

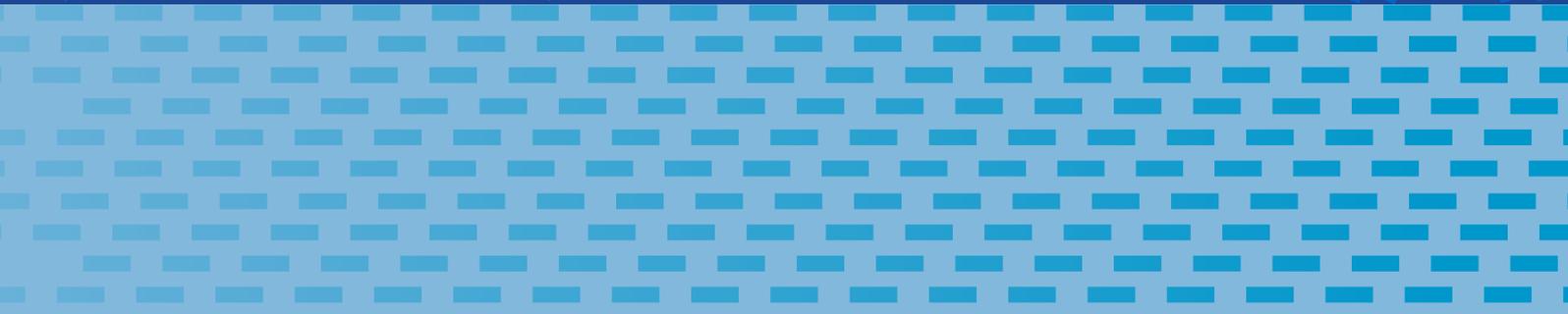


FEANTSA

16

Good practices

to support mobile EU citizens
living in homelessness





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For more information check our project "PRODEC - Protecting the Rights of Destitute EU mobile Citizens - 2nd phase (2019 - 2021)" at <https://www.feantsa.org/en/project/2019/08/28/prodec-protecting-the-rights-of-destitute-eu-mobile-citizens-2nd-phase?bcParent=418>

FEANTSA is the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. We are the only European NGO focusing exclusively on the fight against homelessness. Our goal is an end to homelessness in Europe. FEANTSA works with over 120 members across 28 countries including 24 EU Member States.

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Foreword

The strength of the European Union is said to lay in unity, in the capacity of bringing together diverse and multicultural communities, while promoting respect and defending human rights. Despite continuous challenges and an ongoing global health crisis that put the EU in an unprecedented situation, the values that the European community was built on continue to be at the heart of the European project. Institutions and civil society have worked relentlessly to ensure that the slogans “United in diversity” and “No one left behind” become a reality and not mere words.

As one of the most important milestones in the construction of the European Union, **free movement** is a right enshrined in the EU Treaties and regulated through Directive 2004/38/EC. Currently, it is estimated that 13.3 million EU citizens have exercised the freedom to move across the EU. In the light of events such as Brexit or the Coronavirus pandemic, this right has been under threat. Many had their free movement limited, which meant being confronted with increased destitution or separation from families and friends. But even before the pandemic, mobile EU citizens often faced multiple legal and administrative challenges, which prevented them from fully enjoying their rights and participating on equal footing in their host societies.

The European Commission has announced its intention for 2022 to update their guidelines on free movement,¹ aiming to clarify certain aspects in the implementation of the Directive 2004/38/EC, and to adjust legislation to recent court rulings showing that many times MS fail in transposing correctly the European legislation. At FEANTSA, we believe the new guidelines can be a chance to realise the rights of mobile EU citizens. We strongly encourage the European Commission to address the situation of those vulnerable citizens in the upcoming Communication. Protecting the right to free movement is even more important in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the UK withdrawal.

The link between free movement in the EU and homelessness is very important for FEANTSA, a topic we worked on for over 10 years.² FEANTSA members on the ground have experienced how the number of mobile EU citizens they support increased over these years, therefore we developed tools and built knowledge on how to better claim the rights of EU citizens. This work involved a wide variety of activities such as legal fitness checks, guides for professionals, training modules, study visits, or comprehensive reports on the living conditions of mobile EU citizens experiencing homelessness in several European cities. We work



1 https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/eu_citizenship_report_2020_-_empowering_citizens_and_protecting_their_rights_en.pdf

2 <https://www.feantsa.org/en/resources/resources-database?search=free+movement>

Introduction

ruthlessly with European institutions to bring forward on their agenda the issue of mobile EU citizens experiencing homelessness.

This publication contributes to this purpose and presents a number of 16 good practices in supporting mobile EU citizens. We believe it is time to take stock of these great initiatives, which are a result of many years of work with and for EU citizens. I highly recommend institutions and authorities to get inspiration from these good practices, and consider, where appropriate, transferring or replicating them in their context. For this, you will count with the support of FEANTSA and our members.



Kjell Larsson
FEANTSA President

This booklet presents 16 good practices, identified by FEANTSA, for supporting mobile EU citizens who are destitute and/or live-in homelessness across Europe. Despite the high percentage of mobile EU citizens who relocate successfully to another Member State of the EU, a significant number of individuals who exercise their right to free movement need structural support with obtaining information and for counselling on their rights, as they experience destitution and live in insecure conditions in Europe's cities.

FEANTSA is working to raise public awareness about the complexity of homelessness and the multi-dimensional nature of the problems faced by homeless people. FEANTSA has been studying the situation of mobile EU citizens experiencing homelessness for almost a decade now. Together with our members, we have worked at national and European level to raise awareness about the factors that contribute to pushing EU citizens into destitution and we call for including mobile EU citizens in public policies. We strongly believe that there is a need to increase support from local and European level in this area.





With this booklet, we aim to promote the scaling-up of the existing good practices of services for destitute mobile EU citizens and to involve local authorities to a higher extent in supporting mobile EU citizens to exit homelessness and destitution. While long term support (in housing as well as in all other areas of life) is of course the final goal, we acknowledge that these types of measures remain difficult to put in place so we advocate for multiplying and developing the good practices identified here to achieve our objective of ending homelessness among mobile EU citizens.

As part of this work and under the framework of the project Protecting the Rights of Destitute mobile EU Citizens (PRODEC) we identified 16 good practices which are transferrable and can be used for inspiration in designing services for destitute mobile EU citizens across Europe. These practices have been developed as a response to the high number of mobile EU citizens who have been met by services. They involve a complex set of support measures, starting with meeting basic needs for emergency accommodation, ensuring everyday food provision or simply offering a place to relax and create social connections and working to empower mobile EU citizens to reclaim their rights. The good practices identified show that the most important areas of intervention for supporting mobile EU citizens are:

- ▶ Support to exit or prevent homelessness.
- ▶ Counselling for information on and how to realise mobile EU citizens' rights.
- ▶ Support in accessing healthcare.
- ▶ Counselling for accessing the labour market (incl. preparing CVs, applying for jobs, registration in the national system, etc.).

- ▶ Basic needs support: day shelter (incl. social networking), emergency night shelter, food, shower, clothes, etc.
- ▶ Housing and social support.
- ▶ Advocacy and awareness raising on the situation of mobile EU citizens and their rights.
- ▶ Support with legal representation and legal case-work, strategic litigation.
- ▶ Research and communications around mobile EU citizens' rights.

Several important principles have been repeatedly underlined during the interviews held with representatives of the organisations working to support mobile EU citizens. Ensuring a holistic approach where people are offered support in all areas of life is one of them, as it allows individuals to build the capacity they need to succeed in life. Stabilising the housing situation as an initial step is a common approach among the good practices identified. Where possible, housing is secured for the long term, which consequently allows people to focus on other important aspects of their lives such as gaining employment, improving language skills, clarifying their immigration status or the educational situation of their children. The issue of language is of utmost significance and most services employ people who come from the origin countries of mobile EU citizens, or who have learnt the languages their beneficiaries speak, so as to enhance communications. Engaging with people from the same communities is also relevant in terms of creating bridges and improving knowledge and communication between mobile EU citizens and the host societies. Flexibility is key as well, since people are diverse and have different needs.

It is important to respect the agency of mobile EU citizens, therefore the services featured in this booklet are services that build their work around the needs that individuals (or families) consider to be the most important at the moment they are met. Participation is also key, most practices develop means by which to involve their beneficiaries in their everyday activities, for some this includes training and employing mobile EU citizens with experience of homelessness to work in their services. Several projects engage with certain issues more closely, for example, with the education of young people, fighting discrimination against mobile EU citizens (particularly of Roma origin) or implementing legal casework to defend people's rights.

Advocacy, together with research and communication regarding the situation of destitute mobile EU citizens, is another important area of work which all the good practices identified here engage with. It is unanimously acknowledged that we need to communicate more about the situation of mobile EU citizens at a societal level. Further awareness raising and advocacy with authorities, public services and potential employers on mobile EU citizens' rights is also a key activity. Official guidelines and training are still lacking on this topic and should be further developed by MS and the European institutions. Fostering a rights-based approach among homeless service providers is essential, as is monitoring the realisation of mobile EU citizens' rights and holding authorities accountable for the way they implement free movement legislation at national level.

Though success is difficult to measure (and can be also difficult to achieve), the good practices in this booklet have managed to contribute to raising awareness

about the situation of destitute mobile EU citizens and improving knowledge among public services and authorities within their respective countries on this topic. Moreover, they have brought improvements in people's lives, supporting mobile EU citizens to access healthcare, exit homelessness and gain employment.

We hope that the practices identified will serve as inspiration both for the homeless sector and for the local authorities who are all invited to consult the booklet and to transfer these types of measures as much as possible to their work with destitute mobile EU citizens. These practices prove that it is possible to develop services that can serve and support destitute mobile EU citizens, lifting them from homelessness and poverty, by following a human rights-based approach and enabling people's access to rights.

