

Who Counts?

This year there has been a census of the population which has tried to list all of the people who live in the country. The census has important implications for policies and public services such as education, housing and health. Sadly, it is likely that there are many that it won't include, such as the hidden homeless and destitute asylum-seekers. Recognising this, and the fact that God's own son was born into poverty in a stable in the year of a great census, we asked our supporters a number of questions: **Who counts in society? Who does the counting? Who decides who is included and who is excluded? Who has a voice? Whom do we value and why? Who counts in God's eyes?**

Prayer calendar

This year was the first year of the Action Week prayer calendar. It combined prayer, reflection and actions on specific issues throughout the week, using material provided by organisations such as DePaul UK, the Student Christian Movement, the Church Urban Fund and the National Housing Federation. You can still find the videos that accompanied the prayer calendar at <http://s.coop/14q2>. If you didn't get a chance to see them during the week, we encourage you to take a look!



More events than ever before

This year Poverty & Homelessness Action Week was a great success, with over 160 events registered on the Action Week map, and many more that we heard about after the week had finished. In total, we have counted over 200 events taking place, making this year's Action Week the biggest yet. Events took place across the length and breadth of the UK. From Inverurie, Scotland to Penzance in England, from Bangor in Northern Ireland to Cardiff in Wales, it was amazing to see so many people gathering together to tackle poverty and homelessness in the UK.

As with last year, the most popular type of event was a worship service, with 40 per cent of events falling into this category. There were also a significant number of awareness-raising and promotional events, with video showings, stalls and exhibitions taking place around the country. Sleep-outs and tea and coffee sales were popular ways of raising funds to support local charities and the campaigns of Action Week's organising partners, Church Action on Poverty, Housing Justice and Scottish Churches Housing Action. (Donations are still welcome! Please visit www.justgiving.com/actionweek to make a secure online donation to the Action Week partners.)

Whether big or small, attended by fewer than 10 people or over 100, each event played an important part in Action Week, helping to ensure that all are counted in our society. We would like to thank all those whose hard work, dedication, passion and creativity helped Action Week 2011 go so well.

Overleaf, we report on some of the most exciting events.



Action Week is jointly organised by:

Church Action on Poverty www.church-poverty.org.uk | 35 Dale Street, Manchester M1 2HF

Housing Justice www.housingjustice.org.uk | 22-25 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1DX

Scottish Churches Housing Action www.churches-housing.org | 44 Hanover St, Edinburgh EH2 2DR

Foundation: supporting young homeless people

During Action Week, Foundation staged the official launch of their new Homelessness Prevention Scheme, which delivers floating support to people aged 16 years plus who are homeless or at risk of homelessness across Hambleton and Richmondshire in North Yorkshire. The launch took place with eight market stalls across the two districts and displays in Hambleton & Richmondshire District Council Offices. This was an opportunity for agencies and potential customers to meet the team and find out more about what they do.



Tea and cakes

The Wantage & Grove Housing Justice group held a 'Tea & Cakes' afternoon on Sunday 30 January. They had information points and slideshows around the room, particularly focusing on housing and homelessness. The morning service was based on homelessness and the youth group performed a sketch from our youth resource pack.

Mission and housing

Saltash Wesley Methodist Church used both Sundays to focus on poverty and homelessness issues, and also used the prayer calendar prayers for their midweek 'prayer breakfast'. On the first Sunday, instead of a sermon, there was a question-and-answer session with a housing officer from one of the poorest areas of Plymouth. On the second Sunday they invited the manager of the Shekinah Mission in Plymouth, which is a drop-in centre for homeless and destitute people, to speak. They built on this event by having a meeting to explore ways to practically support Shekinah and see if there are other ways in which to work in this area.

of the centre for one month. Revd Dr David Chantrey writes, "We in the churches of this deanery gained a great deal from this service. I hope that it will be the beginning of a new phase of activity and involvement for some of our people. Janet has invited us to drop in any time, and I hope that people will do so."

Barnsley: raising awareness



The Barnsley Church Action on Poverty group had an awareness-raising day featuring a display with posters and leaflets. They were able to hand out about 400 flyers, making more people aware that there are sections of the community that do

not seem to 'be counted' when it comes to help, support and taking into account their views.

Wellington: collections

St Peter's Church in Wrockwardine held a Homelessness Sunday service. Janet Groves from Mark's Pitstop, a drop-in centre for the homeless in Wellington, talked about the centre's work. A collection raised enough food, bedding and clothing to fill three cars, and enough money to fund the running costs

College collection

Holy Cross College in Bury created an Action Week display in their library, and made a collection of toiletries for the Mustard Tree, a Manchester-based charity committed to providing life support for the homeless, marginalised and vulnerable. There was also a collection of money for the Action Week partners.

