



FEANTSA

## European Report



# Multiple Barriers, Multiple Solutions: Inclusion into and through Employment for People who are Homeless

## Annual Theme 2007 Employment and Homelessness



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Report**

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# Table of Contents

Executive summary .....	5
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2. Employment profiles of people who are homeless.....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 Unemployed and economically inactive .....	14
2.2 Mainstream and supported employment .....	14
2.3 Work in the informal economy and income generating activities .....	15
2.4 Vocational training, life-skills training and meaningful occupation.....	16
2.5 Gender differences regarding the employment profile .....	16
2.6 Efforts to gain employment .....	16
<b>3. Multiple barriers to employment for people who are homeless .....</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1 Lack of job opportunities .....	17
3.2 Personal barriers to employment .....	18
3.3 Housing barriers .....	19
3.3.1 Housing barriers to employment .....	19
3.3.2 Barriers to housing for workers who are homeless .....	20
3.4 Health barriers .....	20
3.5 Barriers related to education .....	21
3.6 Stigmatisation and discrimination.....	22
3.7 Bureaucratic and financial barriers.....	22
3.8 Barriers related to services .....	22
3.9 Barriers related to transport .....	23
3.11 Gender difference regarding barriers to employment .....	23
3.12 Barriers to employment for migrants who are homeless.....	24
<b>4. The Right to Work and employment initiatives for people who are homeless .....</b>	<b>24</b>
4.1 Right to Work .....	24
4.2 Mutual support between employment and homelessness policies .....	25
4.2.1 Employment policies for disadvantaged groups .....	25
4.2.2 Coordination of homelessness and employment policies .....	25
4.2.3 Coordination of prevention policies .....	26
4.3 Employment programmes and projects for disadvantaged groups.....	27
4.3.1 Examples of employability programmes and projects .....	27
4.3.2 Challenges in relation to the lack of a legal and policy framework .....	28
4.3.3 Challenges in relation to the definition of employment .....	28
4.4 Unemployment benefits, social benefits and compulsory participation .....	28
4.4.1 General overview .....	28
4.4.2 Conceptual problems .....	29
Level of benefits .....	29
Structure of benefits .....	29
4.4.3 Willingness to work and compulsory participation .....	29
4.4.4 Young people and compulsory participation .....	30
4.4.5 Access problems .....	30

4.5 General context and trend .....	31
<b>5. Employment services for people who are homeless .....</b>	<b>32</b>
5.1 Mainstream employment services and services for people with multiple needs.....	32
5.2 Advice and counselling .....	32
5.3 Supported employment .....	33
5.3.1 Supported employment in the mainstream labour market .....	33
5.3.2 Supported employment in social enterprises or homeless organisations .....	33
5.3.3 Other forms of organised job placements .....	34
5.3.4 Challenges for supported employment .....	34
5.4 In - Work Support .....	35
5.5 Vocational training and education for people experiencing homelessness .....	35
5.6 Occupational activities and prevocational training .....	36
5.6.1 Life-skills training.....	36
5.6.2 Meaningful occupation .....	37
5.7 Challenges for employment services for people who are homeless .....	37
5.7.1 Participation of service users .....	37
5.7.2 Geographical distribution of services .....	38
<b>6. Cooperation of different stakeholders and awareness-raising .....</b>	<b>38</b>
6.1 Cooperation of different stakeholders .....	38
6.2 Awareness-raising initiatives for employers or public administration .....	39
<b>7. Funding of employment services for people who are homeless .....</b>	<b>40</b>
7.1 Funding sources .....	40
7.2 Security of funding .....	40
7.3 Effectiveness of funding .....	41
7.3.1 Lack of stable and long-term funding.....	41
7.3.2 Conditions and structure of funding.....	41
<b>8. Indicators, data collection and research .....</b>	<b>42</b>
8.1 Indicators .....	42
8.2 Data collection .....	42
8.3 Research .....	43
<b>9. The right to work for people who are homeless – a political issue? .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>10. Conclusions .....</b>	<b>44</b>
10.1 A holistic approach .....	44
10.2 An individualised approach .....	44
10.3 Recommendations .....	46
<b>11. Bibliography.....</b>	<b>48</b>
Annex 1: ETHOS – European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion .....	49
Annex 2: Glossary - working definitions! .....	50

## Executive summary

Unemployment is one of the main trigger factors that lead to homelessness. Without a job, it is difficult to access or keep adequate accommodation. At the same time, many people who are homeless face multiple barriers to work and employment.

FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations working with People who are homeless, felt that there was a need to analyse in more detail the link between unemployment and homelessness and decided to dedicate its Annual Theme 2007 to the topic “Multiple Barriers, Multiple Solutions: Inclusion into and through Employment for People who are homeless in Europe”.

This European report brings together the main findings of the year. It is based on national reports from 16 EU countries and aims to provide an overview about the employment situation of people experiencing homelessness as well as efforts to overcome their barriers to employment in the European Union as a whole.

The report has been prepared in the context of the European Strategy for Social Protection and Social Inclusion and aims to contribute to current EU discussions on the “active inclusion” of people furthest away from the labour market and the development of a holistic approach to help this group to move closer to employment.

The report is based on the assumption that employment plays a crucial role for the social inclusion as well as personal fulfilment of an individual. What is more, employment also contributes to the economy and social cohesion of society as a whole.

This is in line with the increasing attention that Member States pay to the “activation” of people who are long-term unemployed and disadvantaged in the labour market as well as the objectives of the Jobs and Growth agenda at EU level.

However, the understanding of inclusion into employment for people experiencing homelessness in this report goes beyond the integration of people into the mainstream labour market. The focus is rather on improving the employability of people and to favour their social inclusion through

an approach that is adapted to their individual needs. This approach includes the engagement of a person in all kinds of occupational activities that help the person to connect with working life and the labour market in general.

### ***Employment profiles of people who are homeless***

The report first looks at the employment profiles of people experiencing homelessness. It becomes clear that the majority of people are unemployed or economically inactive. Nonetheless, a significant proportion of people experiencing homelessness are working.

Some are working in the mainstream labour market and still face difficulties accessing and sustaining adequate and affordable accommodation. A number of people are also employed in the social economy. Others are forced to seek work in the informal economy as they do not have access to equally paid jobs in the mainstream labour market.

Many of the employment contracts of people experiencing homelessness are temporary. For some, short-term supported employment will allow the person to move on into more stable contracts in the mainstream labour market. However, many people experiencing homelessness are trapped in a situation of precarious and often low-paid jobs in the mainstream labour market that further contribute to their vulnerability. A particularly vulnerable group are those working outside of labour regulations in the informal economy.

Due to their difficult living situation, many people who are homeless have difficulties actively seeking legal employment in the mainstream labour market.

### ***Multiple barriers to employment for people who are homeless***

While for some people access to housing is the most important barrier to finding and sustaining a job, the majority of people experiencing homelessness face multiple barriers to work and employment. These include:

**Lack of job opportunities:** Due to structural changes in the labour market, there are fewer low-skilled jobs available which used to be typical entry points for people who are homeless into the labour market.

6

**Personal barriers:** Personal barriers directly relate to the life experience of each individual and include family related problems, debt problems, problems relating to physical appearance as well as the lack of core life-skills. Personal barriers are closely linked to structural and societal barriers.

**Housing barriers:** Without access to some form of housing stability it is almost impossible for people who are homeless to engage in education, training or employment. For homeless workers, securing adequate and affordable accommodation is often a precondition to sustain employment.

**Health barriers:** People who are homeless often suffer from an accumulation of health problems, ranging across mental health problems, substance abuse, general physical health problems and dental problems which affect their chances to participate in training or to gain employment.

**Barriers related to education:** People who are homeless often have lower levels of education than the general population. They also tend to be overrepresented amongst people who lack basic skills such as literacy and numeracy.

**Stigmatisation and discrimination:** Many people who are homeless are regularly confronted with discrimination and stigmatisation related to their living situation which can considerably reduce their chances of being considered for job vacancies.