Background

Freedom of movement for workers is a fundamental principle of the EU, guaranteed to its citizens by Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. In agreement with this principle, a high number of mobile EU citizens relocate to another Member State to look for employment, with a high success rate. In 2019, 3.3% of the working age (20-64) of EU citizens resided in an EU country other to that of their citizenship, according to Eurostat.³ The profiles of mobile EU citizens are diverse. The countries that EU citizens leave from the most are: Romania - in 2019, Romanian citizens of working



³ Eurostat, EU citizens living in another Member State - statistical overview, Data extracted in June 2020, accessed on 10th August 2021 at <https://tinyurl.com/8pvjzmz8>

age (20-64) residing abroad within the EU accounted for about a fifth (19.4%) of the population residing in Romania; next are Croatians (16.1%), Bulgarians (11.4%) and Portuguese (10.8 %).⁴ The most numerous national groups of mobile EU citizens aged 20-64 in 2019 were those from Romania (2 280 000 persons), Poland (1 079 000 persons), Italy (965 500 persons) and Portugal (655 600 persons).⁵

Eurostat shows that the employment rates for mobile EU citizens are higher than among the resident population of their country of citizenship and that this proportion has been increasing over the last decade: mobile EU citizens were employed at a rate of 75.5% in 2019, compared to an EU average of 73.1% overall. Despite the overall successful free movement of workers in the EU, in the past years, it has also become apparent that mobile EU citizens are increasingly being pushed to destitution and left without protection in moments of hardship. A possible connection between homelessness and migrant status (in particular reinforced by ethnic discrimination) was confirmed by the ESPN study in 35 European countries, where in countries such as Denmark, Germany, Finland, the Netherlands

or Sweden, reports of overrepresentation of some ethnic minority populations and/or of recent rising trends in homelessness were made.⁶ Despite a lack of comprehensive data, research from big cities in Europe confirms this trend, which has also been reported by FEANTSA members. To provide several examples: in London, 31% of those seen rough sleeping in 2018/19 were from Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries with Romanians continuing to represent the single biggest non-UK nationality group (16% of all rough sleepers).⁷ In Copenhagen, in 2017, 88% of migrants living rough (rough sleeping and in overnight shelters), were coming primarily from Central and Eastern European countries.⁸ Homeless services in Brussels also write about an increase in the numbers of the EU citizens they support: in 2018, the outreach service of Diogenes was in contact with 228 mobile EU citizens, compared to 225 Belgians,⁹ while data from Samu Social, the main provider of emergency accommodation in the city show that 15.3% of the total amount of their beneficiaries in 2018 are EU nationals (385 Romanians and 147 Polish).¹⁰ Germany is following the same trends: BAGW's estimation model shows 678,000 homeless people in 2018 with a proportion

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 European Social Policy Network, Fighting homelessness and housing exclusion in Europe. A study of national policies Isabel Baptista and Eric Marlier, European Commission, 2019, accessed on 10th August 2021 at <http://www.praxis.ee/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/homelessness.pdf>

7 Greater London Authority (GLA), Rough sleeping in London (CHAIN reports) accessed on 10th August 2021 at <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>

8 Ibid 6.

9 Mauro Striano, Factors Contributing to Vulnerability Among Destitute Mobile EU Citizens in Brussels, FEANTSA, 2020, accessed on 10th August 2021 at <https://www.feantsa.org/download/report-en4173526389729689354.pdf>

10 Samu Social, Observations sur le public accueilli, 2018, accessed on 10th August 2021 at <https://rapportannuel.samusocial.be/observations-sur-le-public-accueilli/>



of 17% EU citizens (an increase from 4.7% in 2010).¹¹ BAGW also finds the proportion of EU citizens who are roofless is around 50%, especially in large cities.¹² In Barcelona, a report from 2019 shows that the situation of mobile EU citizens has deteriorated in the past ten years, 45% of those found sleeping rough came from other EU countries, compared to 28% from Spain.¹³ In the UK, a very popular destination for mobile EU citizens, the increase of those experiencing or being at risk of homelessness is also confirmed by a CRISIS report from 2019,¹⁴ while since 2009/10 over 50% of the non-UK nationals found to be rough sleeping through The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) have been people from Central and Eastern European countries.¹⁵

The factors that lead to homelessness among mobile EU citizens are complex. They can begin from the level of preparation that each person does before leaving their home country. Many people do not go through a recruiting process prior to departure, so they do not have a work contract when they arrive in another MS. They are not prepared for the administrative requirements they might be faced with for registering in the host MS and some simply might not know or be afraid to demand their rights as a mobile EU citizen.

Further challenges appear in the recognition of worker status. Where MS assume a restrictive interpretation of the notion of worker and deny mobile EU citizens worker status, they, in consequence, bar them from social protection. Administrative obstacles might also contribute to destitution in some cases. This could be because EU citizens are not aware of the procedures required for registration in a MS or there is a lack of clarity about what documentation should be provided. Some mobile EU citizens also face barriers in not knowing the language of the host MS or not knowing it well enough to be able to manage in relation to public services. They need support overcoming these barriers, and, where this support lacks, are confronted with reluctance from authorities (e.g.: in opening a bank account, in accepting the national ID card for registration with the job centres, etc). Challenges in accessing social benefits and services are also an issue, based at times on the misconception that EU citizens are trying to take advantage of the welfare system of MS or based on a misinterpretation or lack of knowledge of the legislation by public servants. Not being able to access social benefits and services leaves EU citizens vulnerable to destitution.



11 Current figures from the statistics report can be found here: <https://www.bagw.de/de/themen/zahl-der-wohnungslosen/index.html> [last accessed on 06.05.2021]; the entire BAGW statistical report for 2018 is here: https://www.bagw.de/fileadmin/bagw/media/Doc/STA/STA_Statistikbericht_2018.pdf [last accessed on 19.05.2021].

12 Ibid 11.

13 Albert Sales Campos (Institut d'Estudis Regionals i Metropolitans de Barcelona), Who's sleeping rough in Barcelona?, Area of Social Rights Barcelona City Council, 2019, accessed on 10th August 2021 at <https://tinyurl.com/ym4rs8zd>

14 Sophie Boobis, Ruth Jacob and Ben Sanders, A home for all: Understanding migrant homelessness in Great Britain, Crisis, 2019, accessed on 10th August 2021 at <https://tinyurl.com/ek74aycx>

15 Greater London Authority (2019) CHAIN annual report: Greater London 2018/19. Greater London Authority.

A lack of access to the labour market severely influences the chances of success for mobile EU citizens, as they are confronted with difficulties and challenges, especially in Member States where there are very strict criteria when it comes to hiring foreigners or because the public services are not knowledgeable about the rights of mobile EU citizens. Fake promises of jobs and discrimination are other factors that may affect access to the labour market.

After obtaining a job, mobile EU citizens may face additional challenges related to precarious working conditions that push them into destitution. These might have to do with inadequate working conditions, job insecurity in the host society, low wages, accommodation which is directly connected to the employer, or a lack of social protection, which is not always guaranteed within their work contracts. Personal circumstances can contribute to the deterioration of people's situation and may lead to homelessness in the case of mobile EU citizens. Episodes related to poor or deteriorating health, addictions, substance misuse, family disruption or domestic violence (particularly for women) can put a big mark on people's lives. It is especially difficult to exit such situations as a mobile EU citizen when access to social protection and social rights is complicated and limited.

The consequences of these factors point to a constant need to protect and promote the rights of mobile EU citizens, especially as the number of those citizens experiencing destitution and homelessness in MS is increasing. FEANTSA's objective is to contribute to this by promoting the scaling-up of the good practices identified under our PRODEC project.

Methodology

The good practices presented in this booklet have been collected through an open call launched by FEANTSA between March and August 2021. The organisations that applied and that worked to support mobile EU citizens were interviewed by FEANTSA staff as part of the selection process. The practices were assessed by both a grading system and consultations with our FEANTSA migration cluster. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to this process, and we truly believe that the transference and scaling-up of these practices at national and local level can contribute to lifting mobile EU citizens out of destitution and homelessness.



1 The Federal Working Group for Homeless Aid eV (BAG W)



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www.bagw.de/en/

Germany

AREAS

Advocacy aimed at increasing access for destitute mobile EU citizens to social protection.

SHORT DESCRIPTION

BAG W is The Federal Working Group for Homeless Aid eV, a nationwide working group of social services and facilities for people in special social difficulties, founded in 1954. Since 2012, a **Migration Working Group** was founded within the BAG W, with the purpose of analysing legal developments and national practices concerning EU migrants (among others).

The Migration Working Group deals with all issues related to migration and homelessness. Approximately 17% of homeless people (not including homeless refugees) are EU citizens; that is about 40,000 people. Many of these people live on the streets without any accommodation. Especially in the metropolises, their share of people without any accommodation on the street is up to 50% (<https://www.bagw.de/de/themen/zahl-der-wohnungslosen/index.html>). One of the main tasks of the group is to address the challenges of mobile EU citizens and advocate for better support.

The Migration Working Group's work is aimed at institutions responsible for the situation of EU citizens and tries to influence the political agenda.

ADVOCACY WORK

The members of the Migration Working Group ideally come from all over the country and work in different sectors (government and welfare institutions, associations, homeless service providers), being involved in migration issues. Meetings take place regularly, at least twice a year and they are coordinated by BAG W. At these meetings, socio-political developments, local and national processes and case law relating to migration aspects are discussed. Furthermore, the Migration Working Group holds expert discussions on specific topics. Joint statements are drafted, which are published and presented at conferences. Social workers from across Germany who work in institutions that help the homeless are invited to the conferences, as well as professionals in health services or addiction support facilities.

BAG W implements a strong advocacy component at different levels: local, Länder/Federal and European. At the local level, campaigning is done in order to demand that mobile EU citizens receive access to registration, municipal accommodation and medical care.



“Street homelessness in Germany is strongly influenced by internal EU immigration”

At Länder/Federal level, BAG W advocates for the development of and adherence to good standards in regulated and municipal accommodations; for the development and promotion of clearing centres to clarify and enforce health insurance coverage, and for the provision of financial resources to enable the implementation of projects where supply gaps exist. The main objective of BAG W is to achieve that mobile EU citizens get coverage by the regular social security system.



At the EU level, BAG W stands for a trans-European uniform emergency social security system that protects poor EU citizens from poverty regardless of their place of residence, which will also open up ways for them to participate in society. This includes Europe-wide health insurance coverage, for example.

COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

The work of BAG W involves:

- ▶ Joining networks in the areas of migration and homelessness.
- ▶ Participating in and organising conferences with the involvement of policy makers to discuss solutions with relevant stakeholders.
- ▶ BAG W has a seat on the advisory board of the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD) and also represents the interests of emergency housing assistance at the ESF+. The involvement of BAG W in the implementation of FEAD and ESF+ has been a great success.

Partnerships with other organisations consist of organising joint events, sharing developments and developing common policy positions.

WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

Poor EU migrants suffer from a manifold lack of resources. It can be assumed that if people had sufficient social security in their countries of origin, the majority would not have to take the risk of migration. Migration places many individuals in an even more insecure legal status and triggers discrimination. On the other hand, people who migrate should not have to fight for their survival without social security.

This demand is a long-term objective of the BAG W, and it can only be achieved by intensifying advocacy and by holding institutions accountable. That is the reason why it is extremely important to advocate for the rights of destitute mobile EU citizens, so their situation can be improved.

However, to do so, there must be an understanding of people's lived experiences (in the host country as well as in their countries of origin), which requires a kind of research that should be organised at a European level in all Member States.

FUNDING

No special funding, as it is part of the regular tasks of the organisation.

LINKS FOR OTHER RESOURCES

Position paper: “Support for citizens from other EU Member States in housing need and social difficulties” (in German): https://www.bagw.de/fileadmin/bagw/media/Doc/POS/POS_19_EU-BuergerInnen_in_Wohnungsnot.pdf

2 Kirkens Bymisjon, the Church City Mission, Department for destitute migrants



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Norway

kirkensbymisjon.no/bymisjonssenteret-toyenkirken/fattige-tilreisende/departament-for-destitute-migrants/

SHORT DESCRIPTION

The Department for destitute migrants was founded in November 2018 and is part of the Church City Mission in Oslo. The department runs several of the Church City Missions low threshold services for the target group, many of them running already since 2013. Implemented under the Department, **V4** is a 3-year project that the Church City Mission in Oslo started in April 2019, tested previously in two pilots (in 2013 and 2017 for 6 months). V4 offers temporary accommodation in 4 flats for vulnerable people who have limited rights in the Norwegian welfare system and who lack access to

housing, besides ordinary emergency shelter. Guests are followed up by a multidisciplinary team consisting of a nurse, a lawyer and a social worker who use an integrated approach, for relieving crisis situations, improve and stabilize individuals' health condition, prevent worker exploitation, mapping possible existing rights in the system and facilitating the contact with public services.

