

**LLP-ERASMUS
Intensive Programme**

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

Social exclusion of homeless people in Romania

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Introduction

According to the Law Concerning The National Social Assistance System, homeless people constitute a social category made of single individuals or families because of one or cumulative motives of a social, medical, financial, economic, legal nature or because of some force majeure situations, live on the streets, live temporarily with their friends or acquaintances' place, cannot afford to rent a place or are in danger of being evicted, those who are in penitentiaries or institutions from which they are due to be released or discharged and do not have a domicile or place of residence. ([https://www.senat.ro/Legis/PDF / 2011/11L450FG.pdf](https://www.senat.ro/Legis/PDF/2011/11L450FG.pdf)).

Homelessness is most frequently correlated with people sleeping in the streets. Nevertheless, while this is the most noticeable situation, people who are considered homeless, or in danger of housing exclusion, may face other predicaments. They may not have stable places of residence, as they live in shelters or institutions. In this category we can also include people who are at risk of becoming homeless because of insecure tenancy arrangements or because they face eviction. Those who live in inappropriate conditions, such as caravans, campsites or in overpopulated improvised dwellings made of cardboard, for instance, or in tents in the poor neighborhoods or at the outskirts of the towns or cities can also become homeless.

Homelessness is one of the most pernicious and traumatic cases of poverty and social exclusion. Social exclusion of homeless people in Romania is a multifarious situation because it triggers a whole range of issues. Children, for instance, who are born from homeless parents, or children who get to live on the live are excluded from the educational system, which in turn contributes to perpetrating their inability of having a normal life. The situation of adult homeless is also a grievous one, since most often do not have an identity, as a result of losing their identity cards for instance and consequently cannot participate at the life of the community and their reintegration into the society is prevented by their lack of a stable income or a job. At a national level, this leads to a decreasing of the number of taxpayers and therefore a reduction of the state budget. Consequently, these people do not contribute to the pension fund, do not have a life or health insurance and therefore do not enjoy the rest of

benefits as the largest part of the population. Homelessness also determines a personal crisis at the level of every individual who has to struggle with this plight night and day, which may in turn result in substance abuse and a whole range of diseases which can ultimately be life threatening.

1. Level and structure of homeless people exclusion

According to Samusocial Romania, the current typologies of adult homeless people take as distinctive criteria biological or family related indicators. While the traditional category of an adult homeless person associated with the historical figure of the vagabond is the single man, starting with the period of extension of the phenomenon of adult homelessness, this category has also multiplied in different categories which include: young persons, women, and the elderly. This categorization based on gender and age is most often followed by one which is based on a classification of medical or social problems: alcoholism, drug addiction, mental disorders, poverty and urban vagrancy. A great interest in the construction of these typologies established on the basis of data more or less statistical than qualitative is manifested by the researchers, professionals and authorities alike. That is because a typology allows one to distinguish in a heterogeneous public some lines of differentiation and to envisage, on the basis of resemblances and differences, by means of rational choices, effective interventions in the community. The target public is heterogeneous- there is not a single adult homeless population, there are groups of adult homeless persons. They cover a multitude of trajectories and complex individual situations, and the fact of not having a dwelling does not constitute a priori determining criteria for evaluating a person.

Being a homeless person does not involve only not having a place to live, but a set of economic and social difficulties related to the lack of a dwelling. The endeavor to establish categories of beneficiaries results in a more useful representation of the necessity and the appropriateness of the services for different types of needs. Samusocial presents a typology which takes into account different types of factors (age, gender, issues):

The number of women is increasing concerning the situation in the streets and also in the centers for lodging. Some consider that this situation is triggered by the growing urban marginalization. The network of social protection offers few possibilities to these women,

firstly because they do not correspond to the access criteria of the structures designed for specific categories (victims of violence, young people).

Families with many numbers are also in growing number and are very vulnerable due to the fact that the centers for receiving them do not provide adequate infrastructures to accommodate them. Moreover, these families, because of the housing market situation, cannot afford to find a place which measures up their income.

Young people constitute another vulnerable category (it appears that the number of girls is growing) because of the degradation of the socio- economic context which excludes especially them, mainly those with poor qualification in what concern the social insertion. The report *Strategies to combat homelessness* states the fact that many are high-school drop outs who face long-term unemployment in a skills-oriented society (64).

In what concerns the elderly, the reintegration is a difficult task, chiefly because of their health problems. Moreover, the structures which should attend and treat them lack (www.samusocial.ro/get.php?id=45).

The report *Strategies to combat homelessness* points out the difference between homeless men and women which is also valid for Romania. Men become homeless because of financial issues such as lack of money, no access to housing and unemployment, whereas women tend to become homeless when they fall below poverty line or because of evictions, domestic violence (65).

Another category of homeless people is that of persons suffering from substance abuse. In some cases, this constitutes both a cause and a condition for homelessness. Their income is severely reduced as they spend money on alcohol or other substances which would have otherwise been spent on the rent, for instance. Substance dependence and chemical dependency include drug taking, alcoholism, glue sniffing, solvents. Nevertheless, there are many homeless people who were not addicts before their current situation, but have become so in an endeavor to “escape from the reality of their situation by finding solace from bottles, needles or aerosol cans” (66).

