

Homeless persons

Activity Box 1.6

Module 1: Target Group



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Key Facts

- Over 700,000 people are sleeping on the streets in Europe, an increase of 70% over the last 10 years (45).
- 83% Homeless World Cup participants reported improved social relations with family and friends (46).
- Two-thirds of homeless adults report substance use and/or mental health problem (45).

Specific groups this Activity Box applies to:

- All whose primary night-time residence is in a [homeless shelter](#), a [warming centre](#), a [domestic violence](#) shelter, [cardboard boxes](#) or other ad hoc housing situations.
- Other forms of inadequate housing (46): Government support centre, sleeping on the streets, and “From sofa to sofa (family and friends)**”.
**In some contexts also known as “couch surfing”

Note: Additional variants of homelessness are also covered in other Activity Boxes:

- People living in slums.
- Camps and refugee camps.
- Emergency shelters in post-disaster episodes.

Why is it so important

Contribution

Homeless people can face the same forms of social exclusion as asylum seekers and refugees. The benefits provided by Sport programmes and events are vast:

- Creation of meaningful pathways into education, training and employment.
- Build confidence, life skills and important social networks.
- Creation of awareness of homelessness to show the public that homeless people are individuals with needs, aspirations and skills just like anybody else.
- Friendships between participants of Sport programmes (festivals or tournaments) may provide social and moral support in times of hardship (47).
- Promotes mutuality and obligations that foster a sense of an individual being part of a larger community, rather than an exclusionary model of individualism (48).

International endorsement

European Parliament resolution on tackling homelessness rates in the EU:

Homelessness is [...] one of the most severe forms of poverty and deprivation that needs to be abolished by targeted and integrated policies. By 2030, EU and its member states should aim to stop homelessness. Much advocacy is required to decriminalise homelessness (45).

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Barriers to Sport that should be overcome

- Lack of Sport facilities and equipment
- Negative perception of the homelessness situation: Isolation and reduced social contact
- Besides football there are scarce systemic initiatives addressing homelessness in other Sport

Tips and key success factors

The need for a holistic and structural approach that addresses all kind of underlying issues.

- Inadequate housing issues: Offer free showers and enough potable water as the homeless are at higher risk for dehydration, especially in warmer climates.
- Needs for food
- Homeless youths frequently exhibit developmental levels that do not match their chronological age.
- Risk of infectious or other communicable diseases. And mental health problems and substance abuse

Focus on personal self-development

- It offers access to sporting facilities, equipment and training and a chance to reconnect with an activity that many will have participated in some degree when younger.
- It is paramount to support players to increase their self-confidence, self-esteem, and offer help to improve stress management, teach leadership and a range of other life skills.

Other tips

- Empathy is an important aspect of social support. It contributes to close and warm interpersonal relationships.
- Provide Sport apparels and other equipment for homeless participants.
- Offer alternative transportation means.

Available Resources

- Assisting Homeless People. [Click Here](#)
- Homeless World Cup. [Click Here](#)

Sample Case

The Homeless Games (The Homeless Games)

- Two-day, multi-Sport event, and 620 people registered for the event over the two days.
- Involves Homeless, recovery services, LGBT agencies, refugee agencies and mental health agencies.

More information:

Event Site Homeless Games 2019. [Click Here](#)

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