**Bureaucratic and financial barriers:** In some countries, poorly structured welfare benefits which make it financially unattractive to seek employment are one of most important barriers to people finding a job in the mainstream labour market.

**Barriers related to services:** The lack or inadequacy of services (e.g. short opening hours of hostels and canteens which make it impossible for residents to do night shifts or the lack of a study room) can constitute a barrier for people who are homeless to actively seek employment or to engage in training and education. The lack of services affect in particular people experiencing homelessness and living in rural and more remote areas outside of city centres.

**Barriers related to access to information:** People who are homeless have difficulties accessing information about relevant training and job opportunities, due to limited access to employment services, Internet and telephone as well as their difficulties to use these tools with a view to searching for a job.

**Migration and gender specific barriers:** What is more, the experience of domestic violence and the lack of child-care services are barriers that particularly affect women who are homeless. For migrants who are homeless, their precarious legal status is often the most important barrier to find a job in the mainstream labour market.

### *The Right to Work and employment policies*

There is no justiciable right to work for people who are homeless in any of the EU countries. Instead employment policies exist which aim to promote the labour market integration of disadvantaged groups.

Although people experiencing homelessness might benefit from these policies, there is the risk that policies are ineffective for this group as they are not tailored to their multiple needs.

There is evidence that a better coordination of employment and homelessness policies, including prevention policies, is needed. What is more, an employment dimension should be an integral part of comprehensive homelessness strategies.

### *Programmes and projects for people experiencing homelessness*

In addition to employment policies, there are a variety of programmes and projects for disadvantaged groups. In a number of countries, these specifically target people experiencing homelessness.

Reports highlighted that the provision of employment services for people who are homeless is easier where specific policies for people with multiple needs also exist.

What is more, the provision of low-threshold services, such as meaningful occupation and life-skills training, may be more problematic as they fall outside of the usual definition of "employment".

### *Unemployment benefits, social benefits and compulsory participation*

Problems for people experiencing homelessness in relation to unemployment and social benefits are emphasised in many reports. Problems included:

**Level of benefits:** In particular in countries where social protection systems are less developed, the level of benefits may not be high enough to ensure a life in dignity of socially excluded people.

**Structure of benefits:** Unemployment and social benefit systems are often very complex and not transparent for people who are homeless. In several countries, making work pay for people who are homeless is a major challenge.

**Willingness to work and compulsory participation:** In many countries benefits are linked to certain conditions, such as efforts to actively seek employment. These obligations are often particularly strict for younger people under 25.

Strict regulations may have a negative impact on the employment situation of people who are homeless. People may be pushed into jobs that are not adapted to their needs and further contribute to their exclusion. However, exonerations of obligations for people who are homeless may also lead to a de facto exclusion of people from employment services as they are not considered to be a target group of interventions. There is a need for a more flexible approach that offers engagement opportunities that are adapted to the person's needs and aspirations for all.

### ***Employment services for people who are homeless***

Mainstream employment services are often not very effective for people experiencing homelessness as they are not flexible enough to adapt their services to the living situation of people with multiple needs.

In many countries, some specific employment services exist for people who are homeless. These include:

**Counselling and advice:** The most common service provided by most homeless services is counselling and advice about job opportunities.

**Supported employment:** In most countries, people who are homeless have the possibility of taking part in job placements, either in the mainstream labour market or in the social economy. In these schemes, participants receive ongoing financial support. In addition, a wide range of support may be provided, including health, housing, educational and personal/emotional support.

**Vocational Training and education:** People who are homeless may participate in professional training and education courses (e.g. woodwork, maths, and computers). Some of these trainings are organised within homeless services.

**Life-skills training and meaningful occupation:** These low-threshold services are an important tool to encourage people to move from non-engagement to engagement. The provision of these services is underdeveloped in many countries.

**In-work support:** Ongoing support after a job has been taken up may be very important for job retention. The provision of these services still remains limited.

Reports highlighted the need to provide different stages of employment services that can be individually adapted to the needs and aspirations of a person. Services will be most effective if they find the right balance between encouraging people to move forward to a next stage (e.g. into supported employment, into jobs in the mainstream labour market) without putting too much pressure on people who require more time and support.

Other challenges mentioned in the reports relate to ensuring an effective participation of service users in the design of employment services and the geographical distribution of services.

### ***Cooperation of different stakeholders and awareness-raising***

All national reports highlighted the importance of an effective cooperation between different stakeholders in order to provide a holistic support framework that is adapted to the multiple needs of people experiencing homelessness.

Many programmes and projects are organised in partnership with a variety of stakeholders including employment and social services, NGO's, the social economy and private businesses.

However, the level of cooperation differs considerably from one country to another and between different programmes and projects. In particular in countries where there is a dominance of emergency services for people experiencing homelessness, cooperation of different stakeholders tends to be very difficult.

Cooperation is also highlighted as an effective means to raise awareness amongst people outside of the sector about the needs and living situations of people experiencing homelessness.

### ***Funding of employment services for people who are homeless***

In most countries there are multiple funding sources for employment services for people who are homeless. While in some countries, State funding is the main funding source, in other countries, there is a dominance of European funding, such as ESF funding and funding through the Community Initiative EQUAL.

Most of the reports highlight that ensuring sufficient, stable and long-term funding is a major challenge for service provider organisations. This funding is urgently needed in order to help people who are homeless to move out of homelessness and possibly into employment in a sustainable way. Usually, an inclusion process takes several years and not every attempt will be an immediate success.

There is evidence that the provision of services that are adapted to the individual needs and aspirations of people who are homeless will be less costly in the long-term than ad-hoc emergency interventions.

### ***Indicators, data collection and research***

The focus on hard outcomes (e.g. number of transfers into the mainstream labour market) is too short sighted for employment services for people with multiple needs. More qualitative indicators which take account of the overall situation and quality of life may more effectively capture the real impact

There is an urgent need to develop data collection on homelessness, including on the employment situation of people who are homeless, as well as to promote research in this area.

### ***The Right to Work: a political issue?***

Most countries are sceptical about a rights-based approach to the employment of people who are homeless. Many reports state, however, that the right to work could be an interesting example for a media campaign.

### ***FEANTSA recommendations***

People who are homeless need support that is holistic and adapted to their personal needs in order to develop their skills and competencies and move closer to employment.

To promote this approach in the European Union, FEANTSA makes the following recommendations:

#### **1. Recognise the right to work and to participate in a meaningful occupation of people who are homeless**

Employment and occupational activities are realistic options for people who are homeless if the right support framework is provided. Employment policies for disadvantaged groups have to be adapted in a way that they take into account the multiple barriers to employment of people experiencing homelessness, including the lack of access to adequate and affordable housing.

#### **2. Focus on improving employability and skills**

Employment for people who are homeless is more than the reintegration into the mainstream labour market. Inclusion into employment aims to improve the overall situation of an individual through the person's involvement in all kinds of occupational activities and supported employment schemes. These employability services help people to gain skills, competencies and motivation and to possibly move on into employment. They include low threshold services such as meaningful occupation and life-skills training as well as vocational training and supported employment schemes.

#### **3. Provide a holistic support framework**

Most people who are homeless require support in more than one area. Employment support has to be linked to housing, health or other forms of social and emotional support. This requires a better coordination between employment policies and homelessness as well as a better integration of an employment dimension in strategies to combat homelessness.

#### **4. Adopt a personalised approach**

A personalised approach is needed that includes an initial as well as ongoing assessment of the needs and aspirations of the person as well as ongoing support after a work placement. Many people experiencing homelessness may require extra time and support before being able to take up and sustain employment or to participate in occupational activities. Flexibility is needed to change track, work on one's own pace and also "fail" sometimes.

**5. Create real incentives for people to gain employment and ensure adequate levels of minimum income**

Badly structured benefits may constitute a barrier for people to seek work in the mainstream labour market as they risk losing benefits. Taking up a job has to pay in real terms for people that are ready to do so. Having the possibility to combine social benefits with income through work for an initial period of time may be essential for job retention. People who are not ready to work need guaranteed access to adequate minimum income and social benefits.