2. Causes and consequences of homeless people exclusion

Causes of homeless people exclusion

According to Adrian Nicolae Dan and Mariana Dan, there are two types of causes which determine homeless people exclusion- endogenous and exogenous. The endogenous causes represent all those circumstances which are related to the individual- the main cause why some individuals do not own their own house lies exclusively with the individual and refer to behavioral patterns (the situation of homeless people is analyzed as a social issue, from the point of view of the social pathology and from the perspective of the deviant behavior).

The exogenous causes- the homeless phenomenon includes all those circumstances which do not lie with the individual- the main cause why some individuals are homeless belongs to the society and its failure to ensure the welfare and equal opportunities in what concerns access to different benefits for all individuals (the homeless people situation is analyzed as a social problem, from the perspective of social disorganization) (<http://www.iccv.ro/oldiccv/romana/revista/rcalvit/pdf/cv2005.1-2.a06.pdf>)

Homelessness can be determined by family conflicts such as divorces which can produce family breakdown. Youth homelessness, related to the 'throw- away' and 'run-away' is often determined by family strife, changes in family structure (*Strategies to combat homelessness*, 64). The economic crisis and the consequent recession which affects our country have determined the loss of jobs and consequently unemployment. Some of the redundant employees, left without any source of income, while some are forced to rely on the unemployment benefit, which in many cases can barely help them to subsist, are often forced to live on the streets as they can no longer afford to pay the bills of their house or flat.

People with mental disorders such as schizophrenia, personality disorders, retard, can also become homeless. Usually, this type of persons end up on the streets because they are unable to adapt to their family environment, their job and social requirements. Taking care of them constitutes a big issue for their families because they are unpredictable and have an

aggressive potential. Those with personality disorders end up on the streets because of the family conflicts they cause, most of them come from disorganized families and have an irritable and peevish personalities. Persons with mental retard need constant care and cannot survive without help from their families; they can become homeless because their families abandon them (<http://www.antena3.ro/romania/cum-poti-ajunge-om-al-strazii-conflictele-familiale-si-evacuarile-principalele-cauze-86014.html>). Consequently, lack of effective therapy and support increases the risk of becoming and remaining homeless. In what concerns Europe, this situation is due to the closure of mental hospitals. Some mentally ill people have been released from psychiatric hospitals to ‘unknown living arrangements’ and after ceasing to take their psychotropic medication, returned to active mental illness and often became homeless in the process. Physical illnesses, such as disabilities or chronic health problems also render people vulnerable to displacements and homelessness (*Strategies to combat homelessness*, 68).

People can also become homeless because of frauds. This is especially the case of old people who are victims of frauds. People are convinced to sign documents and then find themselves compelled to leave their houses because they have sold them without knowing it.

In the last years, the forced retrocession of nationalized houses has also begun to play a role. As a result of court orders, some persons were forced to retrieve the nationalized houses to their former owners.

This seventh factor, that is the evictions, can be the result of the inability to pay a bank credit, different kinds of bank loans or the inability to pay utility bills. Some of the persons who get evicted and do not have other places to go to eventually end up living on the streets.

Homeless people in Romania are excluded mainly because of the mentality of the people and the relative inertia of the authorities. As many homeless people are unqualified and have low educational attainment, they are excluded from the economic life, as they are unable, for instance, to find a job. As a result of not having identification documents and not having a health insurance, a significant number of homeless people get excluded from the health care system. Moreover, as a result of not having identification documents, such as

identity cards, a stable domicile, many homeless people are excluded from the political and public life, as they cannot vote for example. As the report *Strategies to combat homelessness* shows, they lack power to an extent that they are virtually non-persons without papers, rights and consequently come close to being invisible for the society (62).

Consequences of homeless people exclusion in local society and Romania:

Alcoholism represents one of the consequences of homeless people exclusion. For many homeless persons, alcohol becomes a refuge, as they feel that it offers them an apparent balance and a sensation of ease of the affective discomfort they experience and that is how they strive to tackle the hostile and threatening environment they live in. The alcohol constitutes a destructive, organic factor; the chronic, abusive consumption determines the loss of abilities undermines the aptitudes and impairs the precision of accomplishing activities ([http:// www.antena3.ro/ romania/ cum-poti-ajunge-om-al-strazii-conflictele-familiale-si-evacuarile-principalele-cauze-86014.html](http://www.antena3.ro/romania/cum-poti-ajunge-om-al-strazii-conflictele-familiale-si-evacuarile-principalele-cauze-86014.html))

A further consequence is the deviant behaviour: drug abuse and addiction, self destructive behaviour, street aggression, transgressions, vandalism.

Homeless people lead insecure lives, as they often do not know what they will eat. Moreover, they and their personal goods are not protected, as they do not have a roof over their heads and or even an improvised dwelling, and consequently can fall prey to robbery, mugging and sexual violence (*Strategies to combat homelessness*, 62).

Mental illnesses can represent both a cause and a consequence of homelessness. Due to such factors as a lot of stress and little hope, some homeless persons can develop symptoms such as anxiety and depression (68).

