

National report



LLP-ERASMUS
Intensive Programme

**Internet advanced promotional tools application for increasing awareness
of social exclusions movement**

Social exclusion of homeless people in Belgium

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Table of contents

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HOMELESS PEOPLE	3
'T HART VOOR IEDEREEN ~ NGO	6
1 GENERAL INFORMATION	6
2 MARKET ANALYSIS	7
3 CURRENT MARKETING	9



Discrimination against homeless people

What is a homeless person?

A person without any form of accommodation or any means to afford accommodation is generally labelled as a homeless person.

Who are they?

Most of the homeless in western countries are single males that are between 18 and 56 years old. There are a lot of women as well and ethnic minorities are often overrepresented in the homeless demographics . The Belgian homeless population is built identically, with an overrepresentation of single males and ethnic minorities.

In certain parts of the world, specifically third world countries in Asia and South-America homelessness affects all parts and all layers of society. These parts have entire families that are without a home and without a future and often include kids.

Causes

There are multiple causes for people to stumble into homelessness. Often, one of those causes is unemployment, especially in countries that lack a system of social security. Other times people have a job but they are not being paid enough to afford a place to stay.

Sometimes people with poor physical or mental health or people with certain addictions lose track of their own lives and become homeless after a series of events that leads them there.

Despite its excellent system of social security, Belgium is also affected by homelessness and often with the same causes. Unemployment and inability to pay for proper housing causes individuals or families to become homeless and when there is no family or friends to offer them help, those people can go through a hard time finding a job and applying for social security services , as from the moment a person is homeless and doesn't have an official address, there is little chance for them to be able to get access to official social security services.

In third world nations or countries with an unstable regime , other causes are war-situations, natural disasters or abuse by government officials and overpowered individuals.

Vicious circle

The moment a person becomes homeless, because of laws, regulation and social standards, it is very hard for them to get back on the tracks of normal of life.

When a person has no permanent address, it is impossible for them to find a job or even receive any form of unemployment benefit. And even if they find a job, by not having an official home those

people won't be able to open a bank account on which they could receive the payment of the benefit.

Homeless people therefore often live in poverty and see no easy or even any way to improve their condition.

Where do they stay?

As they have no place to go, homeless people will mostly spend their daytime on the street and in public spaces, wandering around, looking for opportunities to gain money or social acceptance. Most of the time, homeless people are concentrated in and around cities.

There are certain places where homeless people spend the night trying to catch some sleep. These places include the street where they settle, on a bench or under a bridge, in old buildings that are not being used by anyone anymore (this is called squatting), in cars and other vehicles, in public spaces like airports, car parks and bus or train stations.

Life on the street

Some homeless people beg for money or find more creative ways to gain some income like making street drawings or performing music. Some homeless people team up and with support from certain people/organisations, they create magazines for the homeless, or initiate other actions that can be a source of revenue.

Besides having economic troubles, the homeless also encounter certain social problems like physical and sexual abuse, theft and drug abuse. Their health also suffers from their situation, because of having insufficient access to decent food they often have poor nutrition and, living in the streets does not provide them with the most hygienic conditions and they are therefore more vulnerable to diseases and bad health in general.

Situation in Belgium

Belgium is reported to have had over 50.000 homeless people in 2011. That's a huge increase over the number of 2003 when "only" 17.000 people were reported to be homeless.

There are arguments that account for that increase: the economic crisis and a lack of affordable housing. A lot of the "new homeless" are young people, often with an originally difficult home situation.

Most of the homeless are found in the 4 most populated cities of Belgium, these are Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent and Charleroi. A large number of homeless are invisible to society because those homeless wander between houses of friends and family and public spaces like airports and train stations. As they don't live in the streets 100% of the time and they aren't always in a big city, those homeless are almost "invisible" but they are in a majority compared to the "visible" ones.

Youngsters in Belgium, and especially in the biggest cities of the country, increasingly become part of the homeless community . One of the main reasons for that is that troubled teenagers don't get any obligatory support anymore from the moment they turn 18 and more often than not those teenagers aren't ready to live on their own, resulting into teenagers starting having debts and losing their housing and their jobs . Another cause of homelessness with youngsters is youth gangs. Youngsters that were part of or are still members of a gang are more vulnerable to problems associated with homelessness.

It is important to note that there are no official numbers for the number of homeless people in Belgium or any other European country ; there are only estimates as there are no official counts. The numbers given are thus only an indication, not a fact.

't Hart Voor Iedereen ~ NGO

1 General Information

The NGO that we have chosen to talk about is named “ 't Hart Voor Iedereen”. (The heart for everyone)
The following is a quick summarisation, kind of like a factsheet, of what this organisation is all about.

Name and Localization

't Hart Voor Iedereen

Kinderwelzijnstraat 95

2920 Kalmthout

Belgium

Key staff

Chairman of the board: Wil van Dommelen

Secretary: Fiona Klomp

Treasurer: Willemijn van Dommelen

Members: Bas Witvoet, Sonja Regemortels, Annick Donkers

Organisation Goals

't Hart Voor Iedereen's main goal is to fight poverty and homelessness in Belgium.

They want to do this by making sure the money and means they gather reaches the right initiatives.

The projects that they support should prompt personal growth for the people who they're trying to help.

Age of the Organization

The organisation has been founded in 2008.

This means the organization is approximately 4 years old.

URL

<http://thartvooredereen.be/>

Website Age

The website has been online since April 2009.

The website is approximately 3 years old.

Social Media

't Hart Voor Iedereen, only has a publicly accessible Facebook-group for which you need permission to actually join the group. However, the content currently on the group's page can be read by anyone.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/175831809141596/>

Other than that, the organisation does not manage any other social media channels.

