



ACCOMMODATING A TRAVELLING LIFE (ATL)

A journey back home supporting peers

Homelessness is the most extreme example of social exclusion in modern Western societies. Homeless people not only lack access to a stable housing. They also lack access to other basic needs, recognized as human rights, such as health services, employment or even a reasonably proper nutrition. Life on the streets is a constant struggle to find food and a safe place to spend the night. And, if this was not enough, homeless people are often subject to mockery, violence and exploitation. Those trying to get out of homelessness face multiple difficulties and barriers and have no one to turn to. Although it is a heterogeneous collective there are frequent common factors, like an untreated mental illness, an addiction, illegal status accompanied by low level of education or major language issues.

Organizations working in the field know only too well that winning and maintaining the trust of a homeless person- especially if she has been in this situation for an extended period of time- is one of the most difficult steps. At the same time, is critical to the effectiveness of the intervention process. It is very frequent that these people reject any offer of help addressed at their social inclusion, meaning, any kind of help going beyond a small gesture such as handing out cash to satisfy their immediate needs (food or similar).

Accommodating a travelling life (ATL) project is framed within the need of offering innovative and effective solutions to persons who find themselves living in the streets. With this project, we will help organizations working in the field to conduct more effective interventions with persons living in the street by involving persons with first-hand experience in the in the intervention process. For that purpose, ATL introduces the figure of Journey Certified Supporters (JCS)- mutual support agents with lived experience of homelessness, advanced in their process of re-integration and trained in the ATL methodology.

ATL project will design a tailor made training model built on the principles of peer support methodology. It will provide training to both professionals and experts by experience in order to prepare the latter to become Journey Certified Supporters. Comprehensive information and a set of effective training tools will help the future JCS to give value to their life experience and use it to help people at an initial stage of re-integration to get out of the situation of extreme vulnerability and social exclusion. On the other hand, the ATL training program for professionals will prepare the latter to offer tailored support and conduct interventions in coordination with the JCSs.

ATL methodology will incorporate the Restorative Justice approach with the objective of contributing to the reestablishment of family and friendship ties and thus favoring re-integration. It will address the reintegration of homeless people from a respectful, unconditional approach, based on listening and dialogue, which does not judge or criticize.



General objective:

Improve the success rate of interventions addressed at recovery of people experiencing homelessness.

Specific objectives:

1. Provide the professionals with intervention models offering tailor made solutions to challenges and individual needs of homeless people.
2. Offer persons with first-hand experience of homelessness quality training, to grow personally and help others, without denying their past.
3. Create sustainable jobs for persons with a lived experience of homelessness.
4. Facilitate reinforcing social links within the community, an essential step towards sustainable reintegration

Activities:

1. Carry out an initial research with persons with lived experience of homelessness and professionals working with the collective to detect the needs and the most recurrent barriers that impede recovery from homelessness, the findings of which will guide the definition of the ATL intervention model and the role of the JCS.
2. Design the ATL methodology and develop the training materials, the JCS Online Program addressed at professionals who will train the future JCS and a guidebook for the future JCS to facilitate and support their learning.
3. Train 45 professionals and 50 persons with first-hand experience of homelessness in ATL methodology.
4. Design a serious game for the future JCS addressed at practicing peer support skills and solving real life situations they may affront on-the-job.

Partners:

1. Fundación INTRAS, Spain (Coordinator)
2. Restorative Justice for All International Institute, United Kingdom
3. Eteria Kinonikis Psychiatrikis Ke Psychikis Hygias Panaghiotis Sakellaropoulos, Greece
4. Caritas Archidiecezji Warszawskiej, Poland
5. Salute Mentale ed Esclusione Sociale Italia, Italy
6. Helsingin Diakonissalaitoksen Saatio, Finland