



European Action Booklet

European Action Coalition
for the Right to Housing and to the City

European Action Booklet

Preface

In the European Action Coalition for the Right to Housing and to the City we come together from all over Europe with a backpack full of ideas and experiences. Some of them we are gathering in this Action Booklet. All texts are based on interviews we made during the coalition meetings in 2017. We want to thank everybody for participating and hope to inspire you for your next action.

Let's fight together for the right to housing and to the city. Join the struggle!
Berlin / Lisboa – November 2018

The European Action Coalition for the Right to Housing and to the City is a grassroots network of 30 groups from 20 countries. You can find links to all represented groups on the website of the coalition:: housingnotprofit.org

Texts: European Action Coalition for the Right to Housing and to the City

Photos: Federico Ienna, Julia Dickow, Ioana Răileanu (Theater play: The subjective museum of housing / Overview of one of the "exhibits" of the museum featuring: Alexandrina Fieraru, Cristina Eremia, Gabriela Dumitru, Nicoleta Vișan.) Groups of European Action Coalition for the Right to Housing and to the City



Let's clean up the city from speculation!

How we raised awareness for Blackstone in Ostrava

Eliška, Jakub & Klara from Wake Up Houses, Ostrava, Czech Republic
(June 2017)

In 2016 over 40.000 housing units including social housing were bought by a real estate company in Ostrava and around. Former state housing, privatized in the 1990 already had a bad reputation in public, so it was not surprising we heard more stories about not taking proper care about tenants and their flats. Also, they followed a policy of segregation directed against Roma people. We started collecting these stories. We were also interested in who was behind the company. We found out that it belonged to Blackstone, which is one of the core actors within the system of financialized real estate capital worldwide. We went into public with this findings and the stories we had heard of and we also tried to reach more affected tenants. We also connected with people in Spain or the United States which are also organizing against Blackstone.

To raise awareness for what we found out and to put pressure on this company, we wanted to temporarily occupy their headquarters. To gain support for our struggle we planned a campaign to build up to the action. Besides the investigative work, media and neighbourhood work we organized a street parade through the city. We did this in October 2016, when there was an international housing action month. Our slogan was "we clean the city from housing speculation". A lot of the people were dressed as city cleaners. We also had music and things for kids because we wanted to create an accessible and positive atmosphere. When we reached the company's headquarter people started to clean its windows. This caused some trouble with the police which was protecting the building very seriously.

The next day we came back with a small group and a journalist. This time not announced. We entered the building and demanded to speak with the management. Of course they said they weren't present, but we could talk to the company's lawyer who had appeared. Also, the police came. We decided to negotiate outside because



otherwise we would have faced detention which wasn't the most helpful outcome in this moment.

We handed over a catalogue of suggestive questions like why they would discriminate Roma people. They agreed to answer our questions within a week. Their replies were very vague and not really saying anything. However, we could still publish them in order to raise more awareness for the activities of this company and continue our struggle against it. Also, we got to connect with the tenant union over those questions. The video we made during the action is used by a homeless action group in a theatre of the oppressed played in a neighbourhood where this company has property. So overall our action including the campaign leading to it helped us discover Blackstone in Ostrava. Start to attack it on a public level and to connect with other groups in Ostrava and other cities.

www.facebook.com/probuddomy



Center Strike:

How to invite your enemy to your own protest

Elof from the social center Cyklopen, Sweden (June 2017)

The action was taking place around one commercial center in the neighbourhood of metro line number 19 in the south of Stockholm. The local center was originally bought by this company Boultee, which was already a scandal because they started to raise rents and kick out shop owners. The center quickly became a symbol for the process of renovation in this area. In 2011 around 70% of the center was bought by Citycon who became the new main actor. All shop owners had to negotiate with this company who managed to individualize the ongoing conflicts through individual rents.

The group Linje 19 (Line 19) started to talk with the small shop owners and organized collective meetings. As often with these spatial conflicts the company was not visible as the thriving force behind this process. We wanted to do something to give the enemy a name and put them into public. We thought that this would be one crucial condition to continue with the conflict. But it was very clear that they would never show up if we had invited them as our group.

So Linje 19 created a fake neighbourhood association; Vantörs Societal association. With this association we invited Citycon to an event saying that we are very interested in the future developing of the neighbourhood and so on. We also invited politicians to give the event an official touch. Citycon was thinking about going to a nice little event to talk about its developing project. Meanwhile the group organized a center strike. Shop owners were supposed to close their shops two hours earlier just before the event was taking place. Also we mobilized neighbours through posters to show up to the event to protest.