The project also has an advocacy component that focuses on preventing discrimination (with a focus on Roma) and enabling vulnerable groups to demand their rights and report injustice. This part of the project has also improved the collection of data and systemize it for further use in the advocacy work.

AREAS

- ▶ Day shelter
- ▶ Night shelter
- ▶ Support in accessing health care
- ▶ Support to exit or prevent homelessness for mobile EU citizens
- ▶ Advocacy



ABOUT THE GOOD PRACTICE

V4 is part of the Department for destitute migrants that runs several low threshold services such as emergency night shelter, café, CityBreakfast, outreach and storage boxes for the target group.

V4 gives vulnerable persons in particularly precarious circumstances access to temporary living quarters as well as counselling and practical support. The project disposes four flats (10-12 beds), and guests are invited to stay for a maximum of four weeks. Around 2/3 of the guests are EU citizens, including mobile Roma. The rest are undocumented migrants.

Many of the EU citizens have problems accessing necessary health care and/or social services in Norway. Some are migrant workers who are exploited in the labour market. The team offers counselling that is aiming to have a preventive effect when it comes to discrimination, knowing the rights one has as an

“Destitute EU migrants are a forgotten group in Norway. They face widespread discrimination and poor living conditions, and it is often very unclear what their rights are. Governmental bodies and NGOs working with human rights and anti-discrimination issues rarely give attention to this specific group.”



employee, information on which institution to contact to ask for help and/or complain. While people are housed, they are supported to ask for their rights and accompanied in contacting the social services. V4 staff work in collaboration with other services of the Church City Mission, such as the Health Centre for undocumented migrants who also treats EU migrants.

In addition to supporting individuals, the project engages in advocacy, aiming to create political pressure to improve the situation of destitute mobile EU citizens and raise awareness of their situation. The objective is to improve the living conditions for disadvantaged EU migrants and to counter and prevent discrimination and exploitation.

At the department level, the languages spoken by staff are Romanian, English, Polish, Swedish, Hungarian, Lithuanian.

OUTCOMES

The biggest outcome is proving that access to housing has an empowerment effect on people and enables them to focus on improving other parts of their lives, such as employment or education, when the access to basic needs is granted. The possibility of living in a safe place, even for a short period of time, is reducing vulnerability and allows people to boost the involvement level and awareness on their own situation/crisis.

Closer follow up at the individual level results in enabling the potential guests have in participating and engaging in the problem-solving process. It also contributes to a broader knowledge in society about

the situation, challenges and issues the target group has when meeting the system. More in-depth knowledge and insights about mobile EU citizens' situation form the basis of advocacy and more systematic efforts to raise awareness among stakeholders and in the public.

WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

It offers people the chance to bring normality back in their life; fulfilling basic needs as a start allowed for focusing on empowerment. The combination of supporting individuals and systematic work at the political level to promote the rights of the target group is productive.

The innovative component of the project is that there are no formal criteria to enter, giving the team the opportunity to assess each case individually. There is no set of rules that guests must comply with.

The multidisciplinary team ensures that guests are followed up at several levels throughout their stay.

PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

The guests at V4 take an active role in defining their needs, in the problem-solving process and deciding how to use their stay in the project. Within the Mobile Roma Network, a reference group formed of mobile Roma living in destitution is established to consult on the discrimination issues, give input and engage in advocacy.

The project aims to gather and systemize knowledge about the target group and to strengthen cooperation with relevant actors. A Mobile Roma Network, consisting of humanitarian and human rights NGOs, governmental bodies, researchers and activists – including a Roma reference group – has been established for knowledge exchange and coordination. The project also cooperates with unions and other actors to combat work related crimes and exploitation of migrant workers.

FUNDING

Fundraising at national level which were allocated to the V4 project.

LINKS FOR OTHER RESOURCES

- ▶ <https://kirkensbymisjon.no/bymisjonscenteret-toyenkirken/fattige-tilreisende/department-for-destitute-migrants/>
- ▶ <https://kirkensbymisjon.no/bymisjonscenteret-toyenkirken/fattige-tilreisende/>



3 Fondazione Casa della Carità, in partnership with Ce.A.S



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Italy (Milan)

AREAS

- ▶ Housing and social support for Roma families
- ▶ Support in accessing health care
- ▶ Support to exit or prevent homelessness for mobile EU citizens
- ▶ Counselling for ensuring mobile EU citizens' rights
- ▶ Counselling for accessing the job market (Preparing CVs, applying for jobs, registration in the national system, etc)



SHORT DESCRIPTION

The **Solidarity Village** started as a pilot project in 2005, and has been running continuously since then, to respond to the needs of Romanian Roma families who migrate to Italy and are living in homelessness and poor housing (informal settlements). By providing the families with free or very low-cost housing solutions, Casa della Carità aims at promoting their social, working and housing inclusion.

ABOUT THE GOOD PRACTICE

Fondazione Casa della Carità was the first organisation in Milan (probably also Italy) to start working with Roma people from Romania who were sleeping rough and living in informal settlements. Initially, the

work with migrants was run on a voluntary basis and it involved providing basic assistance. As the informal settlements they were living in were often demolished, many people, including families with children, were left in the streets.

That was the moment when Casa della Carità initiated its work with Roma families, starting by housing 17 families and developing a model to support them, which was defined together with the families based on their needs. Specific programmes were developed in parallel to the housing programme: a programme to support children and the schools they attended to facilitate learning Italian; literacy and Italian courses for women; and support for adults into vocational training.

“Housing is the key, but flexibility is the key as well. We don't have a 'model of intervention', but a style which has to be flexible, because people are not all the same, each individual has different resources. It was important not to have a pre-defined target, but to draft together with the family their project, so it becomes tailor-made.”

At present, the Solidarity Village project guarantees integrated support to all families and develops together with them tailor-made measures that aim at promoting their social, economic and housing inclusion. Starting with offering long term housing, families are supported with an integrated approach in the fields of work, education, health and language learning. A weekly assembly is held to discuss the problems, proposals, etc., that the families face, and to define common rules and commitments for the community life. Consultations with individuals and families are carried out on a daily basis and a great investment is placed in the education of children. Specific projects are promoted to support women. Lastly, the association also provides other services in the legal, health and psychological domains.

Regarding staff, the team consists of an educator, a sociologist, a cultural mediator (Romanian speaker), and an Italian teacher to support with language learning. Several Roma women were supported to become cultural mediators over the years, and they now collaborate with the project occasionally.

OUTCOMES

- ▶ Since 2005, 106 families (over 400 Roma) have been welcomed by the Solidarity Village project and have now reached economic and housing independence.
- ▶ Over 70% of the families in the project exited homelessness and obtained housing (either in public-supported housing, with a tenancy or buying a house).
- ▶ Policies and institutions have become more aware of these target groups. For example, when the settlements were demolished at first, institutions only offered accommodation to women and children, which meant separating families. After Casa della

Carità worked with them, the institutions started opening centres to welcome families from the settlements.

WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

This project has been replicated in other municipalities near Milan, and the working model employed by Casa della Carità has been implemented in several other communities living in informal settlements. The municipality of Milan also exported the model and implemented it by themselves.



PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

A partnership with the municipality of Milan was established to implement the project.

Participation of beneficiaries is done through regular meetings, consultations and by supporting them to become cultural mediators within the Foundation.

FUNDING

Self-funding initially, for the housing work.

Ministry of Education in Italy (for the pilot project 2005 – 2007).

Funding from the Municipality of Milan for housing services.

Other founders such as municipalities and different foundations.



4 Stockholms Stadsmission, Crossroads

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<https://www.stadsmissionen.se/vad-vi-gor/migration-och-integration/crossroads-rad-och-stod-eu-medborgare>

Sweden

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Crossroads is a department of Stockholms Stadsmissionen which offers social and legal support to European migrants and third country nationals who are economically or socially vulnerable.

AREAS

Social and legal support

ABOUT THE GOOD PRACTICE

Crossroads is offering basic needs, general assistance, and legal support for migrants, in order to support them in establishing themselves in Sweden as well as to access their rights in the Swedish society. Crossroads strongly recognizes the importance of being able to understand a new system and its requirements by mobile EU citizens. With the aim to satisfy this need, Crossroads offers drop-in information, pre-booked appointment and access to socio-legal and economic information and support related to Swedish society, migrant rights and obligations in Sweden.

The aim is to help migrants navigate through and understand the Swedish system, such as which government, social, local and non-governmental agencies they can or are required to contact, what processes they should consider upon settling in Sweden and so forth.

In addition to basic needs, Crossroads offers:

- ▶ The possibility of being supported by staff in relation to: a) writing a CV, looking for a job and guidance on how the Swedish job market works, b) the search for accommodation and the possibility of accessing social benefits, c) legal representation in relation to the migration and social welfare law.
- ▶ The possibility of meeting medical staff (Médecins du Monde) once a week.
- ▶ The opportunity to meet trade union experts on labour law once a week.
- ▶ The possibility of receiving a monthly prepaid card worth 30 euros that can be used in all grocery and second-hand shops managed by Stockholms Stadsmission.



© Stockholm City Mission / Anna Z Ek



“We aim for a more humane society for all. A society where everyone has the power to shape their own lives, everyone has access to housing, education and employment, everyone feels love and warmth”

- ▶ The access to a section which is only for women, in order to create a safe place. This is an ideal opportunity to build relationships and to promote trust, as well as to discuss women/human rights and enhance female empowerment.
- ▶ The opportunity to speak to a lawyer and obtain legal assistance.

OUTCOMES

The support offered means that newly arrived European migrants can access information and better understand their health, socio-political and economic benefits and requirements. Mobile EU citizens who are experiencing social and/or economic vulnerability receive the necessary information and support to improve their living conditions.

This stems from the idea that individuals are more capable of having a better quality of life and making better life choices if they have access to appropriate information, resources and assistance. This is the self-autonomy Crossroads aims for, so clients obtain the opportunity to make more informed decisions in matters relating to their life circumstances, as other non-vulnerable migrants do.

On a monthly average, Crossroads receives approximately 900 visits (230 unique visitors), serving 1100 meals. They also hold 50 individual legal counselling

sessions, 30 individual job coaching sessions and 20 individual sessions on EU-migrant rights regarding Swedish social welfare.

WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

Informing mobile EU citizens about their rights is an important element that is needed and can be easily transferred in most countries.