**6. Abolish sanctions for people experiencing homelessness**

Sanctions are not an effective policy measure for people experiencing homelessness. This group is already in a very vulnerable situation and sanctions only risk further contributing to their social exclusion. Social support and empowerment that are adapted to the personal needs and aspirations are more effective instruments and more likely to lead to a sustainable improvement in the living situation of people experiencing homelessness.

**7. Promote the effective cooperation of all relevant stakeholders**

The inclusion of people experiencing homelessness into occupational activities and employment requires cooperation within homelessness services but also amongst all relevant stakeholders in related areas, such as social services, training, education and employment. Cooperation is also a means to raise awareness amongst people outside of the sector about the real living situations of people experiencing homelessness.

**8. Establish a multi-annual funding system for employment services for people who are homeless**

The inclusion into employment for a person who is homeless usually requires several years of support. In order to accompany and support the person during this process, service provider organisations need to have access to stable and sufficient long-term funding. Budgets for employability measures have to be clearly defined. ESF and Community action programmes such as EQUAL have a vital role to play within this context. There is evi-

dence that tailored ongoing services for people experiencing homelessness will be less costly in the long-term than ad-hoc emergency interventions.

**9. Promote the effective participation of service users**

The effective involvement of service users in the design of employment services as well as in decision making processes affecting these services is crucial in order to develop an approach that actually works for people experiencing homelessness.

**10. Ensure access to clear and consistent information on rights, entitlements and existing support services**

Many people who are homeless find it hard to access information on the range of services available to them. Many find it even harder to gain accurate and consistent advice on their benefits or tax entitlements, or their right to engage in activities that are related to employment. Clear, consistent and accurate information needs to be easily available and kept up to date.

**11. Ensure geographical distribution of services and access to transport**

Most homeless services are located in cities and urban areas, where also the majority of people experiencing homelessness live. However, a significant proportion of people experiencing homelessness also live in rural areas, where the lack of services as well as the lack of public transport facilities may constitute an important barrier to access the necessary support.

**12. Support the role of the social economy as a transitional labour market**

The social economy plays a crucial role for the (supported) employment of people with multiple needs who are not or not yet able to find a job in the mainstream labour market. Many social enterprises have proved to be effective in combining inclusion through training and work with ongoing housing or social support. Social economy employers need adequate financial support for these schemes. There should be incentives for employers to target the most vulnerable groups and to effectively promote the transition into the mainstream labour market for those who are ready to do so.

**13. Develop indicators that measure soft outcomes of interventions**

10

Indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of employment programmes currently focus too much on hard outcomes such as the number of people who have gained employment. Indicators that are mindful to the soft outcomes of interventions, such as an overall improvement of the living situation of participants, are more effective for people who are homeless.

**14. Establish homeless data collection systems that look at the employment profiles of people**

There is an urgent need to further develop homeless data collection systems in Europe in order to better understand the profiles and needs of people experiencing homelessness, including people's employment profiles and needs. This system would be an effective tool to further develop policies to combat homelessness at regional, national and European level.

**15. Promote research in the area of employment and homelessness**

Although several studies have looked in recent years at the employment situation of people who are homeless, there is still a lot of scope for more detailed research in this field.

# 1. Introduction

Unemployment and homelessness are closely interlinked. The lack or loss of employment is an important trigger factor that leads to homelessness. Without a job, it becomes difficult to pay the rent or mortgage. If unemployment continues for a longer period of time, people risk becoming socially isolated. They might lose contact with friends and colleagues because they lack the financial means to actively participate in social life. The frustration and stress that is often linked to unemployment contribute to the disempowerment of the person and negatively affects the individual's physical as well as mental health situation. A combination of these factors makes a person vulnerable to housing exclusion and homelessness.

On the other hand, the lack or loss of a home negatively affects the ability of a person to keep a job or to gain new employment. Without the security and comfort of a home, it is difficult to maintain working times, ensure sufficient rest and hygiene, take care of children and dependants, seek help from mainstream services and organise a person's life in general.

To better understand the link between employment and homelessness, **FEANTSA – the European Federation of National Organisations working with People who are homeless** – decided to dedicate its Annual Theme in 2007 to the topic **“Multiple barriers, multiple solutions: Inclusion into and through employment for people who are homeless in Europe”**.

During the course of the year FEANTSA has conducted a wide consultation with its member organisations on this issue. A comprehensive questionnaire<sup>1</sup> was distributed to the different member organisations across the European Union. Following the questions laid out in this questionnaire, every AC member (i.e. the official delegate of each country) was responsible for drawing together the information in a single representative report.

In total 16 countries<sup>2</sup> submitted a National Report which are all available on the FEANTSA website: [www.feantsa.org](http://www.feantsa.org). In addition, some information was available from Germany. There has been no information from Greece, Sweden, Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia and Malta.

This European report draws together the main information from the national reports and aims to provide an overview about the key findings across the EU as a whole.

The report has been prepared in the context of the European Strategy for Social Protection and Social Inclusion.<sup>3</sup> The European Report aims to contribute to current EU discussions on the “active inclusion”<sup>4</sup> of people furthest away from the labour market and the development of a holistic approach to help this group to move closer to employment.

## *Inclusion through employment*

The report is based on the assumption that work and employment play a key role for the social inclusion and personal fulfilment of an individual. Work can provide a person with a meaningful occupation in life and contribute to the person's self-confidence and recognition in society. This has positive effects on related areas, such as the health and housing situation of the individual. In addition, the inclusion of a person through employment positively impacts on the social cohesion and economy of society as a whole.

A positive notion of work is also reflected in various international human rights instruments that stipulate the Right to Work. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, for example, sets out in article 6 that the States Parties recognise the “right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts, and will take appropriate steps to safeguard this right.” The European Social Charter protects the Right to Work as well as a series of related rights, such as the Right to Safe and Healthy Working Conditions or the Right to Vocational Training.

Many people experiencing homelessness also attribute a high importance to work. Although they may have more

1 FEANTSA questionnaire for the Annual Theme 2007 „Multiple barriers, multiple barriers: Inclusion into and through employment for people who are homeless in Europe”. [http://www.feantsa.org/files/Employment\\_annual\\_theme/Annual\\_theme\\_documents/Questionnaire/FINAL\\_questionnaire\\_annual\\_theme07\\_EN.pdf](http://www.feantsa.org/files/Employment_annual_theme/Annual_theme_documents/Questionnaire/FINAL_questionnaire_annual_theme07_EN.pdf)

2 National Reports are available from: Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

3 This is the official Anti-Poverty Strategy of the European Union, established in 2000 and revised and relaunched in 2006 as the European Union Strategy for Social Protection and Social Inclusion.

4 See European Commission webpage on Active Inclusion: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/social\\_inclusion/active\\_inclusion\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/active_inclusion_en.htm)

urgent needs at the moment, the majority of people who are homeless indicate the wish to work or to engage in occupational activities.

12 A survey of participants of employment and training programmes of UK FEANTSA member St. Mungo's illustrates the mutual support between engagement in occupational activities and social inclusion. The findings show that:

- 4 in 5 felt they were learning new skills by being linked into the service
- 4 in 5 felt their confidence and self-esteem had increased since linking into the service
- 2 in 3 were positive that their involvement would lead to them getting work
- 1 in 2 said their housing situation had improved since coming to the service
- 1 in 2 felt their health had improved.<sup>5</sup>

The majority of people who are homeless are unemployed or economically inactive. There are, however, also a significant proportion of people experiencing homelessness who are actually working. Some are employed under regular job contracts in the mainstream labour market. Others are working in the social economy, where social enterprises provide job placements for disadvantaged groups.

A number of people experiencing homelessness are generating income through work in the informal because they have not access to equally paid jobs in the mainstream labour market. In particular people with substance abuse problems are also trying to make some money with activities, such as begging and collecting rubbish.

For some people experiencing homelessness the lack of adequate and affordable housing is the main barrier to access and sustain employment. The majority of people with long-term experience of homelessness, however, face **multiple barriers to work and employment**.

