

Call for participants

Mobilising data for energy poverty research and action

Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ICTA); Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). Barcelona (Spain), June 3rd – 7th, 2019.

Concept

For a long time, energy poverty research has revolved around quantification methodologies and indicators. Metrics have been and still are instrumental for the societal and institutional recognition of energy poverty. They bring issues of domestic energy deprivation to the fore and, as evidenced by the history of official fuel poverty indicators in the UK, shape public debates and policy action. In the EU, the European Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV) is laying the groundwork for common measurement frameworks in response to EU legislation that will soon introduce an obligation for Member States to report periodically on national energy poverty rates. The institutionalisation of selected indicators has occurred in parallel to the multiplication of alternative measuring approaches, often critical of and conflicting with each other. All these efforts have mostly relied on national statistical data sources such as the Household Budget Survey or the Income and Living Conditions Survey that offer solidly built samples of representative data at the EU, national and sub-national scales.

Indicators have fuelled collective action around issues of affordable energy, energy injustice, right to energy and other sources of grievances and discontent related to inadequate access to domestic energy services. Activists and civil society organisations often rely on available energy poverty metrics to support their claims and demands. But they also engage in the collection of own data to fill the gaps in available statistics, better understand local realities or shed light on matters that have not been identified as relevant by researchers and statistical offices. The result is a myriad of unconventional data sources, much of which still lies scattered and unrecognised. Often compiled through purposive sampling strategies, these datasets do not always comply with random sampling and statistical representativeness criteria. Yet in absence of other sources they are the only available way to inform about unrecognised issues that they illustrate with an unparalleled level of actuality and realism. All these often unmapped and untapped sources of information have a considerable potential for communication purposes, for sparking public dialogue and for leveraging renovated public energy poverty action. They connect with new research approaches such as scientific crowdsourcing and citizen science aimed at more participatory, democratic forms of knowledge co-production.

The Barcelona ENGAGER training school aims to develop skills for mapping, evaluating and making use of unconventional, unstructured data sources; and to provide tools for realising the potential of untapped data for enhanced energy poverty research, communication and action.

Confirmed speakers/trainers and field visit

Brenda Boardman (University of Oxford)
Patrik Oskarsson (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences)
Caitlin Robinson (University of Manchester)
Aliança contra la Pobresa Energètica (APE) – Barcelona's Alliance against Energy Poverty
Harriet Thomson (University of Birmingham)
Marlies Hesselman (University of Groningen)
Siddharth Sareen (University of Bergen)
Sergio Tirado Herrero (Autonomous University of Barcelona)

On the afternoon of Thursday June 6th we will go on a field visit to the [Sant Roc neighbourhood in Badalona](#) for an on-site discussion about energy debt, access to housing, irregular connections and fire risk with the neighbours' association, local activists and the fire service

Eligibility and expenses

Eligible participants must be engaged in an official research programme as a PhD student or postdoctoral fellow. They can also be employed by, or affiliated to, an institution, organisation or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with performing research. Selected trainees will have their overall travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses reimbursed following the attendance and completion of the training school.

Application criteria and procedure

A maximum of 20 participants will be selected based on their background and relevance of their work. The selection procedure will also consider COST inclusiveness policy principles: gender balance, geographical spread and career stage. Trainees from [Inclusiveness Target Countries](#) and early career researchers will be prioritised. Applications from civil society organisations with an applied research profile are encouraged.

Applicants need to submit a short CV, relevance of their research or professional activity with respect with the objectives of the COST Action (especially for ENGAGER [working groups 2 and 3](#)) and a topic or case study of their choice for the planned practical coursework of the training school (see below). They can do so through this [online application form](#). The deadline for applications is May 1st, 2019. We hope to notify selected participants by May 6th, 2019. Please send an email to sergio.tirado@uab.cat if you have any questions or suggestions.

Practical coursework

Participants will be asked to provide in advance an energy poverty research and/or action topic to work with during the training school. Ideally these will be actual issues or cases with which the trainee is currently dealing with or is planning to look into for her research or professional activity. There will be allocated time to work on these and to put in practice the knowledge and skills gained in the training school. Participants will be given the opportunity to do a short presentation of their assignment the last day of the school.

About the ENGAGER COST Action

[European Energy Poverty: Agenda Co-Creation and Knowledge Innovation \(ENGAGER 2017-2021\)](#) is a research network funded via the European [Co-operation in Science and Technology](#) (COST) scheme. It is aimed at developing and strengthening an international community of researchers and practitioners focused on combating [energy poverty](#).

ENGAGER draws together scholars and practitioners based both within and outside Europe who focus on various aspects of complex energy poverty challenges, using the full suite of [COST](#) networking instruments.

COST is a funding agency for research and innovation networks. COST Actions help connect research initiatives across Europe and enable scientists to grow their ideas by sharing them with their peers. This boosts their research, career and innovation.