The lack of ways to maintain themselves, leads in turn to practices such as begging, prostitution, child exploitation. As a direct consequence of poor living conditions and inappropriate nourishment, homeless people suffer from various health issues such as: respiratory conditions, cardiovascular conditions, digestive conditions, skin conditions, tuberculosis (www.samusocial.ro). Homeless people often do not have access to basic healthcare system assistance or to the welfare system, social security benefits, educational programmes often because they have lost their identification cards. The overall situation dramatically reduces their chances to reintegrate in their families or into society.

In Europe, another consequence is ethnic exclusion, as in some Western countries immigrants constitute a large group of the homeless community. Groups like the Roma population sometimes live in illegal campsites at the outskirts of the metropolis with no access to electricity, running water, central heating and are vulnerable to discrimination and even violent attacks.

3. Government role in preventing homeless people exclusion

National policy against exclusion. Law regulations

According to the Law Concerning The National Social Assistance System, ch. IV, section 1, art. 54 (1) the measures for the prevention and eradication of poverty and the risk of social exclusion are in line with the general framework of multi-dimensional actions of the process of social inclusion through which they ensure the necessary opportunities and resources for the full participation of vulnerable persons into the economic, social and cultural life of the society, as well as the process of taking decisions which concern their life and their access to fundamental rights.

Ch. IV, section 1, art. 54 (2) In order to prevent and fight poverty and the risk of social exclusion, by means of initial public policies, the state provides vulnerable individuals with access to fundamental rights such as: the right to a dwelling, to medical and social care, to education, a job and institutes measures of support in accordance with the particular needs of persons, families and the underprivileged.

Art. 56 (3) The main mode of support for the prevention and fighting against poverty and the risk of social exclusion is the minimum insertion income allotted by the state budget as a difference between the levels provided by the special law and net income of the family or of the single person achieved or obtained in a certain amount of time, in view of guaranteeing a minimum income for every person from Romania.

Art. 58- Social services destined for homeless people are designed to ensure lodging combined with offering guidance services and services for reinsertion or social reintegration, in accordance with the identified individual needs.

Art. (59)- (1) The local public administration authorities are responsible for setting up, organizing and administering the social services for homeless persons.

(2) The local public administration authorities have the obligation to set on their territorial areas adequate social services adapted to the needs of children who live on the streets, the elderly who live alone or who do not have children and for persons with disabilities.

(3) The local public administration authorities have the obligation to organize emergency shelters in winter time for the persons living on the street.

Art. 60- (1) Social services designed for persons living on the street can be organized as:

- a) mobile teams for intervention on the street or services such as social ambulance;
- b) night shelters;
- c) residential centres which offer a fixed period dwelling

(2) In order to prevent and fight against young adults leaving residential care becoming homeless persons, as well as in order to promote their social integration, the local authorities can set up multifunctional centres which ensure living and husbandry on a fixed period. (<https://www.senat.ro/Legis/PDF/2011/11L450FG.pdf> our translation)

Strategic National Report Regarding Social Protection and Social Inclusion (2008-2010)

1.2. General strategic approach

Romania's main objective set forth in the National Reform Programme refers to the assurance of an operation of the labour market that favours the active inclusion of vulnerable groups. In order to achieve this objective, there will be focus on:

- ensuring an operation of the labour market that favours the creation of jobs, the reduction of undeclared work and the adequate management of changes on the level of enterprises and workers;
- promoting social inclusion and improving access to the labour market for vulnerable groups;
- promoting competitiveness on the labour market, especially by improving the cooperation between the educational and training system and the demands of the labour market.

In this sense, efforts shall still be made in order to implement strategies for the promotion of the social inclusion of disadvantaged people by encouraging them to actively participate in the labour market and in the society. Thus, special attention shall be paid to avoiding the creation of dependence on receiving social benefits and measures shall be taken in order to encourage vulnerable people to find an active place for themselves in society.

A continuous approach, on which the Romanian government must carry on with its solution efforts, is represented by the differences between the legislative provisions and their degree of implementation. As to the area of social inclusion, efforts shall aim at the actual implementation of sector strategies in the area, aiming at the improvement of the standard of living for various vulnerable groups, namely: youth moving out of foster care centres, elderly people, disabled people, children with difficulties etc. At the same time, during this period there shall be a development in the monitoring and assessment instruments for the results obtained as a result of the implementation of these strategies and the efficiency and effectiveness of the measures shall be evaluated.

PART II – THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL INCLUSION

2.1. – Progress in the social inclusion area

During 2006 – 2008, Romania’s strategic objective in the social inclusion area focused on strategic actions to lead to the creation of an inclusive society in which to provide the citizens with the resources and means necessary for a dignified life. In order to reach this objective, the main priorities identified consist in:

- the general growth of the population’s standard of living and the stimulation of revenues gained from work, based on facilitating employment and promoting inclusive policies.

- Enabling the access of citizens, especially of groups that are disadvantaged from the resources, rights and services point of view.

- Improving the living conditions of Roma population.

Further to the implementation of the Special Programme enforced in 150 cities in disadvantaged areas or in cities with high unemployment rate, 33,506 people were employed

compared to 16,000 people that were planned for employment in 2007, which led to 209.41% in terms of achievement percentage.