The turnout was huge. In the end we had around 200 people there. Politicians didn't show up, but we represented them with big pictures on stage. Our facilitator opened the event with a warm welcoming, but started to face the CEO of Citycon with the conflict right away. I felt almost sorry for him. While he was speaking all of the old neigh-



BUTIKEN ÄR STÄNGD

KÄRA KUNDER OCH CENTRUM BESÖKARE!

***IDAG DEN 11 maj 2013 SOM PROTEST MOT DE HÖGA
HYROR OCH HYRESVÄRDEN NONCHALANS HÅLLER VI
STÄNGDA VÅRA BUTIKER FRÅN KL 14:00 TILL 16:00 OCH VI
HOPPAS ATT NI ÄR MED.***

VI BER OM LIPSÄKT FÖR BESVÄRET

bours sitting in the front rows were starring him to death, while smiling as soon as someone else speaking. The CEOs corporate language wasn't working here. However, he had to remain cool because it was no possibility to leave.

The biggest success of this action was the creation of a common feeling between neighbours and shop owners facing their enemy. This wouldn't have worked without this CEO being present. The most active shop owners could manage to negotiate better, but unfortunately we couldn't collectivize this particular part of the struggle. Nevertheless this action did the groundwork for following actions and protests in this area. Also we managed to pull this company into public where it was presented as a problem from then on.

cyklopen.se



How we occupied the office of a social housing company

Renk from Union for precarious living conditions, Hertogenbosch, Netherlands (June 2017)

We offer social and juridicial support for people in trouble with their housing situation. If those measures can't solve a problem, we protest. Sometimes we have cases of eviction in on block or street belonging to one social housing company like Rossdale. If there are more tenants belonging to one specific company, groups are formed to go into conflict with these companies. This strenghten both our organizational model and also the action we are going to launch against the company.

As organization with our actions we aim to get into a better position to negotiate the cases of affected tenants. The affected tenants themselves often hesitate with protesting in the front row because they fear the reaction of the company if they find out about them participating in the protest. Also, those companies are watching us through false facebook profiles for example.

So we need a stable group of activists or non affected tenants willing to protest in any case. The most common action is to organize a temporally occupation of the office of a company we have a conflict with. We need to mobilize 200-300 people through our own channels, using social media and email lists. We have to prepare banners and bring megaphones.

Once we enter the company's facilities usually the managers will most likely show up. We surround them manager with our banners and shout out our demands through megaphones. We try to go on with the occupation until the managers will offer something which could be a solution in our case. However, often they don't want to negotiate. If police is coming we go willingly. We wouldn't be afraid of protesting harder, but most of the time we think this wouldn't help the case which is behind the action. We don't threaten people or use any other form of violence.

Even if there is no direct negotiating we can use our action in our favour. We produce our own material with photo and film and we also inform the mainstream media.



It is very important to have a dossier ready beforehand, which explains the case and our demands for the media.

We work with the pressure of producing bad press. Housing companies can be very sensitive about this. Our action is about to put pressure on them to change their general policies and review their decisions in individual cases we work on. We could obtain this several times with our action.

bondprecairewoonvormen.nl



Hotel Check In – How we raised attention for corruption

Tomislav from Right to the City Zagreb, Croatia (June 2017)

Our overall target is to put on the agenda the issue of privatization of public space and how a corrupt government is treating the city as a commodity.

In Croatia we have Agrokor, the biggest private company, whose founder Ivica Todorić is a close friend of the first president of the 90s. He is one of those people the state is making its laws for.

He lives in a palace right above the city of Zagreb. It's located right next to a protected forest within an area where any construction was not allowed unless they are for public purpose. In the 2000s he bought the building and started working on it getting the construction permissions for planning a hotel there. Of course he didn't open any hotel, but started to live there with his family. In 2009 the city changed its zoning restrictions so that now residential buildings for private use were exceptionally allowed in this area up to a scale of 15.000 m² which is exactly the size of his property.

We wanted to make this public. So, we organized with 50 activists from Right to the City Zagreb and Green Action. We rented a Bus and invited everybody to come with luggage. We also invited some journalists, but as always we never told them what we were up to. This is important, otherwise our plan would be in danger. Don't worry if they complain about not knowing. After a while we established an image, where they knew that they would get a good story from our actions. Still we have a few journalists in our close circle with whom we discuss actions also beforehand to get a professional feedback.