Many of the obstacles to work are personal, including family related problems or debt problems. Yet, the personal barriers are closely interlinked with structural obstacles, such as the lack of affordable and adequate housing, badly structured benefits that discourage people to take up a job, as well as the lack of professional advice and support.

People who are homeless are often confronted with stigmatisation and discrimination. In many countries the clichéd image of the "tramp" who does not want to work or to "integrate" into society still exists.

Moreover, there is clear evidence that in most countries, economic and social changes have made it even more difficult for disadvantaged groups to gain employment. Many, though not all countries, are affected by high base unemployment rates. Due to industrial restructuring, the delocalisation of production and migration, less and less low-skilled jobs are available which used to be typical entry points for this group into the labour market.

In this context, EU member states are paying increasing attention to the "activation" of people who are long-term unemployed in order to balance national budgets. This "work first" approach is in line with the overall objectives of the revised Lisbon Strategy at EU level.<sup>6</sup> Attracting and retaining more people into employment has been identified as one of the key priorities on the EU Jobs and Growth agenda. In the Employment Guidelines the European Council advises member states to ensure inclusive labour markets and make work pay for job-seekers, including disadvantaged people.<sup>7</sup>

A growing interest in using work as a means to fight against poverty and social exclusion may have positive effects on people experiencing homelessness. However, the focus on reducing official unemployment rates raises questions about the current approach to inclusion through employment. Is there only one possible way of social inclusion? Do we want and need employment at all costs for everybody?

### ***Inclusion into employment***

What does inclusion into employment mean for people experiencing homelessness? If we take into account the vulnerable situation of people who are homeless, it becomes clear that for most the immediate solution will not be a full-time job in the mainstream labour market. In particular for people with the experience of street homelessness who are often in a very bad physical and mental health condition, employment will not be a priority.

<sup>5</sup> National Report: United Kingdom, 22.

<sup>6</sup> The Lisbon Programme is an overall programme of the European Union launched in 2000 and revised in 2005. The Lisbon Programme aims to make the European Union the "most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion".

<sup>7</sup> Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005-2008). [http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/integrated\\_guidelines\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/integrated_guidelines_en.pdf)

Employment and work for people who are homeless therefore go beyond the common understanding of “integration” into the labour market. Inclusion into employment for people experiencing homelessness is rather linked to the active engagement of the person in all kinds of occupational activities that will ameliorate the employability of the person.

Improving employability can be understood as the development of skills and competencies that will help an individual to connect with working life and the labour market in general. The focus of interventions is therefore less on hard outcomes (How many people have found a job?) but on soft outcomes (Has the overall situation of an individual improved? Is a person on the right track?).

Such a holistic approach requires services that look at the current situation of each homeless individual and use this as a basis to develop a personalised action plan for inclusion. The multiple obstacles to employment require **multiple solutions**.

An employability approach to the inclusion of people who are homeless challenges current employment policies for disadvantaged groups in the different European Member States. In most countries employment policies still do not leave much room for a variety of solutions:

- Either a person is ready to work and able to participate in vocational training and jobs that are available, including in programmes that target disadvantaged groups. In this case, also social benefits and minimum income will depend on the person's efforts to actively seek a job.
- Or the person is considered not to be ready for work or ill and will remain dependent on social benefits and minimum income.
- In addition, some will qualify as “disabled” and participate in supported employment schemes for people with disabilities.

While these options will be suitable for some people who are homeless, most will require an approach that is somewhere in between and tailored to their specific situation. Otherwise, there is a real risk that people are pushed into a job that is not adapted to their needs and which might contribute to their further exclusion.

At the same time, some people also risk to be “blocked” in a situation of non-engagement and dependency. Many people experiencing homelessness are not able to participate in trainings or job placements for disadvantaged groups if this is not combined with adequate housing support, for example. They are not taken into account by employment services due to the lack of prevocational training schemes, such as life-skills training or meaningful occupation.

An employability approach does not only challenge employment policies for disadvantaged groups. This approach also questions service provision for people who are homeless in Europe. In a context of strict funding regimes, existing homelessness interventions are often focused on housing support. For many people who are homeless housing will also be one of the most urgent needs. However, in order to ensure the long-term reintegration of a person, occupational activities and employment play a key role.

There is a growing understanding that homeless service provision will only help people to get on a sustainable pathway out of poverty and exclusion, if it is based on a holistic and individualised approach. This approach takes into account the different areas of a person's life, including housing, health, social relationships, participation and employment.

As the National Report from Luxembourg states: “The employment or rather the non-employment of people who are homeless is a complex phenomenon”. This report aims to contribute to a better understanding of this phenomenon in the European Union. Based on the experience from different Member States it will provide an overview about the main findings and discuss effective ways to promote the inclusion of people who are homeless through employment and into employment.

The definition of homelessness in this report is based on **ETHOS – the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion**. ETHOS classifies people experiencing homelessness in four different conceptual categories<sup>8</sup>:

- **Roofless:** people sleeping rough or people sleeping in emergency night shelters
- **Houseless:** with a place to sleep but temporary in institutions or shelter
- **Living in insecure housing:** threatened with severe exclusion due to insecure tenancies, eviction, domestic violence

8 For more information on ETHOS, see Annex 1.

- **Living in inadequate housing:** in caravans on illegal campsites, in unfit housing, in extreme overcrowding

14

This report generally focuses on people who are houseless, and – to a minor extent – people who are roofless. However, many of the issues will be relevant for people living in insecure and inadequate accommodation. Where possible and appropriate, the report tries to highlight differences between these categories.

The report first looks at the **employment profiles** of people who are homeless and their chances to gain employment in the mainstream labour market.

This is followed by a presentation of the **different barriers to access and sustainment of employment** for people who are homeless.

The report further describes the **policy and legal framework** of employment initiatives for people experiencing homelessness and provides an overview of the variety of **employment services** for people who are homeless across the EU.

**Cooperation of stakeholders** and **funding** of employment initiatives for people experiencing homelessness are discussed in chapter six and seven of this report. The next chapter looks at possible **indicators for the evaluation** of services and presents the state of play in relation to **data collection and research** in the area of employment and homelessness.

The last chapter is dedicated to the **rights-based approach** to employment for people who are homeless.

## 2. Employment profiles of people who are homeless

Few national statistics exist on the employment profiles of people who are homeless. Available figures are mainly based on data collected at local level (e.g. city) or at the level of individual homeless services. In addition, there are some estimations on the employment situation of people who are homeless<sup>9</sup>.

The available figures show a certain discrepancy between the expressed wish of people experiencing homelessness to work and the actual employment situation of this group. There is evidence that many people who are homeless would like to work or engage in occupational activities but are not working at the moment because they have more urgent needs.

The **French report** for instance states “all [people who are homeless] want to work, even if, at one point during their re-integration, employment might not be a priority for them.”<sup>10</sup>

In the **UK**, OSW’s [Off the Streets and Into Work] ‘No home, No job’ research found that 77% of homeless people surveyed said that they wanted to work at the time of being surveyed, with 97% wanting to work at least at some point in the future.<sup>11</sup>

### 2.1 Unemployed and economically inactive

In all countries, the majority of people who are homeless fall under the categories unemployed and economically inactive. Many people belong to the long term unemployed. In addition, some are also not working because of illness or a disability.