Another recommendable element is the holistic work approach. It consists of offering a large spectrum of support services, from basic needs (food, shelter) to access to health care, legal assistance, counselling on accessing the labour market or support in accessing an independent accommodation.

PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Crossroads is an active partner under a framework of an IOP-agreement with the City of Stockholm, alongside with other NGOs (IOP stands for “idea driven partnership”).

Crossroad strives in identifying civil society partnerships beneficial to their target group and have therefore close collaborations with other NGOs, such as Médecins du Monde, among others.

FUNDING

Public funding and private donations.

LINKS FOR OTHER RESOURCES

<https://www.upphandlingsmyndigheten.se/statsstod/riktade-vagledning/hur-kan-kommuner-finansiera-eller-anskaffa-skyddat-boende/ideburet-offentligt-partnerskap-iop/>



5 DIOGENES



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Belgium (Brussels)

AREAS



- ▶ Building a bridge between homeless people and the rest of society through outreach work, psychosocial support and awareness-raising
- ▶ Support in accessing health care
- ▶ Support to exit or prevent homelessness for mobile EU citizens
- ▶ Counselling for ensuring mobile EU citizens' rights
- ▶ Counselling for accessing the labour market (incl. preparing CVs, applying for jobs, registration in the national system, etc.)

SHORT DESCRIPTION

“Médiation Interculturelle”: Intercultural mediation is a practice implemented by DIOGENES since 2003, which requires specific cultural and linguistic knowledge. The main purpose of this action is to support destitute mobile EU citizens to achieve inclusion in the Belgian society and open access to their rights while in Belgium.

ABOUT THE GOOD PRACTICE

DIOGENES is a service providing support to homeless people in the Brussels-Capital Region through

outreach work. In the Intercultural mediation project, Polish and Roma intercultural mediators meet mobile EU citizens on the streets of Brussels daily, to inform them about their rights, to build up a relationship, to listen and support them in their own life choices. The activities are organised around people's needs in a holistic manner. Support is offered to people in all areas of life where they consider they need help, from accompanying homeless mobile EU citizens when accessing public services to finding housing or receiving financial support from the state. Support is also provided from DIOGENES' team with searching and applying for jobs, enrolling children to school, accessing healthcare, informing people about their rights and supporting them in procedures to access their social rights.

DIOGENES also takes on an “awareness-raising role” by mediating with the authorities and working to break their stereotypes about mobile EU citizens (e.g., Roma people, who are often discriminated against and stigmatised).

Advocacy activities are also organised regarding the rights of destitute mobile EU citizens, by discussing with authorities and building bridges between society and homeless mobile EU citizens. DIOGENES also works to collect data on the situation of destitute and homeless mobile EU citizens and to put the subject on the national and European political agenda.

The intercultural mediation program focuses on destitute mobile EU citizens (Roma and Polish people). 30% of the women DIOGENES worked with in 2020 are mobile EU citizens of Roma background.

The intercultural mediators come from the same communities and they speak the same languages as the beneficiaries, respectively Romani, Romanian and Polish.

OUTCOMES

- ▶ In just 6 months, 110 people were reached for the first time, and 276 interventions were made (guidance and other kinds of support).
- ▶ The number of people reached increases every week.
- ▶ Raising awareness on Roma culture and identity by holding lectures on this subject to public authorities.
- ▶ Success stories: people who were helped to access housing and jobs (even during the pandemic), and to receive healthcare support (including treatment for alcohol addiction).

WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

The cultural and language aspects of the project are very important; therefore, DIOGENES recommends transferring them to other cities. Involving people who come from the same communities and who have similar understandings and perceptions is one of the strengths of the project. It also helps to understand the situations that mobile EU citizens are confronted with from a distinct perspective – engaging someone who can build the bridge between cultures, people and institutions is particularly important. Intercultural mediators are also experts in the difficult situations

“At DIOGENES, we always put the person in the centre of their own life, we always start from what their needs are.”

which people in migration processes face. In the case of DIOGENES, the Roma intercultural mediator is an expert in migration law, while the Polish mediator maintains a privileged link with the Polish consulate in order to help beneficiaries best.

PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

In general, at DIOGENES, the beneficiaries are involved to some extent in shaping the services they use.

There is a partnership with the university KU Leuven, Hogeschool Odisee, Foyer vzw & Kenniscentrum Kinderrechten (KeKi) to produce policy-oriented research on homelessness, with a focus on the topic of begging.

FUNDING

The intercultural mediation project was funded for 6 months (January-June 2021) by the [COCOM](#), but the aim is to make this project a long-term one.

LINKS FOR OTHER RESOURCES

- ▶ Annual activity report for 2020: <https://www.diogenes.brussels/fr/pages/19-rapports-d-activites-2020> (p.44)
- ▶ Press article in Belgian newspaper “Le Soir”: <https://www.diogenes.brussels/file/268/download>
- ▶ To know more about intercultural mediation: <https://www.diogenes.brussels/fr/sections/36-mediation-interculturelle>



6 Bischof-Hermann-Stiftung, Europa.Brücke.Münster plus (EBM+)

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Germany (Münster)

AREAS

- ▶ Counselling and support for mobile EU citizens in precarious living circumstances and homelessness:
 - ▶ Support in accessing healthcare and housing
 - ▶ Support to exit or prevent homelessness
 - ▶ Counselling EU citizens' concerning their rights and duties to access the regular system

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Europa.Brücke.Münster (EBM+) has been implemented since 2016 in the city of Münster in Germany. The project offers counselling, accompaniment and support for mobile EU citizens and their children (aged up to seven) who live in destitution and/or homelessness. The aim of the project is to improve the living situation of the target groups, taking into account the cross-sectional goals of “non-discrimination” and “equality”.



ABOUT THE GOOD PRACTICE

EBM+ advice centre was established by the Bischof-Hermann-Stiftung (BHST) in Münster as a response to the increase in the number of mobile EU citizens expe-

riencing precarious living conditions and/or homelessness present in the BHST various services.

EBM+ receives an estimated number of 250 new clients every year, comprising children up to the age of seven, their parent(s) and adults without any children. In addition to the yearly new clients there are some old cases that receive continuous support (which are around 60 to 80 clients across the years). Most of the beneficiaries come from Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia, in this order (the rest come from other 16 EU member states).

EBM+ is offering support to clarify situations related to the manner in which freedom of movement is implemented in Germany which poses major challenges, especially for particularly disadvantaged EU citizens living in precarious conditions. For various reasons, the target group often has no direct access to the labour



market and is therefore also generally excluded from social benefits and does not know how to access the regular system. The language barrier is another issue, as even those who can speak German cannot fill in official documents or open a bank account on their own and need support.

The work is done on a one-to-one basis: accompaniment for people to access public services, seek health advice, etc.

EBM+ also advocates for the right to housing of destitute mobile EU citizens by raising awareness on the access to shelters for those who have no formal employment or welfare benefits. Support in finding a regular flat with tenancy agreement for the beneficiaries with a stable situation is also organised.

EBM+ is furthermore involved in a bigger network called “network for Anti-Racism in Münster” to fight against racism, as the issue of racial discrimination is very present in the lives of mobile EU citizens, particularly targeted at people of Roma background.

Staff: as most of the clients come from Bulgaria, there are two Bulgarian-speaking volunteers and four social workers and one nurse, who speak German and English.

OUTCOMES

- ▶ Counselling and support from EBM+ and the associated network had often meant that people could get access to shelters and other services (e. g. school, kindergarten, health insurance) and furthermore were able to assert their legal rights to various social benefits in the long-term.

- ▶ EBM+'s work also created more social and political awareness in Münster regarding the situation of mobile EU citizens and their specific problems linked to EU free movement legislation.
- ▶ Overall support for mobile EU citizens was improved, following the EBM+ work to increase knowledge among professionals about the rights of mobile EU citizens.
- ▶ When they arrive, people may be destitute and homeless, they have to stay with relatives or sleep in a car and may not know how they can access shelter or existential support. Enabled by the counselling, support and accompaniment received from EBM+, in several cases people were empowered to find a job and to stabilize their living-situation in the long-term.

WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

The project has a strong component of defending the rights of mobile EU citizens, which is an element that can be easily transferred and can bring a positive development in people's lives. Starting from providing basic information about mobile EU citizen's rights, getting access to shelters, food distribution points and healthcare services, to the point of being empowered to achieve the status of worker and access the national system.

Supporting the children of mobile EU citizens to access education in a network with communal facilities is also an important part of the project which can be of inspiration to other cities/organisations where parents migrate together with their children and are affected by destitution, or they live in homelessness.





During the everyday work EBM+ is also engaged in the fight against different types of discrimination, which is very present in the lives of mobile EU citizens, in particular, the Roma. This component is a highly transferable one as multilevel discrimination is common in all societies and affects the chances that people have in being included in societies or getting access to basic needs.

“Due to the fact that a big part of the funding comes from FEAD, we are not allowed to offer support with finding a job or some types of welfare benefits because that is not foreseen in the German programme. This could only be done in a voluntary context as there is no financial capacity for it. We believe this is something that is missing in FEAD; people should be allowed to receive qualified help in finding a job (CVs, applications, etc.). If we only have the low-threshold procedures, they only can go to a shelter, a soup kitchen, or a doctor (if urgently needed) but people from other EU countries move to Germany to work and live autonomously, and not to be dependent on external aid.”

PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

A partnership has been developed with other organisations, for example with GGUA, (<https://www.ggua.de/arbeitsbereiche/projekt-q-qualifizierung-der-fluechtlingsberatung/>) an NGO specialised on legal counselling for complex cases.

Collaboration with the municipality in areas like housing, access to shelters, education of children, healthcare etc. is also ongoing, as well as networking with the project “Marischa” (<http://www.muenster.org/projektmarischa/>), which offers counselling for sex workers (not only, but especially for EU citizens).

On participation, previous beneficiaries are involved as volunteers in activities at EBM, for example as interview partners in surveys or public meetings. In the future (depending on COVID19) especially women and their children shall be able to meet in a new site, to get in touch with each other, share their experiences and get help from a peer who has been in a similar situation.

FUNDING

- ▶ FEAD (Funds for the European Aid to the most Deprived)
- ▶ German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
- ▶ German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

LINKS FOR OTHER RESOURCES

<https://www.feantsa.org/download/1-the-use-of-fead-in-germany1032434327325702777.pdf>

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Germany (Berlin)

AREAS

- ▶ Support in accessing healthcare
- ▶ Support to exit or prevent homelessness for mobile EU citizens

SHORT DESCRIPTION

The project **Frostschtzengel 2.0** was started by GEBEWO in 2012 to offer counselling in several languages to homeless people from countries of the European Union and Germany, concerning their rights and opportunities. Many EU citizens are dependent on offers from the homeless support system and need information and counselling to exit destitution or prevent/exit homelessness.

