

Scottish charity seeks participants to Change the Narrative on Homelessness

Thursday 27 February, 2025

International Network of Street Papers secures funds to launch new journalistic training programme aimed at people who have experienced homelessness and poverty

Glasgow-based charity, the International Network of Street Papers (insp.ngo), is seeking participants for a new exciting journalistic training programme aimed at redressing the narrative on homelessness and poverty.

89% of Scottish respondents to a recent Centre for Homelessness Impact^[1] and IPSOS poll said that they perceived homelessness to be a very or fairly serious problem.

Compounding this is how often people experiencing homelessness and poverty are talked about in public and in the media in unhelpful ways, with labels such as 'scroungers' and 'lazy' often leading to people misinterpreting what the real issues are.

As the Scottish charity representing all printed newspapers and magazines sold globally by people experiencing homelessness and poverty, including *The Big Issue*, INSP is uniquely placed to deliver this programme.

People with direct experience of homelessness and poverty in Scotland are now being invited to join a cohort of other learners over the course of two months. They will undertake journalism and storytelling workshops with professionals from the media industry, as well as other inspiring speakers and authors, many of whom have their own experiences to share.

Participants will be invited to write and tell their own stories – be it a personal story, a creative writing piece or a news article – and will be paid for any articles published. INSP intends to distribute these articles through its own global newswire, the INSP News Service, which sends out news stories to all 92 street paper organisations globally.

INSP hopes that the project will be a game-changer, not just for the global street paper network, but also in terms of how the media and public talk about issues surrounding homelessness and poverty.

The Glasgow charity has managed to attract funds for the pilot phase of the project from five trusts and foundations: The Robertson Trust, Endrick Trust, People's Postcode Trust, Albert Hunt Trust, and the National Lottery Awards for All. All have pledged their full support for the project, viewing it as an excellent way of achieving what its title implies.

Mike Findlay-Agnew, CEO of the International Network of Street Papers (INSP), comments:

"It is exciting that we have captured the imagination of funders in Scotland with our Changing the Narrative project. As levels of deep poverty continue to rise not just in Scotland, but in the UK and in other parts of the world, it is important that we have as much accurate information out there to inform the public and the media as possible.

"Over the coming weeks, we will be going out proactively to invite people onto our journalistic training programme. We have had a great response so far from our Scottish partners in the charity and social enterprise sectors who are helping with the outreach side of the project.

"It is well evidenced that people experiencing homeless and poverty are all too often labelled and misunderstood. We hope this project will go some way to redress that.

"What I am hoping for is that participants feel inspired and confident enough to write their own stories, which we will publish through our global newswire. For some participants, this could be personal stories; for others, it could be reporting on issues that are important to them; or it could be more creative writing. Participants will ultimately have choice and control as to what they write.

"We are still looking to extend our partnerships and funding. I would love to hear from Scottish media organisations with an interest in what we are doing, with the longer-term aim of creating new pathways into the media industry for people who would otherwise not have the chance."

Media:

International Network of Street Papers

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Anyone with an interest in participating should email Niamh Brook with 150 words as to why they want to take part at niamhb@insp.ngo, or contact Mike Findlay-Agnew for a discussion about the project: mike@insp.ngo.

INSP will hold short interviews with potential participants over March and April before starting the programme formally in mid-April this year.

Ends

Notes to Editors

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The International Network of Street Papers (INSP) is a non-profit dedicated to tackling poverty and homelessness globally. We do this by empowering people and street paper enterprises to tackle these issues globally. INSP is based in Glasgow and represents 92-street paper organisations in 35 different countries: <https://www.insp.ngo/>

[1]

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