So we drove up to the palace and said that we wanted to stay in the hotel. At the gate we got into contact with the spokesman of the company (why of the company and not of him?) telling us a bullshit story about that they are preparing the hotel to open up soon. All of it was filmed and just with this we already had everything we needed from this action. The insanity of his statement underlined with the facts we had stood



for itself and all the corrupt ties which there are. So we could leave the site without any further problems or repression. It was one of the first times that the company, it's owner and the case of his palace became bad press all over the media.

The preparation the action took us 10 days, but was only possible because we have enough people in the loop working constantly on the issues and actions. When we do such an action, we don't mobilize publicly, but we inform people via direct messaging. Doing this it is very important for us to make sure that enough people will show up. Otherwise, the image of the whole action could shift completely.

Note: November 2017 Todorčić was arrested in London after the collapse of Agrokor being accused of fraud and corruption. He was replaced at Agrokor already in April 2017.

pravonagrad.org



How we stop an auction in Athens

Tonia from Stop Auctions / Network United Alliance against auctions, Greece (June 2017 / August 2018)

In Greece the crisis causes many cases where people in-depth are losing their houses through an auction. We try to stop those auctions. Each week we check the websites of the e-auctions to map all next week's auctions. This work is very hard, but essential. There are so many auctions that we have to find the most injustice ones. Where very poor people are affected or the property is taken for a very low depth. After we choose the auctions we want to go to, we call the people to join us. We do this publicly, via email and Facebook. All auctions used to take place every Wednesday for one hour. We have to be there early because we want to stop court officials and potential buyers to enter. Usually this is successful. However, sometimes there is police and we can't block the door. In that case we also go inside because the auctions are public. The law says an auction becomes legal if it happens under unusual circumstances. So, we are there to create this situation. We comment, we talk, we provoke or walk around. Afterwards, the person who lost her or his property can go to the court and demand a cancellation of the auction. That is how it works. Sometimes they try to kick us out of the courtrooms. However, if we are 30 people it's not easy to kick us out. And it's illegal to get thrown out of a public courtroom if you haven't done something illegal yourself. And talking loud is not illegal. Sometimes we get accused of damaging. If we have to go to the police because of this accusation, we also accuse the other side of illegal behavior. We have managed to stop 80% of the auctions we went to. We need around 20 people to stop an auction, but usually we are more. The problem is to stay connected with people living outside the center. If we try to stop an auction out there we connect with the local cooperatives.

Because we have been quite successful doing all this, there is now a new law which moves all auctions completely to the internet. The notary will sit inside his office preceding it online, and now three days a week for four hours. This new situation



changes our strategy. Now every week we are demonstrating in front of the offices of notaries where the auctions are taking place. As we cannot go inside because there is a very high police presence. We try to raise public awareness and press the banks to make a deal with the owner and postpone the auctions. In some cases we succeeded, but now more houses are getting passed to the hands of the banks.

An important part of our work is the communication with the affected people. We have a sticker informing people and we organize meetings in different neighborhoods and cities.

pleistirasmoistop.blogspot.it



STANOVANJSKEHOUSING ZADRUGECOOPERATIVES

PRILOŽNOST ZA SLOVENIJO OPPORTUNITY FOR SLOVENIA

Opportunities for Slovenia!

How we got housing cooperatives on the national agenda

Danaja & Uroš from Zadrugator Ljubljana, Slovenia (June 2017)

The story is an example how to get your issue and your solutions into public discussion. In our case it was the field of alternative ways of housing. In October 2016 Zadrugator organized a housing conference together with the faculty of architecture. On the one hand we invited already existing housing cooperatives from Austria, Switzerland and Germany as expert speakers. On the other hand, we invited the bad guys to the conference, f.e. directors of the social and municipal housing found and other people from the administration and parliament. To give the conference an image which wouldn't confuse them to much we named it "Opportunities for Slovenia", which was working out really good.