ABOUT THE GOOD PRACTICE

Frostschtzengel 2.0 acts as a bridge between the homeless support system and those seeking support. The staff provides multilingual and outreach counselling in the facilities of the low-threshold support system in Berlin, e.g. in day care centres and emergency shelters. The clients are citizens from EU countries other than Germany and from Germany: around 230 new cases per year. This is in addition to work with clients from previous years (although there are no estimated numbers for them). The nationalities of the people reached vary every year but usually bene-

ficiaries come from Romania, Bulgaria, Poland or the Baltic countries (this variety is also influenced by the languages that staff speak). Regarding gender, 85% of clients are men and 15% are women. There are also some clients with Roma background.

Frostschtzengel provides very specialized services, with professionals specifically trained in counselling and the legal framework of EU free movement in the German context. In addition, all of the staff have a non-German mother tongue, which helps to reach as many people as possible. Frostschtzengel's work is based on outreach, but with a quite different approach from the usual outreach work in the homelessness sector. It consists of workers going to service providers like shelters, soup kitchens and health centres to counsel mobile EU citizens on-the-spot and act as a



“In the Frostschutzengel 2.0 project, we are confronted daily with the social exclusion of EU citizens in Berlin. We pursue the goal of offering help and orientation to them, and at the same time making the living conditions of EU citizens in Berlin visible, in order to start social acceptance and processes of change.”

“bridge” between them and the staff in these places. They also cooperate with the professionals there to give them information about what rights and assistance EU citizens are entitled to, their specific challenges, etc.

Regarding the approach to public officials, the organisation drafted a user-friendly guide for EU citizens to offer instructions on how to get registered, where to get some sleep and other basic services, etc. This guide is also used by officials working in the welfare system because many of them do not know about the rights and entitlements of destitute mobile EU citizens. Frostschutzengel also organizes working groups and workshops in Berlin with other professionals in the welfare system to discuss about the situation of mobile EU citizens, to share knowledge about relevant new laws and court rulings, etc.



OUTCOMES

- ▶ This is one of the only projects in Berlin which provides both outreach services for organisations and legal consultation, in cooperation with the local-funded partner project TRIA. The Project TRIA is also coordinated by GEBEWO (as Frostschutzengel), but focuses on legal consultation, especially in terms of entitlement to welfare benefits.
- ▶ Since professionals from both projects go to the facilities where homeless people are, the best outcome is reaching homeless people that would have never been contacted otherwise, and giving them the chance to access the welfare system, find a shelter, etc.
- ▶ Another positive outcome is the network created with social services, hospitals, embassies, etc. through which better support can be obtained for destitute mobile EU citizens. This network helps to make sure their rights are not denied because they do not speak German, or because public services believe they are not entitled to anything. It is about opening “the system” to EU citizens, by raising awareness about mobile EU citizens’ rights within the homelessness sector and the social services system in Berlin.

WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

- ▶ One of the main successes has been the extensive and useful network built over the years (almost 9 now) that includes: low-threshold services, migration services, lawyers, translators and interpreters, officers working for the city of Berlin, housing projects, doctors, etc.
- ▶ The project has built up an extensive knowledge base about the legal aspects of EU migration in Berlin, which is used to train staff and professionals from other organisations as well.
- ▶ The quality of awareness-raising work among public authorities, so they are more open to mobile EU citizens: not speaking German (or any other language) should not translate into denying access to any rights.
- ▶ The availability of multilingual staff to support people coming from different countries.

PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Regarding participation, clients always decide which measures to take on their own, and professionals from Frostschtzengel always follow the steps the person wants to take.

There are some partnerships established with: the city of Berlin, several shelters to arrange the frequency of the visits by Frostschtzengel's professionals, and with other organisations in Berlin to share practices and relevant court rulings, to advocate together with officials when support for EU citizens is denied, etc.

FUNDING

- ▶ FEAD (Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived)
- ▶ The City of Berlin (Senate Administration for Integration, Employment and Social Affairs)
- ▶ The German Federal Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs

LINKS FOR OTHER RESOURCES

- ▶ FEANTSA Ending Homelessness Awards 2018: [FEANTSA Ending Homelessness Awards 2018](#)
- ▶ Annual Report 2016: https://www.gebewo.de/images/pdf/wissenswertes/Jahresbericht_2016_FSEplus_Sozialberatung.pdf
- ▶ Rights of mobile EU citizens: User Friendly Guide: <https://gebewo.de/497-prodec-protecting-the-rights-of-mobile-eu>



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Spain (several regions)

AREAS

- ▶ Integrated approach to provide/support access to health care, housing, education and employment resources
- ▶ Counselling for accessing the labour market through employment itineraries (incl. preparing CVs, applying for jobs, registration in the national system, training, etc.)
- ▶ Support to complete educational pathways
- ▶ Support to exit or prevent homelessness for mobile EU citizens
- ▶ Counselling for ensuring mobile EU citizens' rights and fight against discrimination



SHORT DESCRIPTION

Fundación Secretariado Gitano has been working in Spain since the 1960s. The teams focused on non-Spanish Roma families are located in the cities of Burgos and Oviedo (north), Valencia (east) and Catalonia (north-east). These initiatives target Roma families coming from Eastern European countries (mainly Romania) to advance their social inclusion. Following an integrated approach, work is done in the areas of employment, education, health, housing, participation and antidiscrimination.

ABOUT THE GOOD PRACTICE

Around 2000 FSG started working with Roma people coming from European countries outside of Spain. The living conditions of EU mobile Roma in Spain are much worse than those of the national Roma, in terms of housing, access to services, employment, and marginalisation, aggravated by legal and language barriers.

The number of non-Spanish Roma supported by FSG is *circa* 800, comprising all the four projects in several Spanish regions. Given that the total number of Spanish Roma supported annually by FSG is over 30.000, non-Spanish Roma are only a small part

“Legal or administrative barriers very often prevent access to mainstream services and social rights. In twenty-first century, Europe it shouldn't be allowed that so many citizens still live in slums and dire conditions. It is a matter of fundamental rights. Not granting an ID or a registration is only an excuse to deny access to these rights.”

of their target group. However, the challenges they face are cross-cutting, which leads to a simultaneous integrated/interdisciplinary intervention in education, employment, housing, healthcare and social participation with both groups.

FSG focuses on opening access to mainstream services and not to “parallel/ Roma-only” services. This ensures the inclusion of Roma people in society and increases awareness among public servants. The approach and the methodology of all interventions are the same, but the focus may change from one region to another. For example, in Catalonia the focus is mainly on children’s education and health, in Valencia primarily on basic needs, in Asturias on active citizenship, while in Burgos the team specialises on the particular needs of rural life.

Regarding support with housing, FSG cannot offer accommodation to Roma migrants, but instead accompanies families to access rent subsidies or mainstream social housing, managed by local and regional authorities, so they are able to apply for a vacant housing slot.

It is important for the success of the projects that the staff has a good knowledge of the languages spoken by beneficiaries – in this case, of Romanes, Romanian or Bulgarian – and that it includes people from the same communities. The staff periodically receives both internal and external trainings, on the history and culture of Roma migrants, information about local resources, how to overcome administrative barriers, etc..

OUTCOMES

- ▶ The main achievement is access to mainstream resources, like the health insurance card or education. It is a great success that children supported in the project (in the 4 regions) go to school on a regular basis.
- ▶ As the focus of each intervention varies by region, the outcomes and the ways to measure them also vary. For example, in Asturias, FSG develops activities on social participation together with Spanish people (Roma and non-Roma) with the aim to encourage active citizenship. But this is only possible because in Asturias, a “minimum income scheme” has been established for several years now and is also accessible for Roma migrants. Having this type of minimum income, allows individuals to



work in other areas such as social participation or employment skills.

- ▶ After more than 15 years, FSG has set up an extensive and resourceful network of support among public and private organisations to make access to rights easier.

WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

- ▶ Sustained long-term support: given that EU-mobile Roma families suffer from structural needs, 6 months or 1-year interventions are not enough.
- ▶ Outreach work used as an initial contact to start building trust, with activities like introducing FSG and its projects, delivering leisure activities for children and families, or recruiting participants.
- ▶ The staff has a very good knowledge of the local resources available and the needs and possibilities of the people they support. It is very flexible and understands well the migration process and discrimination that people have experienced, which translates into building trust relationships more quickly.

LINKS FOR OTHER RESOURCES

- ▶ <https://otroperiodismo.com/de-rumania-a-espana-como-no-tenemos-derechos-luchamos>
- ▶ <https://www.lavanguardia.com/local/valencia/20180210/44679121453/programa-de-insercion-de-valencia-atiende-a-513-gitanos-de-rumania-y-bulgaria.html>
- ▶ <https://www.fundaciosalutalta.org/actualitat/2018/09/26/entrevista-catherine-bonhoure>



- ▶ Close collaboration with public authorities.
- ▶ An integrated approach, both in terms of areas (education, housing, health, etc.) and people: when they work with families, they work with all the members.
- ▶ Access to mainstream services, and not to “parallel/Roma-only” services is very important. It is also linked with FSG’s interculturality philosophy, since it allows interaction among different ethnic groups.

PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

There are collaborations with other organisations to set up learning courses for adults or projects with children, with schools to boost linguistic skills of children in extracurricular time, etc.

FUNDING

The projects are mainly supported by regional and local authorities. Non-Spanish Roma also have access to ESF or national funded projects.

9 Hope Housing (Bradford) Ltd



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UK (Bradford)

AREAS

- ▶ Support to exit or prevent homelessness for mobile EU citizens
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Support in accessing healthcare

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Hope Housing (Bradford) Ltd has opened their services since 2008 for housing homeless people, including destitute migrants, while also offering support with immigration problems. Tailored support is created for destitute mobile EU citizens in a range of areas including addiction, mental health and employment.

ABOUT THE GOOD PRACTICE

Hope Housing (Bradford) Ltd provides a range of interventions and services including supported housing with the aim of eradicating homelessness in Bradford, using a holistic approach to restoring the individual. Currently the service has 41 units of supported accommodation, of which 7 are designated for destitute migrants with no access to benefits at all. 60% of the people supported by the organisation come from EU countries (in 2020 from a total of 80 clients, 50 came from the EU).

These 7 units of accommodation include 1 shared house and 1 self-contained property. They are provided for free by the local church and bills or other expenses are paid through fundraising. People can be housed there until their migration process is resolved (approximately 3-6 months), and either third-country nationals or EU citizens can access them.

During the pandemic an additional 30 EU citizens were supported, and emergency accommodation was provided to prevent rough sleeping. For these clients, the local authority was paying for their accommodation, while Hope Housing offered support in employment, addiction treatment, job searching, access to mental healthcare, and a tailored individual plan.

Regarding staff, there are 2 language specialists, one for Slovakian and the other one for Polish, since these nationalities are the most represented among beneficiaries. Hope Housing also has an immigration advisor.

OUTCOMES

- ▶ Getting clients out of destitution and obtaining settled status (approx. 20 clients in 2020), which is very important in terms of access to housing and employment.



“A dream of what I’d like to do: if all housing associations and projects had a little space for people with no access to benefits, either in their hostel or housing stock, then we wouldn’t have such big numbers of migrants within the homeless population.”