Unemployment is particularly prevalent amongst people who are roofless. However, people who are houseless and people living in insecure or inadequate housing are often unemployed. A study by Shelter **UK** found, for instance, that 77 % of (homeless) households in temporary accommodation are without employment.<sup>12</sup>

### 2.2 Mainstream and supported employment

The available figures<sup>13</sup> also show that there are still a significant proportion of people who are homeless in many countries who are currently working or have recently been in some form of paid employment:

In **Spain**, a national study indicates that 11,8% of the overall homeless population have a job.<sup>14</sup>

9 See also chapter 8 on data collection.

10 National Report: France, 3.

11 National Report: United Kingdom, 5.

12 National Report : United Kingdom, 4.

13 Please note that the quoted figure are taken from the different national reports and are not comparable.

14 National Report: Spain, 4.

15 National Report: Netherlands, 2.

According to the **Dutch National Report**, around 10 % of people who are homeless in the Netherlands have a paid job.<sup>15</sup>

In **Finland**, 4% of the people surveyed by the Social Welfare Office of Helsinki were employed.<sup>16</sup>

The **Austrian report** shows that in the city of Vienna approximately 14% had at least an occasional job at the entry to a homeless service.<sup>17</sup>

However, only a small group work under regular employment contracts in the mainstream labour market. In a number of countries, many people that indicate they have an employment contract are participating in employment measures for disadvantaged people. In these supported employment schemes, participants receive ongoing financial support. Other forms of support can be ongoing training, mentoring or other forms of social support. The social economy plays an important role in the provision of these forms of supported employment:

In **Luxembourg** in a survey of people who are homeless and roofless, 194 people declared they have a job. Of these, 39% had an actual job contract and 49% were participating in a measure organised by the employment office or the social services.<sup>18</sup>

In **France**, around 9 % of both women and men who are houseless are in stable employment. 22 % of the men and 19 % of the women who are houseless are in supported employment.<sup>19</sup>

The **Belgian report** shows that 33% of houseless workers in the Flemish region are employed in supported employment.<sup>20</sup>

According to the **Danish report**, there are a large number of people who are homeless finding jobs in the "social economy".<sup>21</sup>

Many of the employment contracts in the mainstream labour market as well as in the social economy are temporary or only occasional.

The **Irish report** points out, for example, that according to a study less than 1 in 10 people experiencing homelessness reported employment as an income source with only 1% in regular employment and 8 % in occasional employment.<sup>22</sup>

For some, short-term supported employment contracts will allow the person to move on into more stable contracts in the mainstream labour market. This can be very beneficial for people with multiple needs, especially if it is combined with ongoing housing, health and social support.

However, for many people experiencing homelessness, work itself risk to become a means of exclusion. These people are trapped in a situation of precarious and often low-paid jobs that further contribute to their vulnerability.

### 2.3 Work in the informal economy and income generating activities

Many people experiencing homelessness who are officially registered as unemployed or economically inactive are generating an (additional) income through working in the informal economy.

In some countries, minimum income or social benefits will not be enough to make a living. Due to their limited chances to find equally paid jobs in the mainstream labour market, many people experiencing homelessness in these countries earn an additional income in the informal economy.

In other countries, it does not pay for people who are homeless to seek a job in the mainstream labour market as they risk losing their social benefits.

Some examples:

In **Portugal**, people who are roofless often do not receive social benefits and depend on work in the informal economy. Many of the jobs are offered in cleaning, construction and in the hotel and restaurant sector.<sup>23</sup>

In **Hungary**, according to figures from a job centre for people who are homeless, 30% have worked in the informal economy without contracts or any form of security in the recent two years.<sup>24</sup>

16 National Report: Finland, 5.

17 National Report: Austria, 8.

18 National Report: Luxembourg, 4.

19 National Report: France, 3-4.

20 National Report: Belgium (Flanders), 4.

21 National Report: Denmark, 2.

22 National Report: Ireland, 4.

23 National Report: Portugal, 3.

24 National Report: Hungary, 4.

The **Czech report** describes the most common employment profile of a person who is roofless as the following: unemployed, middle-aged, with primary education or apprenticeship who is at least occasionally working in the informal economy.<sup>25</sup>

The most vulnerable groups of people who are homeless may even have difficulties to find a job in the informal economy. Instead, they may engage in a range of income generating activities, such as collecting rubbish or begging in order to earn some money.

In **Spain**, in addition to 19,9 % of people who are homeless who lived on their wage and 17,5% who live on public benefits, 7,4% lived from the profits of offering services or selling objects, 14,2% on the money given by people in the street and others, 16,4% lived on the money given by family and friends and the rest did not know or answer the question.<sup>26</sup>

The report from the **Netherlands** explains that in particular people affected with drug or alcohol addiction may engage in income generating activities, such as begging. Some may even opt for criminal activities, such as burglary, in order to pay for the substances.<sup>27</sup>

## 2.4 Vocational training, life-skills training and meaningful occupation

In most countries, a significant portion of the people experiencing homelessness are taking part in vocational training or other forms of education. In addition, people who are unemployed may also engage in different forms of occupational activities, such as volunteering in the homeless shelter or participating in meaningful occupation. Most reports also highlight the importance of life-skills training.<sup>28</sup> The provision of these services, however, varies from country to country:

The **Irish report**, for instance, states high levels of participation in life-skills training of people who are houseless.<sup>29</sup>

In **Spain**, only some organisation who took part in the consultation for FEANTSA's Annual Theme indicated that their service users are participating in meaningful occupation or life-skills training.<sup>30</sup>

## 2.5 Gender differences regarding the employment profile

Most reports do not state differences regarding the employment profile between women and men. There are, however, several reports that specifically mention gender differences.

According to a study from **Luxembourg**, only 32% of the men who are employed indicate that they have a work contract while 55% are participating in an employment measure from the employment office or the social services. Of the women, 50% say that they have a work contract and 40% are participating in a supported employment measure. This is explained by the fact that a higher percentage of women lived in supported housing while the majority of men surveyed were sleeping in night shelters. An additional explanation is that there are more low-skilled jobs available that are traditionally taken by women, such as in retail and the restaurant and hotel sector.<sup>31</sup>

The **Portuguese report** states that it is easier for women, including undocumented migrant women, to find work outside of the mainstream labour market, as many have the possibility of being employed in private households. Despite precarious employment conditions and a high vulnerability to exploitation, this has helped some women to escape from a life on the streets. Women, in particular women suffering from drug addiction, are also more likely to work as sex workers in order to ensure an income.<sup>32</sup>

## 2.6 Efforts to gain employment

Long-term unemployment, social benefits dependency and work in the informal economy contribute to the disempowerment and disengagement of people who are homeless.

25 National Report: Czech Republic, 3.

26 National Report: Spain, 4.

27 National Report: The Netherlands, 2.

28 For an explanation of these concepts, please consult the glossary in Annex 2.

29 National Report: Ireland, 4.

30 National Report: Spain, 5.

31 National Report: Luxembourg, 4.

32 National Report: Portugal, 5

There is evidence that many people who are homeless have difficulties to actively seek work in the mainstream labour market, i.e. to write applications or to register with the employment office for example:

According to figures from a job centre for people who are homeless in **Hungary**, 30% of the users look for a job on the mainstream labour market "more or less regularly".<sup>33</sup>

In the **Czech Republic**, approximately 25-30% of the people who are homeless and unemployed, economically inactive and not involved in training or other forms of unpaid activities, seek legal employment in the mainstream labour market.<sup>34</sup>

The **Spanish report** estimates that 20-30% of homeless service users are searching for a job in the mainstream labour market.<sup>35</sup>

It seems that people who are homeless may find it easier to apply and participate in supported employment schemes:

Although there is no official national figure on this, there are generally waiting lists for supported employment in **France**.<sup>36</sup>

In **Luxembourg**, where a considerable amount of people who are homeless are working in supported employment, a high proportion of people who are roofless indicate to actively look for a job: Amongst the 64 surveyed men who were sleeping in night shelters and who were not working, 61 % indicate to be looking for a job. Among the 11 surveyed women who were sleeping in a night shelter and who were not working, 60% indicate to be looking for a job.<sup>37</sup>

### 3. Multiple barriers to employment for people who are homeless

#### 3.1 Lack of job opportunities

There are different reasons for the relatively low percentage of people who are homeless that are actively looking for work in the mainstream labour market. This chapter deals in detail with the multiple barriers to employment of people who are homeless. It seems appropriate, however, to see the employment situation of people experiencing homelessness in context with the overall employment situation in the different countries.