The National Programme for the employment of socially excluded people was drawn up by taking into account the necessity of improving the social effects of the restructuring processes in the economy, as well as the persistence of the social exclusion risk for some categories of people who have difficulty in becoming employed. **As to the access to a job, 2,212 solidarity agreements** were concluded in 2007 the following categories of beneficiaries should be mentioned:

- 334 youths coming from the placement centres and child care facilities within the specialised public divisions and private bodies authorised to act in the field of child protection (15.1%);

- 975 persons belonging to other categories of youths in difficulty (44.0%)

As a result of the enforcement of this law, 1,976 people were employed in 2007. The structure of the employed people is as follows:

- 240 youths coming from the placement centres and child care facilities within the specialised public divisions and private bodies authorised to act in the field of child protection (12.15%);

- 93 unattached youths with children to support (4.7%);

- 427 family member youths with children to support (21.6%);

- 348 family member youths with no children to support (17.6%);

- 1 family member youth who executed a penalty involving personal restraint (0.05%);

- 867 persons belonging to other categories of youths in difficulty (43.87%).

The Romanian Government has always shown a constant interest in the process of implementation of social services in view of enabling the social inclusion of vulnerable groups, thus ensuring financial support by programmes of national interest. Thus, for the first time, 9 programmes of national interest were approved, aiming at the following disadvantaged groups: disabled persons, elderly, homeless, domestic violence victims. The total amount granted for the completion of these programmes came up to RON 64.5 million.

At the same time, there was a continuation of the programme for granting subsidies to the Romanian associations and foundations with legal personality who organise or manage social support units. In order to receive a subsidy for 2007, 3,110 financing applications were

filed for 315 social support units and the selection process approved of 92 applications for 267 units and the total amount approved came up to RON 9,999,837.

The development of social services is also supported by means of projects with international financing. Thus, by means of the “Social sector development” project financed by the World Bank an investment scheme in the field of social services development and diversity, in amount of USD 3 million was implemented during November 2004 – May 2006. 70 social services projects were implemented for 11,320 beneficiaries.

As to the social reintegration of homeless children, the Government approved the ‘Homeless children initiative’ project, financed by the Council of Europe Development Bank with the amount of EUR 5.739 million, resulting in the setting up of 20 centres for 300 children and in providing approximately 150 social workers with training programmes.

Section 2.2 – Key challenges, priorities, objectives and targets

The main challenges over the reference period, namely 2008 – 2010, focused on:

- the prevention of social exclusion, the continuation of efforts to improve the access of citizens to their social rights;
- the development of multidimensional prevention programmes in order to avoid putting citizens into exclusion situations;
- the implementation of customised measures by means of aimed interventions when a potential risk is identified and could lead to an impairment on living conditions;
- improving the access to resources for families who are in social exclusion situations, which may contribute to increasing the level of well-being in the society;
- monitoring programmes developed by the responsible authorities and developing a reference system with a well-established periodicity regarding the progress being made;
- organising continuous sensitivity and awareness campaigns for citizens regarding their rights.

In order to deal with all these challenges, public authorities must focus their measures to ensuring the access of various institutions/bodies/authorities/public or private natural persons to the best and most efficient absorption possible of structural funds. The

implementation of the commitments of this report benefits from the advantages of Romania's first cycle of access to structural funds.

Implementation responsibility and the resources granted:

The Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection, as national coordinator of social inclusion policies, is the main responsible body for the proposed objectives, as well as for monitoring and assessing the accomplishment level. It shall be supported in its actions by other institutions of the central public administration (the National Disability Authority, the National Employment Agency, the Ministry of Economy and Finance), as well as by local authorities, the main providers of social services. In order to ensure the most efficient implementation, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection shall focus on the stimulation of a responsible attitude on the part of various partners: employers' associations, unions, non-governmental organisations.

The necessary resources for the implementation of measures are mainly covered by the European Social Fund and by the national budget.

Priority objective 2 – Promoting integrated family policies by means of promoting a package of efficient social benefits and services measures.

Other actions that contribute to the increase in the quality of life for families: Ensuring the access to a decent home, including social homes; granting subsidies for young families with small incomes.

Romania's participation in the Opened Coordination Method is also achieved by the involvement in 2 projects, in one as project manager and in the other as partner, being finance within the PROGRESS community programme.

1. The Project **“SYNTHESIS integrated social services for the most vulnerable groups”** which had as partners several states, namely: Italy, Spain, France, Slovenia, Hungary, Lithuania, Greece, Poland and Finland. **The activities** included in the project are:

- i. Drafting of Thematic Reports on different themes specific to the field of social inclusion;
- ii. Drafting of a Guide including good practices examples in the field of social services of all the partner states;
- iii. Creation of a Web Page on which the project is presented, as well as ensuring the dissemination of the project results;
- iv. Organisation of an experience exchange programme (by organising

conferences and thematic groups) between the partners involved in the project and other actors relevant in the field of social inclusion;

v. Drawing up of promotional materials (brochures, folders, etc.);

2. The project **“Life after Institutionalisation. Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion of Youths: Identification and Promotion of Good Practices”**, to which Romania is a partner. The role in this project is to participate in the drawing up of the study on the social inclusion of the youths leaving the child protection system by providing data and information, as well as by participating in the organised working groups.

The 2008-2010 stage will have as core objective the strengthening of the national mechanism for social inclusion, so as to become a framework for the coordination and drawing up of the social policies, created for the purpose of understanding better the social exclusion situations in order to set sectorial priorities, promote the active inclusion and create an adequate environment of the development of joint social policies in different intervention areas. This objective shall be achieved by the implementation, as from 2009, of a project financed by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Programme – Development of the Administrative Capacity.