- ▶ Hope Housing has worked with the local authority during the pandemic to make the ‘Everyone In’ scheme a reality for beneficiaries in the area, regardless of their nationality.
- ▶ Following ‘Everyone In’, a program called ‘Next Steps’ was created: 2 workers are funded for a year to help people access long-term tenancies, in shared housing or their own accommodation. The city council paid for that private accommodation while the migration status was in process, so once the settled status was granted, people could stay in the same accommodation without having to sleep in the streets while their migration status is resolved.

WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

The service is aiming at ensuring housing for free or at very low cost for destitute mobile EU citizens, which is a strong point that recommends its transferability. In this manner, the person can focus on resolving their immigration status and it is also much easier for professionals to support them with other issues, because they know where people are located.

The project ‘Next Steps’, where the city council paid for private accommodation in case of emergency to later transform this contract into a normal tenancy, is also a project worthy to replicate.

PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Regarding partnerships, from November 2020 an official contract was signed with the city council in Bradford. A good relationship with the local authorities is beneficial to better support mobile EU citizens in need.

Collaboration also happens with other organisations when there are needs which cannot be covered by Hope Housing on its own. They work with charities Acts 435 and the Vicars Fund to get micro funding for clients. Hope Housing also rents properties from Green Pastures to be able to provide housing for the homeless. There is also a collaboration with asylum specialists for failed asylum seekers, as well as with the local Job Centre and Skills House to help clients getting an employment. With other homeless service providers in Bradford, they created a “Destitution Concern working group” to improve services and have one voice of advocacy in the city.

FUNDING

Hope Housing is funded by a range of trust funds and through rental income from their supported housing properties.

LINKS FOR OTHER RESOURCES

- ▶ <https://www.hopehousing.org.uk/news-and-events> - Stories from clients.
- ▶ [Green Pastures Partner : Hope Housing Bradford - YouTube](#) – Details about the partnership with Green Pastures to provide accommodation.

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Denmark (Copenhagen)

AREAS

- ▶ Day shelter
- ▶ Night shelter
- ▶ Support in accessing healthcare
- ▶ Support to exit or prevent homelessness for mobile EU citizens
- ▶ Counselling for ensuring mobile EU citizens' rights
- ▶ Counselling for accessing the labour market
- ▶ Accompaniment in contacting and in meetings with authorities

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Kompasset Kirkens Korshær is an organisation established in 2013 with the aim to offer counselling to homeless unregistered migrants. Everyone is welcome, but the primary target groups are homeless mobile EU citizens. Presently, the service offers a day shelter for relaxation and counselling as well as emergency shelter during the winter.

ABOUT THE GOOD PRACTICE

Since 1912, Kirkens Korshær has helped socially disadvantaged people in Denmark - the homeless, addicts, the mentally ill, the lonely and the poor. Through the service Kompasset, the organisation is aiming at reaching mobile EU citizens who are not registered in Denmark yet, but it is also used by third-country nationals with European residency. Danish people also use the counselling services and the shelter, but the main target group is EU citizens. Most of the beneficiaries are men (86% in 2020) and 60% of all users are from Romania, with many belonging to the Roma communities (though there are more women among the Roma).

The counselling focuses on ensuring mobile EU citizens' rights, supporting access to the labour market, support in navigating in the Danish system and accompaniment to public authorities. A health coordinator supports people in accessing health care. Besides counselling, the day shelter is also a place to rest and recharge with a cup of tea or coffee before returning to the streets.





The work is done in a practical and case by case manner. For example: to open a bank account, when mobile EU citizens are rejected, the social workers use the existing guidelines at Danish or European level to inform banks about the rights of EU citizens. In this specific area, an agreement with one bank was reached where they accepted to use the shelter's address to open bank accounts for mobile EU citizens.

Since 2016, Kompasset has also developed an outreach program which meets homeless people in the streets for informing them on possible services in the city, accompanying them to the public services or doing counselling on their rights in people's environment.



Regarding the staff, there are between 10-15 volunteers (approx. 2 a day), following the counsellors' instructions. Counsellors in the shelter are social workers, professionals with a background in legal

studies, migration or Human Rights, and pedagogists. Together, staff and volunteers can offer services in 14 different languages.

OUTCOMES

- ▶ Main achievements: clarification on rights of access to emergency shelter for mobile EU citizens, which is extremely important.
- ▶ Opening a bank account for mobile EU citizens has become easier due to awareness-raising on this topic with the banks.
- ▶ Finding jobs and obtaining registration for mobile EU citizens: successful cases of people who exit homelessness thanks partly to the support of their services.

WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

Following a rights-based approach by raising awareness with authorities and employers about mobile EU citizens' rights, raising awareness within the Danish society in general about social exclusion of mobile EU citizens and factors that may lead them into poverty, or supporting people to develop the needed tools for navigating the administrative processes of the Danish registration system and demand for their rights.

The way the shelter is designed is also a component of its success: part of it is a café where people can relax, and then there's the counselling component. Having both services in the same place means different kinds

of support are available. Some people need help in registration and looking for a job, so they go directly to the counselling services. Some others, especially those with mental health issues and with addictions, might not have the capacity to go at first to the counselling services, but with time their situation may be improved, and they are empowered to enter the counselling services.

PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

The approach of the service is that their beneficiaries are at the centre of the decision process when it comes to what steps they need to take in improving their situation. Opportunities are also created for the visitors of the service to be involved in the everyday activities (either occasionally by joining workshops – for example, for fixing bikes or arranging the green space of the shelter, or on a longer term to offer jobs and include them in the staff team).

Collaborations have been developed both with the Copenhagen municipality and other non-profit organisations. A “Migrant Network” is established in the city, which is a coalition of organisations working with migrants, meeting every 3 months to share experiences, practices, and coordinate on activities. It is also a very useful way to have updated information of night shelters and other basic services which are available for migrants.

FUNDING

- ▶ FEAD (Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived).
- ▶ Private donations, fundraising.

LINKS FOR OTHER RESOURCES

- ▶ <https://kbh.kirkenskorshaer.dk/sted/kompasset-english/>
- ▶ [Unregistered homeless migrants in Kompasset: Experiences from DanChurch social](#) (2017)
- ▶ [Covid19 and homeless migrants](#) (spring 2020)



11 Médecins du Monde (MdM) Sweden



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Sweden (Stockholm, Malmö)



SHORT DESCRIPTION

Médecins du Monde program on access to primary healthcare for vulnerable groups

MdM provides healthcare services to vulnerable groups, especially EU citizens lacking health insurance, whilst also performing advocacy to achieve equal access to healthcare for their target populations. Psychosocial support and legal counselling are also services offered at the MdM clinics across Sweden.

AREAS

- ▶ Medical advice and support in accessing health care
- ▶ Primary health care services
- ▶ Mental health and psychosocial support
- ▶ Legal counselling

ABOUT THE GOOD PRACTICE

MdM services in Sweden are open for all migrants, offering a combination of medical health support, psychosocial support and legal counselling. Estimates are that one third, or one fourth of the people met are EU citizens. In 2020, 300 (from a total of 1400 beneficiaries) EU citizens were supported, with a majority of Roma from Romania.

The end goal of MdM is to get everyone included in the public health system. In Sweden, the law grants undocumented citizens the same access to healthcare as asylum seekers since 2013, but not to mobile EU citizens. Therefore, MdM started focusing on EU mobile citizens lacking the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), to ensure basic access to healthcare. Mobile EU citizens do not have access to healthcare in Sweden if they do not have insurance and unless they are seen as undocumented.

Advocacy activities: focus on including mobile EU citizens in the legislation which enables access to health services for undocumented migrants. The process was interrupted because of the COVID 19 pandemic but remains an interest for the organisation. In Skone

“We want to show that it is actually possible to reach these ‘hard to reach groups’. It’s not that difficult and you can find them, you can treat them, it costs so much less money than to wait until things turn into a serious problem.”

region (Malmo), policy makers have granted mobile EU citizens access to health care services equally to undocumented citizens. But due to the lack of knowledge among medical staff on this possibility, Mdm focuses a lot of work on raising awareness on this possibility.

Staff: multicultural and multiple languages: interpreter for Romanian and Bulgarian. Staff also speaks Romanian (in Malmo).

A specific project for mobile EU citizens was called FRISK and implemented in Malmo between the end of 2015 - 2019. The goal was to work towards prevention of diseases among mobile EU citizens through health education, as well as to analyse the level of access to health care. The project was considered necessary because of an increase in the number of mobile EU citizens in Sweden and a strong public discussion about if and how Sweden should support them. FRISK was an important project and targeted at informing people on health issues, because the staff noticed that there was a severe lack of knowledge among mobile EU citizens.

At the Mdm clinics across Sweden, mobile EU citizens have the opportunity to receive a series of services – visits to the doctor, meeting a psychiatrist/psychologist and receiving legal advice, sometimes all during one visit.

OUTCOMES

- ▶ Improving knowledge on health issues among the guests of the service.
- ▶ Ensuring health care for mobile EU citizens (at Mdm clinics).
- ▶ Example of cases where people could also receive support with mental health.

WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

It is already implemented in 8 cities in Sweden where Mdm has offices, after initially starting in Stockholm.

The goal is to make authorities accountable. Therefore, some important aspects of Mdm, such as building relationships with the authorities, showing them that it is possible to reach vulnerable people, and sharing good practices with them, should be transferred.



PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Discussion sessions are organised to consult with target groups on their needs. Partnerships have been developed with organisations, NGOs that can ensure shelter for people where they can be referred to. Also, with social departments in Sweden and official institutions (examples: Crossroads, city missions, Swedish Red Cross).

FUNDING

FRISK project – Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD).

LINKS FOR OTHER RESOURCES

- ▶ Left behind: the state of universal healthcare coverage in Europe https://lakareivarlden.se/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/DOTW_2019_lowress_alt.pdf
- ▶ Left behind: voices of people excluded from universal healthcare coverage in Europe https://lakareivarlden.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/DOTW_Left_Behind_final_alt.pdf



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Austria (Vienna)

AREAS

- ▶ Support in accessing healthcare
- ▶ Day café – access to healthy food (on a donation basis), access to a social space and social work support

SHORT DESCRIPTION

neunerhaus has offered health services to people who are homeless and people without health insurance since 2006 and opened the **neunerhaus health centre** in 2017. Services offered include a general practice with nursing care, an optician and a gynaecologist, as well as a dental practice, social work and peer workers.

The service has a strong focus on person-centred activities and interdisciplinary care. The **neunerhaus Café**, based in the same building, also offers people a space to spend time and socialise without needing to purchase anything.

ABOUT THE GOOD PRACTICE

The health centre and the café are services that support a large percentage of EU citizens. In 2020, 43% of the 3,697 people who were treated at the **neunerhaus** health centre were mobile EU citizens without social security entitlements.

Easy access to social work is a key element of both the health centre and the adjoining **neunerhaus** café where, in addition to social work interventions, people have access to healthy food on a donation basis. Social workers are available in both the health centre and café to give initial advice on health and social issues and provide practical support and case work, for example establishing social security entitlements (where possible), connecting people to other support services and helping them navigate the various administrative systems.