The conference was a success and we created a situation where local politicians had to listen to international experts offering a solution for the housing problem which wasn't neoliberal. Of course this was not usually discussed within Slovenian housing politics. After this conference an official working group was installed, within the ministry of housing. Zadrugator was invited to be a part of this working group and a publication was done. Of course we know that those working groups often are not very effective, but in the beginning it was a good way to keep our ideas in public discussion. The whole thing was not about provoking but to subtle implant a counter solution into a neoliberal housing discours. This worked out very well. Now we have to keep up with the political work to push cooperative housing in Ljubljana and Slovenia further. By the way, another good result of the conference was that both of us joined Zadrugator.

zadrugator.org



Protest camp of evicted

Nicoleta from The Common Front for Housing Rights (FCDL), Bucharest, Romania (June 2017)

Right after the eviction of a residential complex in 2014 on the Vulturilor street in Bucharest and following the work done by the Common Front for Housing Rights in the community, we started organizing a protest camp. Most of the 150 former tenants that made up the Vulturilor 50 community took part in the protest camp that lasted almost two years.

The community took the lead on the strategy of the camp. We declared firmly and immediately after the eviction that we would not leave until we were given proper housing. The city government had offered night shelters, but the protesting community responded with the slogan “night shelter is not housing!”. While setting up the camp in front of the houses that were once our homes, the whole Vulturilor Street – quite a central street in Bucharest - filled up with people of all ages: children, elderly, teenagers. We hold our ground for one night and one day in the street until the riot police came, attacked us and took away the bulk of our belongings.

This episode of police brutality gave the protest even more strength. In the aftermath, more groups – formal and informal – joined the protest and supported the community with logistics, e.g. electricity/water supply and medical care, or organizing press releases and making videos. Together we set up tents and stayed like this for about three months. When the police tried to evict us again after that period, we started building more solid shacks. In the end the families occupied the street for two years. During these two years, the camp was the base for public debates, round tables, negotiations and even a hunger strike. As most of the members of the community are Roma, racism connected with housing injustice was also brought to the attention of officials and general public. International solidarity was also forged and some of us became long-term activists.



All in all, the protest was quite successful because most of the families got proper social housing, which rarely ever happens in Bucharest.

fcdl.ro





Theater play: The subjective museum of housing

Nicoleta from The Common Front for Housing Rights (FCDL),
Bucharest, Romania (June 2017)

We wrote, directed and played an interactive theater play, called “The Subjective Museum of Housing”. Six women from different communities affected by the housing crisis told their stories and talked about their struggles.

The play was a mock guided tour through a fictional museum of housing where the “exhibits” were living statues impersonated by us, women portraying our own experiences. These live statues could be “activated” by the audience to reveal different scenes from the concrete experiences of evictions. The team included Elena Radu, Nicoleta Vișan, Cornelia Ioniță, Claudia Moldoveanu, Alexandrina Fieraru, Cristina Eremia, Gabriela Dumitru. Our aim was, on the one hand, to create bonds between different affected communities and political activists who would participate in the play. On the other hand, to give visibility to the issues of forced evictions, racism on the housing market and housing shortage. The women who told their stories started from the situation of feeling powerless. Based mostly on limited abilities of literacy and the complete ignorance showed by the municipality regarding their demands. The play then proceeded to document their process of empowerment and made it relatable for people who are not directly affected by extreme housing injustice. Production of the play was done through community support: funding was secured through the know-how of cultural workers engaged in the housing movement, directorial and choreographic support - likewise was granted by artists part of the housing movement and mobilization was done via mouth-to-mouth propaganda and social media events.

fcdl.ro



The golden concrete house

The city is for all, Frankfurt/Main, Germany (June 2017)

In 2015, we used the public inauguration of a new housing project of the municipal housing association “AGB-Holding” to gain some media attention and to shame the company for its profit-oriented policy. When the head of AGB was holding a speech, 3-4 people from our platform entered the stage for some minutes and handed him over our self-made “Frankfurt golden concrete house” as an award for 20 years of making good money by building only luxury and high class houses and therefore contributing to gentrification processes in the city. We used the media attention that was already there to take over the microphone and talk about us being affected by the city’s upgrading policies. It was an ironical speech that also addressed the city’s official housing policies.

The AGB’s boss wouldn’t accept his award. Which was actually good for us because it made the whole thing even a bigger scandal as they also tried to push us away from the stage. After the event we published a press release which was widely covered by the media.