The most important actions that may contribute to the improvement of the social inclusion process may be summarised as follows:

- increase inter-institutional cooperation in the field of social inclusion by a clear distribution of the resources and responsibilities;
- promote public debates, at well-established intervals, regarding priority themes related to social inclusion, involving numerous participants from all the activity fields, as well as representatives of the political class;
- community development for the purpose of supporting the local level in the development of the own mechanism for drafting social inclusion plans, in order to be able to assess the actual faced needs, as well as to have an actual assessment and monitoring mechanism;
- the need to rely on data and indicators when assessing the policies and monitoring the social inclusion programmes;

- drafting studies and researches which to enable the analysis of the current situation and drafting recommendations on priority themes in the field of social inclusion, identified at a national level;

- organisation of training sessions for the personnel of the local and national administrations holding responsibilities related to the promotion of social inclusion.

(<http://www.mmuncii.ro/pub/imagemanager/images/file/Rapoarte-Studii/081208Report2008-2010.pdf>)

The Government Decision No. 1171 from 24 November 2010

The national interest programme “ The eradication of the social exclusion of homeless people by creating emergency social centres”

The objectives of this programme are:

a) the prevention of the social exclusion and ensuring the social protection of homeless people;

b) the creation of emergency social centres, which will mainly provide accommodation and attendance services;

c) to draft and implement a methodology for the identification and evaluation of the persons who live on the streets;

d) monitoring, on the basis of real data, the number of homeless persons, as well as the percent of solving the existent cases.

Quantitative indicators:

a) the setting up or the expansion of the capacity of a number of 50 emergency social centres for the homeless people, located in every district and in the sectors of the municipality of Bucharest, by renovating appropriate spaces and furnishing them with the furniture and the equipment necessary for their functioning.

Effectiveness indicators:

a) ensuring minimum living conditions, that is housing, attendance, counseling, support in what concerns the social integration in order to eradicate the social marginalization of this category of persons;

b) the social reintegration of a specific number of homeless persons, by finding a job, a place to live, the possibility of offering them qualification and requalification courses, health education.

Results indicators:

a) the existence in every district and in every sector of Bucharest of a an emergency social centre for homeless people, suitably furnished and equipped;

b) approximately 10.000 homeless persons are provided social services in the emergency social centres.

The programme will be carried on a period of 6 years, starting with 2007, but not later than 30 November 2012 (<http://www.mmuncii.ro/pub/imagemanager/images/file/Legislatie/HOTARARI-DE-GUVERN/HG1171-2010.pdf>).

According to the research report regarding the identification of the prime objectives in the domain of social inclusion for period of 2010-2012, the measures aimed at ensuring the temporary social shelters refer to the ensuring of refuge shelters for the victims of domestic violence and night shelters for homeless persons.

4. Institutions and their actions

In Romania, the main institution that has under its administration the homeless people matter is The Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection. **The Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection** is organized as a specialized institution in public administration. This institution is subordinated to the Government and has as principal role the coordination of strategies and policies concerning labor, family, equal opportunities and social protection. The main functions of the Ministry are the elaboration of bills and programs, the harmonization with the European Union legislation, the administration of budgets and allocated funds and the control concerning law application. (<http://www.mmuncii.ro/ro/minister/prezentare-47-view.html>)

Other public institutions that handle the matter of homelessness are the local city halls. Starting with the capital, where there are night and day shelters for homeless people in every district, almost every city has at least one shelter dedicated to this matter. In Bucharest, where we can find the biggest number of night shelters, there are not enough places to cover all the persons in need, although the authorities provide places even in hospitals. The number of places is different in every location. According to the specifics of each shelter, they can offer food, medical care and accommodation for the night and/or day. Housing is being offered for a period from 15 days to 3 months. Except the places given in every big city from Romania, there are almost 1000 places in 15 shelters from Bucharest.

On the 26th of January 2012, **Bucharest city hall** has opened a 600 places shelter for homeless people with no place to sleep and no identity card. The Mayor made an appeal to all the citizens to bring the homeless people to the shelter in order to protect them from the frost. At this action, the city hall had the support of an important non-profit organization, Samusocial.

According to the Romanian law, the Ministry works in collaboration with humanitarian organizations in order to help homeless people. It has the power to give financial help consisting in budgetary funds in order to develop the projects and humanitarian actions. In this way it encourages the non-profit organizations and contributes to the fight against homeless people discrimination.

Concordia is a non-profit, humanitarian organization that has over 170 employees and volunteers in Bucharest. It was founded in Romania in 1992 by Father Georg Sporchill. The motto of the organization: “Whoever saves one life, saves the whole world”. Like many other humanitarian non-profit organizations Concordia is using donations in order to be able to help the people in need. Moreover, the volunteers play an important part in the development of the projects which are run by Concordia.