To overcome the language barrier, video interpretation is available in over 50 languages, so people can benefit from social work or health consultations in their own language; this has been a great success and is a crucial element in helping people better understand and manage their health. This service is offered through a cooperation with **SAVD**, a start-up based in Vienna offering interpreters via video link in under two minutes. In 2020, 28% of the appointments in the **neunerhaus** health centre took place with the support of video interpretation.

Internal organisation: the health centre employs medical professionals, as well as social workers and peer workers. Employing peer workers brings valuable lived experience and expertise into the service and this allows for different kinds of interactions, contrib-



uting to the interdisciplinary and holistic approach. In recruiting positions for the health centre, it is essential to ensure that professionals understand the target group, as many people who are homeless have had bad experiences before with health services, and may have experienced discrimination, stigma, shame and language barriers.

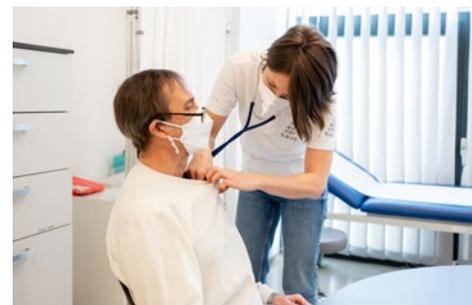
There is no structured training on the legal framework of EU free movement, or access to social rights for EU migrants, etc when joining *neunerhaus*. Instead, new professionals learn how to work with these issues on an ongoing basis, through exchanges with colleagues in different professions in case reviews, team meetings etc.

OUTCOMES

People have access to high quality healthcare and support to improve their health condition, regardless of their migration or health insurance status, through an interdisciplinary approach and, if needed, with video interpretation. The health literacy of individuals also improves: health professionals support people to understand their own health, the actions they can take, for example, pain management if they have a chronic condition, and make sure that people are active participants in their own treatment.

Social workers support individuals in overcoming their social and economic barriers, for example giving information and advice on housing options, financial concerns, etc. The team works in a holistic, low-threshold manner which is key to ensuring the inclusion of people who are severely affected by poverty, illness and exclusion in the social and health care system.

The health centre and the café complement each other. Having both services in the same place has been successful because it has made the health and social counselling very dynamic, allowing people to move between the services and have better access.



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WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

Regarding healthcare, it is important to ensure people without health insurance have low-threshold access to healthcare, and also offer support to establish social security entitlements where possible (either in the host or the origin country). Having a multidisciplinary team of doctors, nurses, social workers, peer workers, and other medical professionals (like dentists) in the same health centre is very important because it allows for interprofessional exchanges of views to address each individual's needs.

The idea of personal autonomy and empowerment is also essential, both in the health centre and the café. In addition, the latter is open to anyone living or working nearby to increase social participation.

Video interpretation is important for *neunerhaus* and strongly recommendable.

PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

People who access *neunerhaus* services are invited to take part in an annual survey on a voluntary basis, with video interpretation available as needed. It is advertised in *neunerhaus* services and is the most



systematic way *neunerhaus* receives feedback from users across its services. There is also often anecdotal feedback given to the team in the health centre.

Empowerment approach: people are encouraged to be aware of and involved in their own healthcare and treatments, to understand how to stay well, and are provided with information about their health condition and how to improve it.

There is strong collaboration with a network of specialist doctors, nurses, chemists and health clinics in Vienna to cover different medical specialities and procedures, so that as many patients as possible can get appropriate medical treatment even without insurance. These collaborations mainly rely on good long-standing relationships, rather than formal contracts.



Apart from the on-site health centre, *neunerhaus* also has a team of mobile doctors who regularly attend other *neunerhaus* services and homelessness services provided by other organisations in Vienna. This supports more people to access low-threshold health-

“Health care for all, irrespective of insurance status, and affordable, permanent and inclusive housing for everyone – these, and nothing less, are the goals of *neunerhaus*.”

Elisabeth Hammer, Chief Executive, *neunerhaus*

care, including mobile EU citizens who might be using these services. For this team of mobile doctors, there are formal arrangements with other service providers, e.g. establishing the frequency of visits, providing spaces for doctors to treat patients within the services.

FUNDING

The *neunerhaus* health centre is funded by Fonds Soziales Wien (the Vienna Social Fund) and also has a contract with the Österreichische Gesundheitskassa (the Austrian Health Insurance Fund). The social work in the *neunerhaus* Café is also partly funded by Fonds Soziales Wien (the Vienna Social Fund).

LINKS FOR OTHER RESOURCES

- ▶ Health and Homelessness FEANTSA magazine: https://www.neunerhaus.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Fachpublikationen/2020/Homeless_in_Europe_Winter_2019_-_full.pdf
- ▶ EU mobile citizens FEANTSA magazine: https://www.neunerhaus.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Fachpublikationen/2019/Homeless_In_Europe_Magazine_Winter_2018_2019.pdf
- ▶ Annual report of 2020 (in German): https://www.neunerhaus.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Jahresberichte/neunerhaus_Jahresbericht_2020_Doppelseiten.pdf
- ▶ How the video interpretation service works in the health centre (video in German): <https://www.wien.gv.at/video/2051/Videodolmetsch-neunerhaus>

13 No Fixed Abode (Vvary)



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Helsinki, Finland

SHORT DESCRIPTION

No Fixed Abode started its immigration services in 2016 based on the existing demand to offer support to people who came to Finland but were not entitled to social security or had an unclear residence status and who were mostly EU citizens.

ABOUT THE GOOD PRACTICE

Vvary's immigrant work is targeted at homeless immigrants, especially when their rights to social security and services are unclear. Immigration experts help people to find out solutions for encountered hardships and support people to integrate into the Finnish society when this is their aim. The service users are informed and supported, i.e. in finding out about their chances to register their right of residence in Finland (EU citizens) as well as rights to social security and to health and social services. Day centre and immigration services for counselling are also offered.

Staff: includes people with international knowledge on homelessness. Immigration experts speak English, Russian, Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian.

Using a step-by-step approach, the staff builds trust and creates relations with the beneficiaries after which

they make a plan together on how to address their needs better. They ensure people receive the correct counselling by cooperating with the networks focusing on the rights of undocumented migrants and the housing of migrants.



Support is also provided with emergency accommodation, job seeking (searching and applying for jobs, preparing CVs), facilitating communication with public authorities and escorting people to public services, appeals concerning negative outcomes of EU registration procedures and achieving the initial registration. Health issues are also addressed, including addiction treatment, although this has proved difficult to achieve. In cases where people request it, reconnections with the origin country or other places where they want to return are arranged.

An estimate of 10-20% of the beneficiaries in the day shelter are EU citizens, while in the migration services, about 50% are EU citizens. 80-90% of the immigrants from EU countries who are beneficiaries come from the Baltic countries, mostly Estonia.



AREAS

- ▶ Support in accessing health care
- ▶ Support in exiting or preventing homelessness for mobile EU citizens
- ▶ Counselling for ensuring mobile EU citizens' rights
- ▶ Counselling for accessing the labour market (incl. preparing CVs, applying for jobs, registration in the national system, etc.)
- ▶ Assistance in seeking justice for the victims of illegal or inappropriate treatment by an employer, lessor, official or customer servant etc.

OUTCOMES

Access to emergency accommodation in Helsinki has been achieved for all by increasing the number of beds in the city. None of the organisation's beneficiaries have recently reported problems to enter in emergency accommodation. This was the result of a long period of advocacy with politicians and other organisations in Helsinki.

We managed to become known among the EU citizens and the organisations who refer people to our services.

Individual cases of success: after months or years of support, people have been registered in the system and they now have access to welfare benefits and access to (supported) housing or found employment.

WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

What recommends the transfer of this practice is its approach to achieving people's rights, supporting them to be included in the Finish system and opening the access to their rights.

The challenges poor EU citizens encounter when migrating to another EU country should not be looked at merely through the lense of homelessness prevention or, for instance, social security, but instead the approach should be more holistic: the practitioners should be innovative and daring, ready to push boundaries as well as support the empowerment of people in difficult life situations flexibly, according to their true needs.

PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Participation of beneficiaries is happening at the level of the organisation. Mobile EU citizens are involved in the everyday work and volunteer at activities of the organisation (sometimes being remunerated for the jobs they do). Centre for peer work – people come there to interact with peers and relax.

Partnerships have been developed with other organisations in Helsinki for advocacy activities.

FUNDING

Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA), based on annual and project-specific proposals submission.

“We are small, but we try to be loud. We try to always remind the politicians that we have these people here also. In our view, the problem for too long was that these people [mobile EU citizens] have been invisible, nobody has admitted they even exist.”



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UK (Luton)

AREAS

- ▶ Welfare Centre
- ▶ Support in accessing health care
- ▶ Support to exit or prevent homelessness for mobile EU citizens
- ▶ Advice for accessing the labour market

SHORT DESCRIPTION

NOAH Enterprise has implemented two projects with a specific focus on migrant rough sleepers. Both projects are coordinated from Luton, a town with a high number of EU citizens, from a welfare centre hub which is a place of safety and peace that provides people with food, advice and wellbeing support.

ABOUT THE GOOD PRACTICE

The first project is the EU Settlement Scheme Employment Programme (EEP). This is an intensive residential programme facilitating a 12-week stay in a home in Luton with employment support for those with pre-settled status, so they can move into sustainable work. The NOAH academy provides training in language and digital skills, and a recruitment service to build relationships with local employers who are socially minded. Then destitute EU migrants are matched with

job offers from these employers, and the training they receive is tailored to them.

The second one is the Learning, Employment and Reconnection Support (LERS) project, which entails street outreach every day and engaging with people, providing care and harm minimisation support. Access to the NOAH training and employment academy is facilitated, as well as replacement of ID documents and in-house EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) support provision.

The work is directly focusing on mobile EU citizens, around 300-400/year. Most of them are from Poland or Romania, single people (no families), with a high





“NOAH was founded in 1987 inspired by the life of St Vincent De Paul to provide practical help to those who need it the most. Supporting the community of Luton and those experiencing abject poverty is our greatest calling.

We value and respect every person no matter their background.

We believe in finding new and innovative solutions for ending rough sleeping by sourcing meaningful work and great housing and through helping every person to enjoy a quality of life.”

percentage of men: 80% for the Polish nationals, and 70% for Romanian, and many people with Roma background.

Some are very vulnerable and suffer from poor mental health, addiction or limited language skills.

NOAH's mission is to alleviate poverty and find positive solutions to people whatever their circumstances are. It is a very person-centric approach on what the

person wants and needs. To start building trust, the project offers free meals and also critical eviction support in conjunction with the local authority to avoid rough sleeping.

NOAH is also a partner of the Home Office on the EU Settlement Scheme, with immigration advisers embedded within the team, who help people get settled or pre-settled status. Having this migration process resolved is key to later accessing employment and the full range of support available. Gaining settled status has been revolutionary for people who had been living in the margins for a long time. With this status, they can access mainstream welfare support like Universal Credit, accommodation services and healthcare, etc.

For people who are destitute and wish to return to their country of origin, NOAH provides a dignified, smooth and compassionate reconnection service. This includes accompaniment to international embassies for emergency travel documents and the covering of all costs.