We think that awarding our enemies is a good way to get publicity for our own ideas and points of view. What’s important is to bring some journalists and professional photographers

Ironically, the Frankfurt golden concrete house has been chosen to be exhibited in the town hall as a symbol of the vivid right to the city movement. However, the cooptation strategy didn’t work out: In 2017 we chose to award another actor that benefits from displacement of tenants, renoviction and the building of luxury apartments.

www.stadt-fuer-alle.net



FRANKFURTER REALITÄTEN

Biographien einer verfehlten Stadtpolitik

“Frankfurt Realities”

An insight of the housing realities in Frankfurt

The city is for all, Frankfurt/Main, Germany (June 2017)

We have a close relation to a lot of tenants in precarious housing situations. A lot of them have no capacity or platform to tell their stories of evictions, displacement and the consequences of rising rents. Therefore, we tried to collect their stories and publish them. For the first edition we made eight interviews with different people in various parts of the city. We published them in July 2018 in a small brochure with an appealing design. To the brochure we added pictures and background information to ongoing urban struggles and (luxury) housing projects in Frankfurt. What comes out is a broad image of the actual housing situation and current struggles in Frankfurt. Through “Frankfurt Realities” we came in contact with new people and could create an insight on the actual urban developments in Frankfurt that is much more comprehensible than statistics and numbers. We printed 1000 pieces of this interview brochure, which was mainly possible through funding by a university project. On our web-page we also have an online version of the brochure.

www.stadt-fuer-alle.net



V for Vendetta walks around the neighbourhood

Committee of Abitanti San Siro, Milan, Italy (June 2017)

We are a neighbourhood group in a poor migrant working class neighbourhood where we have a lot of problems, e.g. with housing shortage, poor housing conditions, drug gangs and racism.

One action to show the contradiction of housing shortage on the one hand and vacant houses on the other hand is our “v for vendetta walk”: First we gather information and register vacant houses in our neighbourhood. Then, we organize the walk with 50-200 people from the committee and people who come from other neighbourhoods. During the walk we mark houses that are empty with a “v” which stands for vendetta and for vacant. We explain to the neighbourhood with a megaphone and via leaflets why those houses are empty and what’s the problem about it. Those who mark the houses wear vendetta masks to hide their identity and to create a recognizable image. We also ask journalists to join us and to publish videos on the action.

With this action we create visibility of our fight for justice, make vacancy public and also provide alternatives for homeless and other people in need for housing: All the houses we marked during our last walk are squatted by now. The marked houses are also a good tool to argue against the municipality that always hides behind housing shortage: If there is an eviction and they keep on saying that they don’t have houses we can literally show them where there’s alternative housing for the evicted. One risk about the action is that it creates visibility about vacancy not only for possible occupiers, but also for people that make profit from occupation, e.g. drug dealer gangs that sublet squatted places to people can also benefit from the markings.

www.cantiere.org/abitanti-san-siro

GIOVEDI' 31 MAGGIO

BLOCK PARTY

PIAZZA SELINUNTE
SAN SIRO

DALLE 16.30

*GIOCHI E ATTIVITA' PER BAMBINI

*LABORATORIO



Block party and cleanup days

Committee of Abitanti San Siro, Milan, Italy (June 2017)

Another regular action is our block party and cleanup day. We have a serious problem with trash and maintenance in the neighbourhood. There is a lack of cleaning; additionally black market trash is being dumped on our streets during the night by mafia groups. So we started, the campaign "take care of your neighbourhood" which in Italian means "occupy your neighbourhood". During our action days we offer music for the young people (e.g. open mic hip hop), activities with children, guerrilla gardening, brunch, graffiti actions with political messages for all neighbours. And we form cleanup teams who collect rubbish and make the neighbourhood look nicer.

The context is important: The housing company which owns most of the buildings in our neighbourhood years ago cut their cleaning service; they say they can't clean because of the occupants. So our joint cleaning is an instrument to show that it's not the occupation's fault, but that we can do things better and by ourselves. We show that our committee, where there are many occupiers organized, we are not selfish, but we care about the neighbourhood. By cleaning publicly, we act against the concept of descent brought by squatting. The idea is to build community and therefore connect people with regular contracts and people that occupy houses in order to fight prejudices from the former against the latter.

www.cantiere.org/abitanti-san-siro

Confrontational billboard campaign

Who builds the City, Belgrade, Serbia (June 2017)