Company present and sales via online and offline channels

There is an option to purchase exclusive greeting cards via the website to support the organisation. There are no other options to purchase anything via any of the organisation's online channels

Other relevant information

Company number: BE 0811.100.538
Mail: info@thartvooredereen.be
Phone +32 485 858 022

2 Market analysis

Current and potential customers

't Hart Voor Iedereen is an organisation who commit themselves to fighting against discrimination and poverty affecting homeless people. Their customers are people who don't have a home or not enough money to provide themselves from the basic needs.

Anybody can be a potential customer for them. Somebody who has not got enough money anymore can lose everything very quickly and become a potential customer. For most families, It's a struggle every day to keep their head above water.

Current and potential competitors

In this case you can change the word "competitor" into the word "partners" because 't Hart Voor Iedereen doesn't really have competitors. They all work together to help homeless and poor people.

Partners

- DAK: Daklozen actie comitéé (HAC: Homeless Action Committee) : <http://users.skynet.be/fa255099/>
- Restaurant du Coeur (Restaurant of the Heart) : <http://www.restosducoeur.be/>
- Chez Nous (with us) : <http://users.skynet.be/cheznous.bijons/>
- 't Vlot (the raft): <http://www.kerknet.be/parochie/1/content.php?ID=660>
- Lean On Me: <http://www.leanonme.be/>



- Free Clinic: <http://www.free-clinic.be/>

Overview of the industry (key characteristics, competitive / saturated / mature) & Market position / specialties

In the “industry” of Non-profit organisation there is no such thing as a market position. An NGO handles voluntarily and it’s not meant to make profit. Of course, there is some healthy competition between the different NGO’s but not really strong.

The industry is very mature and realistic. Non-profit organisations such as ‘t Hart Voor Iedereen help people in difficult times, when they don’t have food to eat or any money to do something. Most of the time, people who have it all don’t realize what it is to live like that. They don’t believe this could happen to them. This industry brings them back to reality, i.e. that it can happen to everyone and that we all have to help each other.

Projected and historical online spend for the industry

Not applicable

Unique selling points of the services offered

‘t Hart Voor Iedereen organises a lot of things to collect money for charity .Some of the actions they do are very unique

(With charity we mean all the projects that ‘t Hart Voor Iedereen supports)

- They are one of the few organisations that are represented by certain Belgian celebrities.
- They organize a comedy night every year and all the money from the entrance tickets goes to charity
- Not only the profit from entrance tickets goes to charity , but so does the profit from postal cards and art works as well. All specially made for ‘t Hart Voor Iedereen
- Twice a year they organize a “Restaurant week”. During that week people can eat in restaurants all over Belgium for only € 27. At the end, customers can choose to donate € 1 a person who has eaten at the restaurant. That profit also goes to charity.

Seasonality of their services or seasonality that the organization has identified

Most of the actions they do happen during the winter. The winter is the hardest season to survive because of the very cold weather. In that season it is even more important to take care of the people who can’t take care of themselves. Every year again you hear about so many people who die because of the cold.

These actions are specially meant for the winter:

- Winter party
- Christmas lunch

3 Current marketing

Website users, e.g. sales, customer service

There is a possibility to get a newsletter. They tell you how to enlist, how to be a member. But there are no numbers about users or sales.

Website strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

- They use famous people to get the attention.
- The site has a very nice layout and you keep a nice overview.
- There is a lot of information on the website.
- You see a lot of pictures on the website, which makes you more attracted to the project.

Weaknesses:

- The URL is pretty long and difficult to remember.
- Pictures change too often and too fast.
- They only use Facebook as social media.
- Not that persuasive. You need to read a lot to get the information that you want or need.
- The last newsletter dates back to November 2010

Website visibility, such as Google PageRank, incoming links, a few keyword search results

Your Search Engine Visibility Score - Pagerank

Web Page [URL:http://www.thartvooredereen.be](http://www.thartvooredereen.be)

The Page Rank:



2/10

(the page rank value is 2 from 10 possible points)

Your search engine visibility score of 36/100 is considered "pretty low". Having said that, there are a few simple changes you can make to this Web page right now that can quickly boost your visibility score.

The above Search Engine Visibility Meter™ is a measurement of how well this Web page visually compares against other Web pages on the Internet. This score does not include other important SEO elements, such as keyword search highlighting, keyword placement analysis and other on-page

factors that can dramatically affect your search engine rankings. For this type of analysis you need to use our Web Page Analyzer.

Title Tag Analysis

Titel: 't (h)ART voor iedereen

Your Title is 23 characters in length which is "acceptable". Acceptable simply means you have a Title and does not mean your Title is optimized for search engines.

Not having an optimized Title means you're not ranking as well as you could and you are not getting your fair share of free search engine traffic. Choosing the right keywords and arranging those words for maximum search engine exposure is easy with our real-time Keywords Research Tool.

If you are not on the first page of search results, over 60% of Internet users will not find you!

If available, summary information from Google analytics or other third party web tracking software

Not available

Other online advertising and offline promotion of the URL

There are a lot of related websites, where the URL is mentioned.

<http://www.restosducoeur.be/>

http://users.skynet.be/fa255099/index_bestanden/Page351.htm

<http://users.skynet.be/cheznous.bijons/>

On the website you can find a couple of articles about the project.

If you search for it on Youtube, you get a link to a video that is on the site too. So through this channel you can get to the site as well. This is a way to get linked to the site, but it's not direct. So first you need the people's interest for the video on Youtube.

The conclusion about the marketing is a little bit disappointing. The site is built up nicely, but there are so many things that could be done better. The promotion of the site isn't that great. We also noticed that the page rank and tag analyses could be better. Maybe the project would benefit from a better online marketing.