Staff are multilingual, which is very important to build trust with people. That is why they have recruited staff who speak Polish, Romanian and other languages like Hungarian, French, Italian, Russian and Spanish.

OUTCOMES

- ▶ 80% of people supported through the EU Settlement Scheme Employment Programme (EEP) have successfully entered employment.

- ▶ The opportunity to have somewhere to stay for a short time is very useful to safeguard people's safety and identity. With these resources, people can later find their own accommodation and pathway.
- ▶ Building trust and a good relationship with the beneficiaries takes time but often helps to prevent future evictions when advice is then sought at an earlier stage.

WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

- ▶ Having multilingual teams is critical, also being proactive and go to find people before they come to you.
- ▶ A good relationship with international embassies to have lost or stolen identity documents replaced as soon as possible. If you cannot overcome the ID barrier, you can get stuck quickly, so it is very important to get this issue resolved first.
- ▶ Work closely with the local authority as sometimes they have additional eviction prevention resources available to prevent crisis.

LINKS FOR OTHER RESOURCES

- ▶ <https://www.noahenterprise.org/who-we-are/vision-mission-values/the-future/>
- ▶ <https://www.noahenterprise.org/luton/successful-completion-of-the-winter-migrant-housing-project/>
- ▶ <https://noahenterprise.zohorecruit.eu/jobs/rainbow>

PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Participation: Some staff have lived experiences of homelessness. A number have used NOAH services as clients, of whom many have overcome serious addiction drug and alcohol problems. And a new upcoming project will train peer-mentor volunteers who have successfully exited homelessness.

NOAH is part of the [Luton Homeless partnership](#), a group of charities with the same objective to fight against homelessness. This partnership has made available services like: visiting nurse, GP, dentist who goes to the drop-in centre, etc. These arrangements are informal though.

FUNDING

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, UK: <https://www.noahenterprise.org/who-we-are/accounts-legal/funders/>



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UK

SHORT DESCRIPTION

EU homeless rights project (2018-21) and **EU homeless rights lab** (2021-).

The initial focus was on developing strategic legal challenges to law, policies and practices infringing the rights of vulnerable EEA nationals and supporting the homelessness sector to adopt a rights-based approach to work with this group.

This work continues alongside a newer research and communications strand, including a rights lab and self-advocacy group for destitute mobile EU citizens.

AREAS

Legal casework, strategic litigation and research and communications around mobile EU citizens' rights

ABOUT THE GOOD PRACTICE

PILC exists to challenge systemic injustice through legal representation, strategic litigation, research and legal education. They specialise in public law, actions against public authorities and public inquiries.

Migrant destitution has been a key area of PILC's work since their foundation in 2016. In 2017 they took the UK government to court over a Home Office policy that interpreted rough sleeping as an 'abuse' of EU

citizens' freedom of movement rights. PILC's victory in [Gureckis, Perlinski & Cielecki v the Secretary of State for the Home Department](#) put a stop to this unlawful policy.

Between 2018 and 2021 PILC ran a project to monitor and defend the rights of homeless EU citizens in the UK in the context of Brexit and policies aimed at the deportation of homeless EU citizens.

This project initially focused on legal casework, strategic litigation and supporting 'frontline' and grassroots organisations to adopt a rights-based approach to their work with homeless EU citizens. Between 2018 and 2020 PILC ran a telephone advice line for homeless EU citizens and those supporting them. Second-tier advice was offered to support workers and frontline organisations supporting homeless EU citizens on themes including housing, welfare, immigration and healthcare entitlements. In 2019-2020 PILC employed a dedicated worker supporting homeless EEA nationals to navigate the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS).

As the project developed, an increasing amount of research, advocacy and legal education was undertaken around the rights of homeless EU citizens. PILC led efforts to secure equal treatment for destitute migrants during Covid-19 pandemic, coordinating advocacy to local and central government.



In total between 2018 and 2021, PILC assisted clients from 48 countries, including destitute EU citizens, qualifying non-EU family members and (particularly during Covid-19) other non-UK nationals with insecure immigration status or subject to an NRPf condition.¹⁶

Staff speak Polish, French and Spanish. Key beneficiaries have included destitute Polish migrant workers and EU citizens of Latin American origin. PILC also works in partnership with Roma Support Group around the rights of homeless Roma EU citizens.

PILC has published three research reports in the period 2018-21 regarding local-authority support for non-UK nationals during the pandemic, recent changes to the UK's immigration rules to make rough sleeping grounds for refusal or cancellation of permission to stay in the UK, and on EU homeless rights after Brexit and Covid-19 (links below).

OUTCOMES

- ▶ PILC's strategic litigation has led to better implementation of EU citizens' rights and mitigation of the harms caused by Brexit.
- ▶ Ongoing monitoring of the forced removal of mobile EU citizens.
- ▶ Fostering culture change in the homelessness sector, including a rights-based approach to working with destitute non-UK nationals.



In numbers

- ▶ Between 2018 and 2021 PILC advised 1562 clients through the EU homelessness and EU Settlement Scheme projects. 186 were provided with representation or complex legal casework; 798 of them were supported to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. Contact was made with 293 Roma rough sleepers and/or precarious workers through street outreach sessions run in partnership with the Roma Support Group.
- ▶ More than 30 other organisations referred to PILC projects or sought second-tier advice.
- ▶ Building-based outreach operations were run in partnership with 11 organisations.

¹⁶ The NRPf condition applies to people who are "subject to immigration control" in the UK, which might include people who have limited leave to remain, refused asylum seekers who are "appeal rights exhausted," those with no status or no documents to prove their status, or European Economic Area (EEA) citizens who are unable to pass the right-to-reside test. This condition bans immigrants from accessing certain benefits, homelessness assistance, or a local authority allocation of social housing. More information [here](#).



WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

- ▶ Strategic litigation as a means of defending the rights of destitute mobile EU citizens.

“One of the most important things we do is our work together with the homelessness sector to try and bring about culture change [...] in terms of how they work with and communicate about destitute mobile EU citizens. We cascade legal information and knowledge of rights but, more importantly, we try to foster a rights and social-justice based approach to support for non-UK nationals facing homelessness.”

LINKS FOR OTHER RESOURCES

- ▶ [Still Here: Defending the rights of homeless EU citizens after Brexit and Covid-19](#)
- ▶ [Rough sleeping as a ground for refusal or cancellation of leave to enter or remain in the UK](#)
- ▶ [Local authority responses to people with NRPF during the pandemic](#)

- ▶ Legal education and promotion of rights-based approaches have improved the homelessness sector's capacity to defend the rights of destitute mobile EU citizens.
- ▶ Innovative combination of legal work with research and strategic advocacy and communications – working for change at both 'micro' and 'macro' levels

PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Collaboration with the homelessness, migrants' rights and legal sectors in the UK at all levels - both mainstream (including statutory and commissioned) sectors and at grassroots level.

FUNDING

The EU homeless rights project (2018-21) was funded by the Oak Foundation. In 2021 funding was secured from Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust to continue work with vulnerable mobile EU citizens through a rights lab.

16 Roma Support Group



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UK (London)

AREAS

- ▶ Support to exit or prevent homelessness for mobile EU citizens
- ▶ Counselling for ensuring mobile EU citizens' rights

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Roma Support Group (RSG) is an advice and support charity providing direct assistance to Roma migrants to successfully settle in the UK since 1998. The **RSG Advice and Advocacy** project was designed in 2010 to meet the needs of Roma migrants in the UK and provide direct assistance and support in terms of accessing information and help regarding rights of EU citizens in the UK, especially for those in vulnerable circumstances.

ABOUT THE GOOD PRACTICE

The RSG Advice and Advocacy project focuses on supporting Roma mobile EU citizens to successfully settle in the UK, regarding access to rights, advice and support from urgent issues to more structural or long-term needs. This includes support to access the welfare system, housing, education, health services and regularising their immigration status. Furthermore, the project is aimed at building confidence in the community, in order to be able to navigate the system independently. This is done through training for Roma

communities and supporting Roma people to become *community champions*.

Developing community champions is an important part of the project because it implies participation and empowerment of members of the communities. RSG provides training and creates opportunities for people to meet decision makers, local authorities, and public services, so that the community champions have the chance to learn how to do advocacy and to make the opinion of the communities they represent heard.

Around 2000 people are supported annually, though the demand is still so big that it cannot be met entirely. This project is the core of the activities of the Roma Support Group and it was created because they



observed that existing services from local authorities, charities, etc. were not accessible for Roma migrant communities.

As issues come from multiple angles, the approach of this project is multidisciplinary. However, observing what the main demands are, the most frequent work areas are: accessing the welfare/benefits system (like health- or job-related), debt and financial management, and accessing health services.

Regarding staff, professionals are multilingual and many of them have a Roma background themselves. These two factors are very important to ensure that the community is represented, to establish trust and to reduce barriers for people. The languages spoken by the staff are (apart from English) Polish, Slovakian, Romanian, and several Romani dialects.

OUTCOMES

During 2020, 2,218 Roma refugees and migrants were supported: 80% had reduced poverty through debt management and were able to access the welfare system; 53% of beneficiaries were prevented from homelessness; and 27% of beneficiaries had improved their employability skills. Access of many people to rights in areas like healthcare or housing was enhanced.

Regarding community champions, the main outcomes are: empowerment to act on issues which are of concern for their communities, building confidence to speak up for the people they represent, or to meet officials.

There has been an improvement within mainstream services on their knowledge about the particularities of Roma EU migrants and the support they need. This has been possible thanks to meetings organised by

“Our vision is that Roma communities are empowered through the realisation that their strength lies within every Roma individual, and his/her fulfilment as a member of society.”

RSG, bringing together people from different services and also decision makers.

WHAT RECOMMENDS THIS PRACTICE TO BE TRANSFERRED?

The staff: their multilingual skills and the fact that many of them have a Roma background themselves is key to the success of the project, since it is essential to make engagement with communities and helps other colleagues to understand the background of the communities they work with or the issues that may appear.

The community champions are a successful initiative that makes it easier to disseminate information, to receive demands and concerns, to empower people in communities, and to make policy makers and people responsible of services be aware of the needs and worries of Roma migrant communities in their day-to-day life.

Creating a space which allows for interactions with experts and access to information: organising thematic meetings with experts on a specific area, inviting people they support so they can ask questions, get the information they need from the main sources, discuss their concerns about that area, etc.



PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Participation of the beneficiaries is enabled through the 'community champions' programme which allows members of the Roma communities to be directly involved in the activities organised by RSG.

A steering group formed by professionals working outside of the organisation in different areas is regularly meeting to provide advice to the organisation on the activities of RSG, its outcomes, supports the team on its projects, etc. A collaboration has also been established with a legal-expert charity for cases where people/families need a legal representative or specialised advice.

FUNDING

The project is supported currently by the Big Lottery Fund.

LINKS FOR OTHER RESOURCES

Annual reports of Roma Support Group: <https://www.romasupportgroup.org.uk/annual-reports.html>





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