The organization’s main purpose is the social and educational reinstatement of homeless or stray children and young people. The organization is also helping the elder people in need. The first step is walking down the streets of Bucharest and Ploiesti in order to find children in need for help. Then the children go to the social centre Lazarus in Bucharest, where they get food, medical care, clean clothing and overnight shelter. Volunteers try to find out where the children come from. At the centre there is also a back-to-school program so that teenagers can retrieve their way back to education. Concordia has at its disposal several social houses and centers where children receive all the care they need. They go to public schools, they have organized playgrounds and gym. Each one of the kids is being evaluated by a complex team of specialists. Then they are directed towards the domains that are most suitable for them. For example, among the volunteers there are teachers and instructors that formed singing, dancing and even a karate groups. Children also have the opportunity to

participate at workshops where they learn different trades. After that, young people also get help until they get a job. (http://www.concordia.or.at/concordia_en/)



Casa Ioana is the main house of charity from Bucharest which offers its services to homeless people day and night. The experienced team that works here is formed by volunteers that have finished studies of Social development and are here in order to help homeless people to integrate themselves into the society.

The aim of this NGO is, as its slogan announces: “*giving homeless people opportunities to improve their way of life*”. The organization helps the persons by means of various activities based on two main elements: temporary accommodation and social services. Casa Ioana has developed since it began its activity in 1995, a program called “ACASA Program” which promotes the rights of homeless people and which offers support to them so they can go back to work and to lead as much as possible an independent live. It has two family centers with 90 places for the temporary accommodation of homeless people, centers where the specialized staff offers moral, medical support, so that roofless people won’t feel any sense of exclusion while they stay there. The volunteers who work in these centers communicate a lot with the persons who come and ask for their help, solidarity and psychological support being two important elements in these desperate situations which determine people to come to Casa Ioana (www.casaioana.org).

5. Other activities against homeless people exclusion

The non-profit organizations from Romania have always developed important projects for homeless people, projects with different characteristics but fighting for the same main purpose: helping homeless people to find their way in life in some ways. One of these non-profit organizations specialized in helping homeless people is Samusocial, an important association which has received the support of public authorities when it was in need of spaces but also when it needed a certain financial support. Public institutions can also help by authorizing the projects and the actions taken by the humanitarian organizations, something which has been rapidly achieved after their submission to the authorities.

The main activity which **Samusocial** carries on in order to help homeless people is the organization of different teams, made up of specialized persons who go on the streets and seek the people who are in need and provide them the support that they urgently need.

The night and day mobile teams are made of a doctor, a social – care assistant and a driver. These teams go out in search of homeless people and once the team finds a sick person or a person with no identity card, they offer him medical help (by buying medicines and giving him the treatment right there on the street or by going with that person to the local authorities in order to get an identity card).

There is also a psychiatric mobile team that operates on the streets of Bucharest in order to find the persons suffering from this kind of diseases. They buy them psychotropic medicine and give them a treatment. This team also monitors periodically each case and offers social counseling. (<http://www.samusocial.ro/proiecte/echipe-mobile/>)

Another important project developed by “Samusocial Romania” is represented by the “Socio-professional inset Workshops”. Their purpose is to offer the homeless persons a job based on a contract concluded for a determined period. The job consist in collecting, dismembering and reconditioning computers and printers. The workshops present 3 advantages:

- Social – offering a job and a shelter
- Economic – the safety of having a job and an salary
- Ecologic – recycling used computers and protecting the environment.

‘Samusocial Romania’ has also developed a ‘HIV prevention program’ which lasted from 2008 until September 2009. This project involved giving medical consultations, small interventions, medicine prescription and administration, providing help in order to obtain the identity card, recommendations for the Psychological Counseling Center and for other specialized associations, distributing sleeping bags, soup, tea and other food for free. (<http://www.samusocial.ro/proiecte/programul-de-preventie-hiv-sida/>)

Among all its activities which render the homeless people the support that they need in order to survive, Samusocial from Romania has set up a newspaper for the people without a shelter, where they can write and present all kind of artistic manifestations. This initiative is ment to prove that homeless people are not people who do not want to do anything in order to end this situation and that they are certainly not people with no capacity of doing something constructive.

This newspaper, called “ *Gazeta strazii* “ or “Newspaper of the street” is the first publication from Bucharest where we, the readers, can find articles and life stories conceived by their “owners”, homeless people who receive all the support from Samusocial Romania, an organization set up in order to find a place for this big number of persons in the Romanian society.

Here, in this newspaper, roofless people come to speak about the beautiful moments of their lives, about their problems, their needs, hopes, sometimes even about their dreams. They speak about the life that they have got to live with or without them wanting to.

On the website of the organisation, the newspaper has one reserved place, where every person connected to the Internet can read it online and also, one can read there descriptions of people who write interesting articles in every issue of the publication.

One exemple of these persons is Vali, who benefits from the services offered by Samusocial Romania for almost an year. He had big medical problems with his eyes, but helped by the organization and by the CEO of a private hospital, he got operated and now he writes long beautiful articles based on the memories of his past life .

7. Dumitru is another homeless person who now writes at the “Gazeta strazii”. He was a very good poet when he was in high-school. In the memory of the old times when he

surprised all the people around him with his devotion for poetry, he now writes poems in the newspaper that gave him the chance to explore again his talent for writing.