At the end of 2016, Who Builds the City made a media campaign with confrontational slogans related to housing condition in Serbia. For the campaign, we used social media, large billboards throughout the city and posters in two bus lines in Belgrade. The name of the campaign was “Welcome to Housing Hell”, with slogans such as “You don’t have an apartment? There is a guaranteed housing solution” (with a prison cell in the background). The principal campaign issue was the in-affordability of housing for the vast majority of Belgrade’s inhabitants. On the campaign web-page (stambenipakao.rs) and facebook and twitter account people could find further explanations of the housing problem, statistics and examples on five cases: unattainable purchase of an apartment, uncertain tenancy, invisible energy poverty, illegitimate evictions, non-existing social housing. With this provocative media campaign, we aimed at creating awareness, but also a level of rage among people. We wanted to show that the housing situation in Serbia is something to be angry about, a result of non-existing policy and not personal incapability. The campaign was relatively expensive, but we got a project funding for it (from Netherlands/Germany). The campaign coincided with the new Law on Housing entering Serbian parliament. It managed to reach many, and open up public debate in the media.

www.kogradigrad.org/wp/o-nama/who-builds-the-city



Kulturni centar REX
Jevrejska 16
Beograd

KO GRADI GRAD

Prvi susret:
petak,
14. decembar
18:00

Drugi susret i
radni sto: subota,
15. decembar
12:00 - 18:00

PAMETNIJA ZGRADA



Da li vas interesuje izgradnja solidnog stana negde u Beogradu po ceni od 300-400-500 €/m²? Bez zaduživanja neotplativim kreditima, stanovanja u nemogućim uslovima ili čekanja na seobu rodbine na selo ili onaj svet.

NEMOGUĆE?

KO, ZAŠTO I KAKO MOŽE OVO

NEMOGUĆE PRETVORITI U **MOGUĆE?!**

Ko gradi grad vas poziva da uzmete učešće u upoznavanju, diskusijama i pokretanju inicijative PAMETNIJA ZGRADA. Ako želite da otkrijete na koji način možemo da učinimo izgradnju gradskih stanova u Beogradu mogućom za većinu onih koji nemaju stan i ne mogu ga ni steći pod sadašnjim nametnutim tržišnim uslovima, ovo će biti prilika da zajednički saznamo i praktično naučimo kako doći do stana - na pametniji način - planirajući kolektivno, investirajući odgovorno (svoje vreme

Newspaper ad to start cooperative housing initiative

Who builds the City, Belgrade, Serbia (June 2017)

To find more people to be active in our platform, „Who Builds the City“ published a provocative advert in a newspaper (Danas) with a mostly socially aware readership. It said “are you interested in building a decent apartment somewhere in Belgrade? Without getting yourself into debt and in-affordable loans, living in impossible conditions or waiting for your relatives to move to the countryside or heaven?” and suggested joining forces instead and find solutions to the housing crisis in an open, collective process. We invited to a public meeting to which about 40 people came; some were activists, some were people in need of housing solution, and some were professionals like architects. With the ad, we achieved to get a working group established and to start working out a concept for community-driven, non-profit housing. In 2017, we published a brochure about it: “Housing from Below: A Smarter Building Model for Affordable Housing in Serbia”.

www.kogradigrad.org/wp/o-nama/who-builds-the-city



Wake up call for the Right to Housing

Droit aux Logement (DAL), Paris, France (November 2017)

At DAL we sometimes need to pressure the local authorities in order to prevent an eviction, or to achieve housing for the affiliated families. Fortunately, we have a lot of different networks supporting our cause. One among them is a political Brass Band where around 150 musicians are part of an action email-list and can be mobilized for supporting DAL actions.

One thing we like to do is for example if we want to be heard by the local government is to visit the Mayor very early in the morning – usually around six o’ clock. We stand in front of his private home and play loud music and state our demands.

With that we use a playful way to make it difficult for them to ignore us. Also, it is probably not the most agreeable thing to have protesting people in front of your private home. We often go to the town hall, after the wake up call, where we again want to get attention in order to prevent the eviction.

www.droitaulogement.org





Using Social Networks against Eviction: Putting up a social media mine field around a certain topic

Pedro from La PAH, San Sebastian, Basque Country/ Spain
(November 2017)

We use all kinds of social media: emails, twitter, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram. They all have different purposes. We use emails to communicate our press releases and information. Facebook to communicate and mobilize people to come in the streets against evictions.

How many people actually go to the action, depends a lot on the place. We mostly mobilize via Whats-App, Telegram, Facebook, Email or Twitter. For example, in Barcelona there are normally around 30-40 people that would try to block the eviction with their bodies and to prevent the police from coming in. Within all those people there are always 2-4 people negotiating. Those are usually lawyers or activists together with the affected. They negotiate with the banks or the landlords. Furthermore, then being present on the street it is important that the people share and comment on Facebook or tweet and re tweet on Twitter the prepared campaigns.

