi</td>
<td>CPAS (Centre de Coordination des Services d’aide et de soins à domicile)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namur</td>
<td>CSD (centrales de Services à domicile)</td>
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• Evaluation by the CERES

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Feedback from experience

◆ Target public met during the trainings

- Home social workers (municipal social centres)
- Energy facilitators (« Tuteurs Energie ») (municipal social centres)
- Staff in direct link with parents (ONE - Public structure active in the field of early childhood)
- Union delegates (BRISE - Network gathering several unions for environmental matters)
Feedback from experience

◆ From a professional point of view

- Participants considered that the topics discussed and the training scheme were very interesting to interesting
- Main concerns are about humidity and air renewal
- All participants think that the advice and information given can improve the everyday life of the underprivileged people they are looking after (a little to a lot)
- All participants have been able to put into practice the advice received during the training session
- More than 2/3 of those who received the trainer's guidance handbook use it often in their professional life (in order to find relevant information)
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Feedback from experience

◆ From a professional point of view

- Unfortunately, the majority of them was unable or unwilling to become trainers themselves.

Why?
- due to a lack of time to be dedicated to the preparation of such a training process (fully understanding the topics discussed, etc)
- sometimes the professional context does not allow it.
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Feedback from experience

◆ Two matters of interest emerge from the experience of participants :

➢ The basic concerns of underprivileged people are not indoor air pollution, even if they acknowledge that a better indoor comfort could be an added-value in their everyday life.

➢ Behavior change dynamics are very difficult to set up. Finding the right control lever is crucial. Why opting for a new less polluting behavior when the current one seems to give complete satisfaction ?
Conclusions

- The field actors are very aware as regards indoor pollution concerns.
- They can be considered as relevant relays able to disseminate information to underinformed or unconcerned people at first.
- Means are needed to allow the right initial training of social workers as well as its continuous update.

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Our awareness-raising tools

- Information leaflets
  ![Image of information leaflets](image1.png)
- Scale model of polluted house
  ![Image of scale model](image2.png)
- A blog: [http://blog.sante-habitat.be/](http://blog.sante-habitat.be/)
- A website: [www.sante-habitat.be](http://www.sante-habitat.be)

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Thanks for your attention!

Fell free to contact us directly:

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