Launching the poster for tomorrow monthly briefs

One of the greatest things about poster for tomorrow is the fact that we receive posters from countries from all around the world. Another one is that we attract lots of entries from students – and that’s exactly the way we want it. People from all over the world, from all kinds of background, at every stage of their careers making posters for issues that affect us all.

But what this means is that because the contest is conducted primarily in English, we receive lots of entries with strong visuals that are let down by choosing to use a line from the brief -in English - instead of an original headline.

This is the kind of thing that happens when you have a poster competition based on one central brief - which even if it’s translated into other languages – is seen and published mainly in English. From feedback at our workshops we know that many people believe that posters written in English have more potential to reach a large audience than any other language. Which is true. But... this year we want to try and do something different.

We want posters from you that truly reflect our international nature, from all around the world that resonate locally first and internationally second. To think locally – on a global scale.

So in March, April and May we’re going to publish a brief written by a member of our international network that we hope will give deeper, more personal insights into the right to housing issue. They’ll be briefs written from a local perspective, supported by facts, photos and opinions that we hope will provide a valuable insight into the issue from another part of the world. But that’s next month.

The focus of this month’s brief is statistics. We love statistics. You can’t argue with statistics and they help bring a huge issue like the right to housing down to a more manageable and understandable level.

We’d like to ask you to make a poster based around a fact relating to the right to homelessness. More specifically, the areas that we’ll be covering in the briefs that follow:

The causes of homelessness: economic and personal – rising house and rent prices, rising unemployment, the price of food, domestic abuse, migration (and the issues, political, economical, social faced by immigrants).

The consequences of homelessness: mental and physical sickness, death, drug abuse, unemployment. The situation as it now is: how many people sleep rough every night, how many people are in sheltered accommodation, the price of sheltered accommodation.

You don’t have to propose a solution to any of these problems in your poster, just alert the public to why the right to housing is so important. Although there’s a wealth of statistics to be found via local councils, NGOs or governmental websites, it’s hard to quantify homelessness statistics exactly (which is worth a poster in itself) as the people affected often don’t ‘exist’ on official databases.

For example, local councils in England reported 2,309 people as sleeping rough across the country on one night in Autumn 2012*. Which is a lot, but almost certainly not as high a figure as it is in reality.


But these are the kind of the statistics we want you to seek out as the basis for your poster.

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Some other examples of useful statistics are:

- 70 per cent of young homeless people in the UK were been diagnosed with depression or other mental health disorders, or had concerns about their mental health.
  

- “Seventy-eight per cent of homeless households surveyed in the UK reported having at least one specific health problem”
  

Or these statistics recently published by Shelter, a charity for homeless people in the UK, on unaffordable housing costs.

“If the cost of food had risen in line with house prices over the last 40 years, the average family’s weekly shop would cost £453, Shelter’s research shows. Applying the same rate of inflation to everyday food items reveals that a 4-pint carton of milk would cost £10.45.”

All of these facts are the good basis for an idea for a poster. E.g. You wouldn’t pay that much money for milk, so how can you expect somebody to pay that much for a house?

And all these facts have been taken from the UK as that’s where I’m from – and I would strongly encourage you to conduct your research in your own country because it’ll be much easier for you to find facts in your own language because you’ll know where to look.

**But please don’t use these facts, please find your own statistics!** Check your government websites, your homeless charity websites, your homeless magazine websites, or go and out talk to people. Find a fact, make a poster inspired by it – and don’t forget to cite the source!