Many national reports state that structural changes in the labour market have made it more difficult for people with multiple needs to access employment. An important factor is the transition of industrial economies in need of a large number of workers, including low-skilled workers, to knowledge-based societies, where more jobs are created for high-skilled workers. Even in countries with economic growth rates and high levels of employment, there are often less job opportunities for people who are homeless. Where jobs exist, for example, in the construction sector, they are often taken by higher-skilled migrant workers.

The **Finnish report** points out that the growing demand for labour does not necessarily improve the possibilities of people experiencing homelessness or other disadvantaged groups in the labour market. Working life is changing rapidly in many ways and new skills and competences are required.<sup>38</sup>

The **UK report** refers to a survey of the homeless charity St. Mungo's in London: "Twenty years ago (1986) St Mungo's conducted a survey of homeless people, and revealed that 83% had some form of paid employment. St. Mungo's reveals, 9 September 2005, that less than 5% have paid employment."<sup>39</sup>

In **Spain**, many low-skilled jobs have been created in the construction area. But most of these jobs have been taken by migrant workers.<sup>40</sup>

Several reports mention that these changes have made it particularly difficult for young and older people who are homeless to enter the labour market or gain new employment. Younger people often still lack the necessary skills

33 National Report: Hungary, 4.

34 National Report: Czech Republic, 4.

35 National Report: Spain, 5.

36 National Report: France, 3.

37 National Report: Luxembourg, 5.

38 National Report: Finland, 7.

39 National Report: United Kingdom, 4.

40 National Report: Spain, 5.

and experience. Older workers may not have been able to keep their skills and knowledge up to date, in particular if they are long-term unemployed.

18 Another trend is the greater precariousness and instability of job contracts. Job biographies have changed and in many countries the number of temporary and instable contracts has increased drastically.

The **Spanish report** indicates, for example, that temporary contracts have passed from 24% in 1987 to 41 % in 1994 and 34 % in 2006.<sup>41</sup>

Some reports also mention regional differences, stating that it is particularly difficult in rural areas for people experiencing homelessness to gain employment.

Several national reports emphasise that the lack of job opportunities in the mainstream labour market cannot be compensated by supported employment jobs in the social economy – at least not in the current funding and policy context:

“The Social economy is not an alternative [...] because it is too small.”<sup>42</sup>

“The insufficiency of employment opportunities in the mainstream labour market (in particular the accelerated destruction of industrial jobs) cannot be compensated by work in supported employment.”<sup>43</sup>

When discussing the multiple barriers to employment for people who are homeless, one has to bear in mind this general economic and employment context in the different EU countries.

Many reports indicate that most of these barriers could apply to all ETHOS categories. They argue, however, that for people who are roofless and houseless there is often a greater accumulation of problems that make an inclusion into occupational activities or employment even more difficult. Some reports indicate a lack of information concerning people living in insecure and inadequate housing as these people tend to make less use of homeless services.

## 3.2 Personal barriers to employment

All reports state the importance of personal barriers to education, training and employment of people who are homeless. Personal barriers can be understood as barriers that directly relate to the life experience of each individual. Despite their personal character they are closely linked to societal structures in general. Personal barriers constitute an important stress for the person who is homeless and may lead to a situation in which work and employment are not a priority.

Personal barriers can be family related problems or the experience of domestic violence. Having a criminal record or having been absent from the labour market for a long time makes a job search more difficult.

Many people who are homeless also have debt problems and/or poor financial and budgeting skills. Some are discouraged to seek work because they fear that their potential salary will only be used to pay the debts.

The **Polish national report** highlights that debt problems are one of the most significant barriers to people seeking work in the mainstream labour market. They work in the informal economy in order to avoid having to put about 50% of their salary towards repayment of their debts.<sup>44</sup>

Many personal barriers are linked to the direct experience of homelessness, such as physical appearance and hygiene. In particular for people who are roofless it is difficult to keep their clothes clean and ensure a sufficient personal hygiene. Chaotic and intransient lifestyles are another barrier that many national reports highlight. Having experienced homelessness for a long period of time, many people have problems to comply with specific time schedules, such as working time. Several reports specify, however, that the lives of people who are homeless do not necessarily lack structure, but that their organisation of life and time structure is simply not in line with mainstream society.<sup>45</sup>

People experiencing homelessness often lack core life skills that enable a person to “function” in society. These include communication skills, the ability to deal with conflicts and the respect of certain behaviour rules in society. Having been absent from the labour market for a long time, some people may also face difficulties in keeping their job.

41 National Report: Spain, 10.

42 National Report: Spain, 5.

43 National Report: France, 4.

44 National Report: Poland, 4.

45 National Report: Finland, 8 ; National Report : United Kingdom, 9.

Homelessness often leads to a situation of social isolation of the people. They do not have a supportive social network that can inform them about job opportunities and help and encourage the person to apply for jobs. Another personal barrier mentioned is the lack of legal capacity, which makes it difficult to conclude an employment contract.<sup>46</sup>

All the above mentioned personal barriers aggravate the feeling of powerlessness of people who are homeless and contribute to their further exclusion. In addition, people who are homeless also face various structural and societal obstacles to employment.

### 3.3 Housing barriers

#### 3.3.1 *Housing barriers to employment*

The lack of a home is one of the most important and obvious barriers to gain and sustain employment for people who are homeless. The national reports highlight that without some form of housing stability, it is almost impossible for people who are homeless to engage in work or training.

“It (housing) is a means of fulfilment that allows other human activities to take place.”<sup>47</sup>

It strongly emerges from the different national reports that the lack of adequate and affordable accommodation are important structural factors that make it difficult for people to move out of homelessness and possibly into employment. This is due to the lack of affordable housing in the private rental market as well as the lack of social housing that is accessible for people experiencing homelessness.

In some areas, there is in particular a lack of small one person apartments. But also families may be affected by housing vulnerability:

The **Estonian report** mentions that single retired people often live in relatively big apartments, while larger households have difficulties to access housing that corresponds to their needs.<sup>48</sup>

For people who are roofless and houseless there is often a lack of move-on housing options:

The **Irish national report** emphasises that while still resident in emergency and transitional accommodation it is extremely difficult to convince a prospective employer that someone is in a sufficiently secure and stable environment to sustain employment.<sup>49</sup>

The difficulties of people experiencing homelessness to secure both, adequate and affordable accommodation and employment, are often also linked to the potential “competition” between housing and labour markets. Housing tends to be more expensive where jobs are available. At the same time, in areas where affordable housing exists, there is usually a lack of job opportunities.

What is more, the lack of an address makes it very complicated for people experiencing homeless to write applications, to open a bank account that is necessary for taking up a job or to apply for minimum income and social benefits payments. Social service provider organisations in France highlight that ensuring the “domiciliation” of service users (the fact of being registered at a certain address) is vital in order to promote their social inclusion.<sup>50</sup>

Other housing barriers relate to the stressful and unstable living surroundings of hostels or overcrowded housing, which hamper the chances of an individual to concentrate and prepare and participate in employment, education and training.

Several national reports note that the functioning of homeless services may also constitute a barrier to employment. This concerns for example emergency services, which have reduced opening hours and therefore do not allow people to do shift work. On this point, the **Italian report** highlights that because many shelters and canteens are run by volunteers, the opening and closing hours are rigid and unable to accommodate the flexibility required of people in employment.<sup>51</sup>

Some reports also mention the lack of ongoing tenant and housing support for people who have gained employment. Especially during a first transition phase, people need support in order to find their way back to a normal life, working and living in independent accommodation.

46 National Report: Czech Republic, 11.

47 P. King, *The Limits of Housing Policy*, London 1996, 22 quoted from National Report: United Kingdom, 6.

48 National Report: Estonia, 13.

49 National Report: Ireland, 7.

50 See for example, Fnars: *La domiciliation, : évolutions en cours, interrogations et propositions de la Fnars*, September 2007.

51 National Report: Italy, 9.

Living in economically deprived areas is another barrier to employment that is highlighted in several national reports. This barrier is closely linked to barriers in relation to access to information, transport as well as stigmatisation and discrimination.