We also use Facebook and Twitter to send out messages in order to damage the image of banks. In general most of our campaigns are against the banks.

With twitter we work in special way. There is a communication commission that receives the campaigns from the different groups. E.g. from the PAH Granada that will ask them to prepare what we call a "manjen". The local group sends a pirate pad to the commission with the relevant information: the hash tag that will be used, the aim of the campaign, the affected person and the press release.

Every night around 11 PM the communication commission of the PAH sends out an email to everyone. In which, the different upcoming eviction and campaigns that will be launched the next day in Spain are summarized.

In the PAD you find the basic information, on this basis you can make your own tweets or Facebook entries. Furthermore, you can login in Twitter and you can authorize the



campaign and then it will automatically tweet at the suggested time you will retweet all the tweets with the #BankiaResponde

The “manje” is part of a program has been made by the PAH (oppt.manje.net). It allows twitter user to automatically share the tweets of a given campaign on a certain time. It helps giving the campaign a boost on twitter.

The banks have a way to follow their tag and they have people who are controlling what is written in the social media and how this affect their image. All our activities on twitter are harming them. If a trending topic in Spain is one of our campaigns the social media observers of the bank will communicate it within the bank.

Of course the impact that is done by the social media campaign and the impact done by the people really going to the streets is completely different. People going to the streets will always be more important. A demonstration in front of the bank is a more direct and more harmful way to damage there image. In the best case the social media campaign goes hand in hand with the actions on the street.

afectadosporlahipoteca.com



Caravan for the right to housing

Rita from Habita, Lisbon, Portugal (November 2017)

In September 2017 we did the Caravan during weekends and we established a plan to visit different cities in Portugal, where people are living with housing issues, problems, e.g. places where people are facing some threat, eviction, high rents, and segregation.

In fact the Caravan had a lot of different aims:

1) was to give visibility to the housing problem that is a consequence of the recent housing policies. 2) to link groups in order to work together and make a coalition and create own housing policies. 3) we wanted to promote the empowerment of the communities, so that they could gain the confidence to organize themselves. 4) we wanted to give protectionism to the neighborhoods through the exchange. One neighborhood would share with another what they were doing. So it was also a kind of exchange between leaderships of all those neighborhoods.

We started with three neighborhoods, who didn't know each other, nor the idea of the caravan. Every 15 days we did some preparation meeting with people from this neighborhoods because we wanted them to participate in the process of preparation. Next to that we had a logistic group that met every week with three to ten people.

The most difficult was that it was expensive to do the caravan. We spend almost 5000 euros, the Gas was expensive and we tried to take people from one neighborhood to another and it was challenging. We applied for a small project from Guerilla foundation and received some money from them.

The main focus during the preparation was to develop the contacts and to come up with a plan. The most work we had was actually to make the plan, make contacts and to prepare the program. After that, we also developed a Blog with the initiatives, we developed a logo for the caravan and the slogan: Our house, our Neighborhood, our struggle. And we did t-shirts. Of course it was also important to raise some funds.



We did the caravan on six week-end. We actually took longer than planned because after it started more neighborhoods started saying we want you to come and visit us.

We recorded everything that people said, we made small videos, small testimonies and pictures.

We decided in the middle of the caravan to present a document of the results: issues that were raised and what people are demanding from the bottom. All these groups are going to come together and give this document to the government, the parliament and different institutions. So it is going to be a small action with the Representative of the different neighborhoods. We are going to send this to the press and do our own media work.

www.habita.info



Mikrofonkia! - How you get your message out on the streets

Felix from Stop Evictions Berlin, Germany (October 2018)

Do you want to inform your neighbourhood about an upcoming action, assembly or other event? You should do a “Mikrofonkia*” which was successfully used several times by Stop Evictions Berlin. You need around 10 people, 1000-2000 flyers, 1 or 2 megaphones and 1-2 hours of time.

Pick a meeting point in the area where you want to inform people and get a vague idea of a route to move through this area. Here you have to take into account where the most important streets or squares are, where you will find the most people, and where you would pass important shops or other spaces of the neighbourhood. Also think about when most people are normally on the streets.

One or two people take the megaphones and start walking slowly shouting a short and clear message. If you have two megaphones you should split them between both sides of the street. A Mikrofonkia is not about giving speeches! It's about a short message and its constant repetition which will give you attention from people in the streets, in the shops and in their houses.