8. Nichi was always an exuberant person, with a great sense of humour, but after the divorce, when he lost his house, he was left behind by all his friends and other people that he knew. He did not lose his gift of being funny and the pleasure to laugh, and he now draws caricatures and writes jokes for people that read the newspaper, giving them a lesson of life about how important is to enjoy life even if it seems that everything is way too tough to be handled. (<http://www.samusocial.ro/proiecte/gazeta-strazii/>)
9. And these are just a few examples of people helped by Samusocial Romania to integrate themselves into the society, to have normal activities even if their life conditions are not as easy as those of the persons who have a shelter, warm food every day, a family and so on. The organisation makes them feel like having a family, a purpose for which to live, to smile more often.

‘ Casa Ioana ‘ is also an important non-profit organisation from Bucharest, which runs its activity day and night, doing its best to help homeless people to have a better life. The association has as one of its main goals the help offered to roofless people in order to encourage them to work and have a certain independence in their lives. The social services and the temporary accommodation are the areas in which Casa Ioana works hard so that people get all the support that they need: moral, medical etc.



The latest project of Casa Ioana, an international project called '**Ending Homelessness**' , was a campaign ment to raise awareness through art. A particular exhibiton of statues having the size of real human beings was opened during March 2011 in different important buildings from Bucharest, in order to present an image of homeless' people problems and way of living; there were presented people with mental disorders or with problems caused by alcohol and drugs.

(<http://casaioana.org/atouringexhibitionwithavision/>)

Concordia Romania, a well known humanitarian organisation from Romania, has as its main goal providing support to children in what concerns housing and education, in order for them to achieve an independent life.

The organisation has set up two apprenticeship schools in two locations from Romania, schools where young people can learn different kinds of crafts. After graduating, the young people get a diploma recognized in Romania and in the European Union and they are also helped to find a job based on what they have learned down there.

One of the children helped by the association Concordia is Marcel Daniel Stancu, born on 20th of August 1989. His testimonial illustrates the great opportunities which Concordia Romania offerses to young people without shelter, in their way through maturity.



‘My name is Marcel Stancu and I am 21 years old. When I was one year old, my mother abandoned me and my father because he used to beat her. I remained with my father at home, but after he got married again, he started drinking alcohol and he was violent with me day in day out, so I ran away from home and went to Bucharest. I did not know anyone here. After one year of living on the streets, I got to Concordia where I found a warm shelter and lovely people willing to help me change my life. [...] In Concordia I went to classes and when the Craft School Concordia opened, I moved there and made one step forward in my life. Here I learned the craft of being a waiter and I also improved my German and my English. At the same time, I improved my knowledge in Geography, IT, Health, Economics, Religion etc. Now I am ready to work in a real restaurant and I am grateful to all the people from Concordia who helped me to achieve something in this life. Concordia is definitely my

family.’ (<http://www.concordia.or.at/romania/de/concordia-romania/povesti-de-viata/marcel-daniel-stancu.html>).

Based on their motto ‘Who saves a life, saves the whole world’, Concordia really brings a major change in the life of the children with problems, who are forced to live on the streets for various reasons. Life is nothing without education and this is one of the most important values transmitted to the children who arrive at the Concordia placements and schools.



6. Characteristic of Samusocial Romania

Overview of the functioning of non-governmental organizations

The following section presents the assumptions expressed in *Global Strategic Planning: Cultural Perspectives for Profit and Non-Profit organizations* (Katsioloudes, Mario I). NPOs (non-profit organizations) should have an objective of reaching those in need; providing access to and information about services is one of the valid functions of nonprofit marketing. Money, however, cannot be discounted as an important factor in NPO management. Without sufficient funds to operate, the organization will be unable to benefit anyone. It is perfectly legitimate for an NPO to see its marketing function as a means to increase revenue in order to operate and grow (285). In NPOs, the line between public relations and marketing blurs; if people know about the organization, hear positive things about the organization, and feel the organization can serve their needs, then the organization markets itself successfully (286).

In what concerns market research and information gathering, the NPO can do formal research on the preferences and reactions of different segments of its clientele. How far the NPO goes depends on its needs, time, money, and expertise (287). Identifying the organization's competitors is a key ingredient to the NPO's market analysis. Since an important factor in the SPP is developing strategies for survival and growth, the organization will need to become aware of others in its environment who might be threats or impediments to the organization's objectives (293). When public and private NPOs need to expand or renovate, they have no choice but to turn to fund-raising for their capital projects. Even though they may have both dues and nondues income, fundraising projects will make the difference in meeting construction goals (296).

The organization ought to try and anticipate the needs, interests, and reactions of various segments of its donors, so that its chances of success increase (300). Looking at such factors as population demographics, geographic location, and the presence and activities of competitors are all marketing-oriented actions that can help the organization to create a favorable future. By investigating whether a market exists for specific services, the organization can develop, grow, and change with the times (301). Marketing is useful for fostering community awareness of problems and the availability and effectiveness of services

provided by organizations. Through marketing activities of some type, the increase and/or maintenance of the organization's services can be achieved. Many NPOs report increases in calls, clients, and customers following the airing of a public service announcement or the appearance of a feature article on their services.

Marketing, if done ethically and humanely, is not a crass and exploitative activity for the NPOs. It is a means of fostering the interaction between the NPO and the consumers, information-giver and information-seeker, in a way that it is beneficial to both (303). Strategic positioning is the development of a favorable spot in the organization's environment and is a useful concept in the development of organizational and marketing strategies. It takes into consideration many of the aforementioned factors: population, social considerations, and competition (304). Some of the marketing techniques that can be put into practice are: public service announcements, advertising, media coverage, referral networks, marketing staff, direct mail, goodwill and word of mouth (305-306).