### 3.3.2 *Barriers to housing for workers who are homeless*

An increasing number of people become homeless because of housing cost issues. Employment as such is not a guarantee to prevent housing exclusion due to financial reasons. The chapter on the employment profiles has shown that a significant proportion of people who are homeless are actually working. This includes legal employment in the mainstream labour market and in the social economy but also working under often precarious conditions in the informal and shadow economy. The national reports therefore also deal with the barriers to housing of this group of people.

The lack of adequate and reasonably priced rental housing is presented as the main barrier to housing for this group in almost all national reports. In addition, there is often either a considerable lack of social housing or the social housing available does not target the most vulnerable groups.

The **Hungarian report** shows that according to data from 2000, 92% of the housing are owner-occupied, 5% is social housing and 3% is privately rented housing.<sup>52</sup>

The **Finnish report** discusses the reform of the selection criteria for social housing, which have been made more liberal in order to facilitate workers mobility. It highlights that less regulation means that the most vulnerable low-income groups such as people who are homeless are excluded since there are more and more "good applicants" in the social housing market.<sup>53</sup>

Another barrier to housing for people who have a paid job are problems in relation to debts or previous evictions, which considerably reduce their chances to qualify as a tenant in the private rental housing market.

For workers with previous experience of homelessness, the lack of ongoing tenant support is one of the key barriers to sustain their housing.

The **Irish report** highlights the specific situation of migrant workers from ten of the new Member States that joined the EU in 2003 and 2007.<sup>54</sup> They have migrated to Ireland for work but not all were able to secure a job and adequate accommodation immediately. For an interim period these people have a clear housing need and lack the income to establish themselves independently. Although working, some of this group is living in emergency accommodation while they save up sufficient money to pay a deposit on rented accommodation. This group is not able to access social welfare benefits for the first two years of domicile due to the Habitual Residence Condition in place in Ireland.<sup>55</sup>

## 3.4 Health barriers

Many people who are homeless suffer from an accumulation of health problems which affect their ability to engage in training, education and employment. The FEANTSA European Health Report in 2006 shows that health and homelessness have a relationship of both cause and effect: "Illness [...] may be among the trigger factors that lead to homelessness. Once in a situation of homelessness, a variety of health problems may result, such as exposure to infectious illness, mental health problems, development or aggravation of substance-abuse and addiction, or health problems resulting from an unsanitary or overcrowded environment."<sup>56</sup>

In a survey of FEANTSA member BMSZKI in **Hungary** almost half of the respondents said that they have a disease that prevents them from taking up a job.<sup>57</sup>

In **Luxembourg**, 64% of the people who are homeless participating in a study indicate that they are not currently seeking work because of health related problems.<sup>58</sup>

All national reports highlight that the problems are most prevalent and most severe among people who are roofless

52 National Report: Hungary, 9.

53 National Report: Finland, 9.

54 This concerns the following countries: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia (accession 2003) as well as Bulgaria and Romania (accession 2007).

55 National Report: Ireland, 5-6.

56 FEANTSA European Report : The Right to Health is a Human Right: Ensuring Access to Health for People who are homeless, 2006, 5.

57 National Report: Hungary, 6.

58 National Report: Luxembourg, 6.

and houseless. There are, however, also health problems linked to living in insecure and inadequate housing.

The three main health barriers mentioned in the different reports are: alcohol addiction, mental health problems and drug addiction. Especially people who are roofless or houseless often suffer from dual diagnosis, i.e. a combination of addiction and mental health problems.

In the **Netherlands**, it is estimated that around 50% of people who are homeless have a mental illness and/or addiction problems.<sup>59</sup>

In **Ireland**, a study commissioned by the Advisory Council on Drugs in 2005 found that 52% of people who are homeless were currently using drugs, with 36% considered to be problematic drug users.<sup>60</sup>

People in all ETHOS categories can also suffer from other health problems at a greater level than people in the general population, due to the very changeable and inadequate living circumstances, which makes it more difficult to find and continue with employment, training or education.

People who are houseless are often in a particularly bad physical health situation, due to previous insufficient and poor diet. Rooflessness often implies a greater exposure to extreme weather conditions (e.g. wet and cold/dry and hot), greater risk of violence and bad nutrition.

Another health barrier to employment mentioned in several reports are dental problems, which are closely linked to barriers in relation to the physical appearance of the job applicant.

### 3.5 Barriers related to education

Another crucial factor that determines the employment situation of people who are homeless is education.

The **Estonian report** emphasises the relationship between skills and job opportunities and states “the lower level of education the higher the risk of unemployment”.<sup>61</sup>

The majority of people who are homeless have a significantly lower education than the general population. The level of education is usually lowest amongst people who are roofless and people who are houseless. Some, in particular young people who are homeless (under 25 years), do not have any vocational qualification and/or working experience.

In **Flanders (Belgium)**, 71% of people who are homeless have only achieved the lower level of secondary school. The equivalent figure for the overall population in Flanders is 38%.<sup>62</sup>

A survey on the situation in Vienna, **Austria** in 2005 revealed that most people who are homeless have achieved a secondary modern school qualification (38%) or an apprenticeship (32%) as their highest qualification.<sup>63</sup>

In **Denmark**, people who are homeless are over represented amongst the people who are illiterate.<sup>64</sup>

In a context where less low-skill jobs are available for people who are homeless, there is a clear lack of educational programmes and training that are adapted to the needs, including the housing needs, of this disadvantaged group in the labour market. The lack of training and educational programmes concern basic qualifications such as literacy and numeracy but also more specialised trainings that would improve the chances of people who are homeless to gain employment.

The **Spanish report** stresses that the shortage of work skills training, access to work skills training and employment support are the three main barriers that homeless people find to access a job.<sup>65</sup>

Several reports point out that the most vulnerable people who are homeless, in particular people with experience of street homelessness, are often not ready yet to engage in vocational training and education. For these groups, the participation in life-skills training is often the first step to stabilise their situation and prepare them for further employability measures.

59 National Report: The Netherlands, 3.

60 National Report: Ireland, 7.

61 National Report: Estonia, 2.

62 National Report: Belgium (Flanders), 4.

63 National Report: Austria, 15.

64 National Report: Denmark, 7.

65 National Report: Spain, 7.

However, some reports assert that there are also people who are homeless with a relatively high level of education that have ended up homeless because of factors related to health and family-breakdown.

- 22 The **Hungarian report** notes that it is rather the lack of work practice and long-term absence from the labour market than the lack of basic qualifications that constitutes the more important barrier to employment for people who are homeless.<sup>66</sup>

### 3.6 Stigmatisation and discrimination

There is a clear lack of awareness among the general population regarding the living situation and profiles of people experiencing homelessness. Many people who are homeless are regularly confronted with discrimination and stigmatisation in all European countries, which can considerably reduce their chances to gain employment.

Due to the lack of a personal address, many people who are homeless are forced to indicate a homeless shelter or other forms of temporary accommodation as a place of residence in their applications. This may have negative consequences on their chances to be considered for vacancies. Living in a socially stigmatised area may have similar effects.

For people with experience of street homelessness and people who are houseless, stigmatisation is also often linked to their physical appearance or dental problems. Due to their physical appearance, their actual work skills may be underestimated by potential employers. This concerns in particular employers in the mainstream labour market who are not well informed about the living situation of the applicant.

Several reports also mention the multiple discrimination of homeless people who are from an ethnic minority or third-country nationals, such as Roma or people from African or Asian origin. Wearing religious or cultural symbols such as a headscarf may also constitute a barrier to employment. The **Estonian report** indicates that the Russian speaking population of the country is particularly affected by unemployment.<sup>67</sup>

### 3.7 Bureaucratic and financial barriers

Poorly structured welfare benefits that make it financially unattractive to seek employment in the mainstream labour market are mentioned as a barrier in several reports. In these countries people risk losing their social benefits if they start participating in training and/or find a job. In some countries the so-called “benefits trap” is even seen as one of the most important barriers to work for people who are homeless.