Here the rest of the group comes into play. They are supposed to spread as far as possible within earshot or sight of the megaphones. Once you get people's attention you start to hand out your flyers with a few words like “neighbourhood assembly next friday” or whatever the key message is. The goal is to hand out as many flyers as possible in a very short time. You also will have conversations because some people want to get more information. You should then take a few minutes to talk to them. You should also go into the shops and ask if you can leave some of the flyers there. But don't get lost – all of you should always keep an eye on the rest of the group.

If you do a Mikrofonkia in a crowded area at a good time of day you will be surprised how soon your 1000 flyers will be gone. And you also will have many fruitful and interesting conversations with people in the neighbourhood, who may even come to your



next action or meeting. Of course you could take a few pictures and post them on your website so others also adopt this type of street action.

*We use "Mikrofonika" because once it was presented to us as an action coming from Greece. We neither know if this is true nor if it is really called Mikrofonika but we definitely like it!

berlin.zwangsräumungsverhindern.org



Leaflets swamp for Neukölln!

Solidarity Action Neukölln, Berlin, Germany (August 2018)

End of March 2018 we did a small, but efficient mobilizing event for an upcoming tenant demonstration. We organized a leaflet swamp. The aim was to hang 5000 leaflets on every door in our neighborhood within one afternoon. Also, we wanted to offer an easy way to participate in mobilizing the demonstration. Therefore, we publicly invited to come to our meeting place between four and six pm. There people could pick up the leaflets and find other people with whom they would do a tour. At 4:15 p.m. the room was already packed with people. The ambiance was vibrant and people were sharing information about the preparations for the demonstration. At the wall we hung up a huge map of our district on which people could mark where they wanted to go. It quickly became very colorful. New people could see where streets were still missing. The action felt good because in the evening you could see the leaflets hanging on every street door. Even though it wasn't a lot of effort for one person, the result of a lot of people helping was astonishing. In the end over 25.000 people came to the demonstration which was called "stop rent insanity!". It was the biggest tenant demonstration in Berlin since the early 90s.

solidarischeaktion.blogspot.eu



How we took our Manifesto Against Evictions to the streets

Eniko from Căși sociale ACUM! / Social housing NOW!,
Cluj-Napoca, Romania

E December 17, 2010 marked the beginning of our fight against housing injustice that hits the dispossessed in a city whose public housing stock is below 1.5%. That was the day when 350 persons, majority of them ethnic Roma, were forcibly evicted from a land whose market value became bigger than the value of the small homes on it.

Up to this, racism made that the evictees were relocated to module houses built for them by the local authorities nearby the city's landfill. At that time, the garbage dump area was already an informal and deprived residential place for 1500 persons, at their turn enforced in the past four decades, individually or in groups, by economic forces or by administrative measures, to settle there under unsecure and deprived condition.

Together people took the Manifesto to the streets, passing the microphone to share experiences of *"being evicted is like a hurricane, of having your dignity taken away, of being destroyed like by a fire, of being punished or banished from society"*. Or how it is to be *"evicted early in the morning when the streets are blackened by gendarmes, or to wake up with bulldozers and excavators at your door."*

Presented with the occasion of a street action, our Manifesto raised awareness about the need for solidarity among: people who were evicted by the public administration from a social home or from an informal dwelling; persons evicted from a retroceded building by its real former owner or his descendants or by speculators; people evicted from the house they bought with a bank credit that they could not pay any more due to the high financial burden this means compared to their income; persons evicted from areas undergoing urban regeneration or restructuring that are serving the interests of real estate developers; but as well as activists not affected directly by these processes, however committed to contribute to the creation of alliances against evictions that do not provide proper alternative housing, and of joint actions for public housing.



Because “solidarity between all evictees is power! Evictees from everywhere, unite!”
“We want privatization of the public housing fund to be stopped! We are calling for lawful forbidding of forced evictions! We demand more public and social housing. We claim for a change in the housing law that supports low-income people’s real access to public housing. We ask for housing become a right recognized by the Constitution!”
Because “cities should be for people not for profit”.

The Manifesto was published in the second issue of “Cărămidă. Ziarul dreptății locative” (The Brick. Newspaper for Housing Justice), launched on the street demonstration.

casisocialeacum.ro

Video about the action www.desire-ro.eu/?p=3484



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and to the City**

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