Samusocial Romania

“We care about homeless people.”

'Samusocial Romania' (The Mobile Emergency Help Service) is a non-governmental organization that has as an objective rendering assistance to homeless people who are dealing with the social exclusion. It is an assistance method for the most excluded persons from the big cities. It was founded by Doctor Xavier Emmanuelli, who has also founded “Doctors without borders” and “Samusocial Paris”. In 2001 he founded “Samusocial International” with the purpose of developing this type of social assistance system all over the world. Nowadays there are 10 “Samusocial” on 4 continents: Europe, America, Asia, and Africa.

The organization was established for the first time in Romania in February 2004. Then two missions took place in order to find homeless persons who are in need of medical help. Another purpose was to create a reliable connection and to have a balance of homeless people living in Bucharest.

samusocial din România

Since then, every year “Samusocial Romania” organizes a number of social actions that are meant to reduce the social exclusion of homeless people. The most important projects are the night and day mobile teams and the day centre.

Nowadays Samusocial Romania has a total number of 20 employees of different professions: doctors, social assistants, psychologist, employment counselor, pharmacist and drivers. They are working on the night and day mobile team or at the day centre. Even if the number is not very big, Samusocial Romania has managed to run successfully several important projects.

The organization works with the help coming from partner companies in Romania and also with funds from the European Union. Partnerships are an important source of income and between them we can enumerate some of the biggest supermarkets and even banks from the country. Concerning the European funds, the organization’s projects are financed by the Phare program. Samusocial is also receiving donations from individuals that are used for the smaller expenses.

Starting with 2009 we can find the Romanian organization online on: www.samusocial.ro. The site contains all the information that a person would like to find out about this organization: principles, team, history, partners, projects, statistics and reports about homeless people, even an archive of media appearances. The site is administered by Monica Tautul, PR manager. Concerning the online environment, Samusocial Roamania has also a blog that we can find on <http://www.samusocial.ro/blog/>. Here we can read stories about the people that were helped by the organization or about the ongoing special events and projects or their results.

On the online environment there is also a Facebook page of Samusocial Romania: <http://www.facebook.com/SamusocialRomania>. This page contains many useful posts about the ongoing actions and also photos from all events, actions and projects that took place and even videos with testimonials of the homeless people.

In 2010 Samusocial Romania ran a public awareness campaign concerning homeless people situation in Bucharest and their real life level. In order to promote the campaign, a video was made (available on <http://www.samusocial.ro/media/stiri/campania-de-sensibilizare-a-inceput/>) an outdoor and print campaign with the message: “Homeless people don’t disappear, they just transform themselves”.



Samusocial Romania is not the only non-profit organization that helps homeless people in our country. It’s main purpose is the social reinstatement of adult homeless people in the society. Other non-governmental organizations for the homeless in Romania are Concordia and Casa Ioana. Concordia helps homeless or stray children and teenagers; meanwhile Casa Ioana is a charity house which offers its services to homeless people day and night. There are also other foundations that are trying to take care of homeless people but their number is insufficient.

“Samusocial Romania” is a member of other international organizations that are fighting against the discrimination and exclusion of adult homeless people. For example, FEANTSA (the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless), SMES EU (the Organisation for Mental Health and Social Exclusion), RHNR Romania (Romania Harm Reduction Network). We must also mention the fact that “Samusocial Romania” has a number of local associations as partners.

Conclusions

The category of homeless persons is not uniform; there are no universal aspects which determine homelessness, but an overlapping of them. The issue stems not only from the lack of a place to live in; there is an intertwining of issues such as health problems, extreme poverty, violent acts. That is why local and national authorities should take into account the specifics of each category of homeless persons, in order for them to successfully address this issue. In what concerns Romania, there should be a closer collaboration between the local and national authorities, because any communication gap can lead to an inability to implement the strategies aimed at solving homeless people exclusion. Also, the current legislative framework should be adapted in order to suit local circumstances and budgets, and this can be achieved only if the administrations work jointly. There is also a need for more monitoring bodies which should survey the implementation of the strategies aimed at reducing homeless people exclusion and improving their situation, and report to the higher national bodies responsible for the social assistance system. Moreover, as nothing can be managed without the human support, the authorities should organize more campaigns in order to raise awareness, because the attitude towards exclusion and marginalization comes from the simple citizens and it is their mentality which should be influenced.

As far as the European context is concerned, the first issue that should be tackled is that of the immigrants, because in many developed countries they represent the most vulnerable category. As some of them cannot adapt to the new society they have come to live into or as they cannot find a job, they end up living on the streets or in illegal campsites. Therefore, the European Organizations should show a greater concern for the observation of the fundamental human rights and these immigrants should be provided with support in order to reintegrate into the society. Shelters only offer homeless persons a place to stay overnight. It does not solve the issue on the longer term. Besides this, European Organizations should monitor more closely the progress of the member states in what concerns implementing the policies adopted at the European level and to offer more support to the non-governmental organizations which can address more efficiently the issue of homelessness at the local level.

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