The **UK report** stresses that for many homeless people, especially those living in temporary accommodation, high rents and the housing benefit taper is the biggest disincentive to finding employment.<sup>68</sup>

The report from the **Czech Republic** explains that in case of a legal ‘additional income’ the earned sum is deducted from the social benefit so that at the end of the day these people have the same level of income as those who did not work.<sup>69</sup>

If it does not pay for people who are homeless to seek employment, they may be discouraged to engage in training, education or employment or - in particular if benefits are not enough to make a living - may be encouraged to look for an additional income in the informal economy.

Several reports highlight the necessity to allow for the possibility to combine minimum income and housing benefits with income through work for an initial period. If high enough and structured effectively, benefits and housing support contribute to stabilising the living situation of a person and create the preconditions for people with multiple needs to become active and to engage in training, education or employment.

### 3.8 Barriers related to services

The provision of adequate and sufficient services for people who are homeless is a challenge for many organisations working with people who are homeless across the EU. Some reports highlight that there is a general lack of services in relation to employment for people who are homeless. This concerns training and education as well as support to find employment and ongoing support after a job placement.

66 National Report: Hungary, 8.

67 National Report: Estonia, 7.

68 National Report: United Kingdom, 9.

69 National Report: Czech Republic, 13.

Access to services may be particularly difficult for people living in inadequate and insecure housing.

In addition, the services that are available are not always flexible enough in order to accommodate the individual combination of needs of a person.

Due to strict and unstable funding regimes, there is also still a dominance of emergency services in many countries and a lack of cooperation between different support services.

The **Belgian national report** highlights the risk of an “institutionalisation” or even “shelterisation” of people who are homeless.<sup>70</sup> If people have lived for a long time in institutions (e.g. psychiatric hospitals, prisons) or shelters they are likely to lose their sense of responsibility or neglect their personal hygiene and it becomes more and more difficult to motivate them to engage in employability activities.

The national report from **Luxembourg** indicates that the quality of services often depends on the individual social worker who is in contact with a person who is homeless.<sup>71</sup>

### 3.9 Barriers related to transport

There is no clear picture emerging from the different national reports concerning access to transport as a barrier to employment. There is some evidence, however, that particularly in rural areas, access to transport or the lack of a driver's licence and a car can constitute a barrier to employment for people who are homeless.

There is also a potential conflict between employment opportunities and affordable housing. While jobs often exist in the centre of cities, affordable housing will rather be outside of the cities. Access to transport can therefore play a key role for people who are homeless to access employment and secure adequate and affordable accommodation at the same time.

Several reports also mention that although sufficient transport facilities exist, the costs of it are too high for people experiencing homelessness.

### 3.10 Barriers related to access to information

Several reports indicate the limited access to information as a barrier to employment for people experiencing homelessness. This concerns information about job offers but also information about training or support for people who are homeless.

There is some evidence that for people who are homeless, access to homeless services and the existence of social networks and word to mouth information about job opportunities is the main source of information concerning training and job opportunities.

Mainstream employment services are often not very effective in helping people who are homeless to find work. Many people who are homeless and unemployed are not even registered with the employment services.

Access to Internet is also not seen as the most relevant source of information regarding job offers and training possibilities for people who are homeless. While in many countries, shelters and other types of housing for people who are homeless usually have Internet access; this is not the case in all countries. In addition, people who are roofless as well as people living in inadequate or insecure housing have often only very limited access to Internet.

What is more, several reports highlight that the more important barrier is not the lack of access to Internet but the inability to use it with a view to accessing information about job offers or training.

There is the argument that access to a telephone is more important for job search for people who are homeless than access to Internet. The **French report** mentions the progressive removal of public telephone boxes as a barrier in this context. However, some people who are homeless, in particular people who are roofless or houseless, may also need assistance in order to make phone calls.

### 3.11 Gender difference regarding barriers to employment

Barriers to employment for people who are homeless are multiple but different from one individual to another. However, several reports highlight that general gender differences can be identified.

70 National Report: Belgium (Flanders), 6-7.

71 National Report: Luxembourg, 11.

A first gender difference concerns the experience of domestic violence which is one of the main trigger factors for women leading to homelessness.

24 The **Spanish national report** explains that survivors of domestic violence suffer not only from the physical but also from the psychological consequences of this traumatic experience. Women with experience of domestic violence often have a low level of self-confidence. They lack a supporting social network which would help them to gain a better self-image and motivates them to engage in training, education or employment.<sup>72</sup>

As there are more women with children than men with children at their charge, women are also more affected by the lack of adequate child services, which reduces their possibilities to participate in training, education or employment. However, there is also the argument that women with children are more motivated to take up a job in order to secure an additional income.

Several reports also mention gender differences in relation to the educational profile and health barriers. However, no clear picture emerges from the information in how far possible differences also affect the chances of women or men to engage in training, education or employment.

## 4. The Right to Work and employment initiatives for people who are homeless

### 4.1 Right to Work

There is a general recognition in all European countries that employment constitutes an important element for the social inclusion and personal fulfilment of human beings. Most countries in Europe recognise the “right to work” and the freedom to engage in commercial activities of (EU-) citizens<sup>73</sup> in their constitutions. Some countries explicitly mention that the State should develop policies aimed at supporting people to find the means to make their living.

### 3.12 Barriers to employment for migrants who are homeless

Many national reports point out the specific situation of migrants who are homeless in relation to access to employment. In particular, undocumented migrants are in a very vulnerable situation.

The main barrier to employment for this group is their precarious legal status. The majority of this group have to work in the informal economy. This group often also belongs to the hidden forms of homelessness (e.g. living in insecure and inadequate housing) without access to training and employment services.

This chapter has dealt with the multiple barriers to training, education and employment that many people who are homeless face. It shows that for most people who are homeless it is the accumulation of problems that is the key problem and not each single barrier as such.

With the right support framework in place, an alcohol addiction can be treated, people who are homeless can be housed and people with a low level of education can engage in training or education. What is more, many people who are homeless also have a lot of skills and competencies –although these might not always be certified - and can therefore constitute a very valuable resource if they are supported effectively. In the following chapters, we will analyse in more detail in how far such a supportive framework exists in the different EU countries and what challenges remain.

All EU countries have developed employment policies that favour the labour market integration of its people. What is more, employment offices exist in all countries where people who are unemployed can access information about job and training opportunities for free. However, there is no justiciable “right to work” in Europe that would guarantee people who are unemployed access to a paid job.

In some countries there are legal provisions for people who are considered to be disadvantaged regarding their access to employment, which will be described in more detail in the next section.

<sup>72</sup> National Report: Spain, 8.

<sup>73</sup> According to the different national contexts, there may be restrictions regarding the right to work for people from most of the new EU Member States, Third-Country-Nationals, asylum seekers or refugees.

## 4.2 Mutual support between employment and homelessness policies

### 4.2.1 Employment policies for disadvantaged groups

Employment initiatives for people experiencing homelessness exist in all countries covered in this report. These include policies and provisions for disadvantaged groups and specific employment initiatives for people experiencing homelessness.

This chapter will deal in more detail with the different initiatives that are relevant for people experiencing homelessness and discuss the link between employment and homelessness initiatives in the different EU countries. For the purpose of this report we will differentiate between policies on the one hand and programmes and projects on the other hand, knowing that overlapping between these may exist.

Regarding **policies** we refer to examples where legal provisions have been made to promote the employment of people who are homeless or where official national or regional homelessness strategies exist that include an employment dimension. **Programmes** often accompany policies and describe how they will be implemented in more concrete terms. Programmes may include several local **projects**.

Most EU countries have developed employment policies that aim to promote the labour market reintegration of disadvantaged groups. Usually, these policies do not target people who are homeless but rather a larger group of disadvantaged people, such as people who are long-term unemployed, people with disabilities or older people.

Several reports include examples of policies that have also helped people experiencing homelessness to move closer to employment:

In **Hungary** a considerable proportion of people who are homeless have an income through work and these people have benefited from a new legal framework of occasional employment. People who are employed with the so-called “occasional employment book” (also referred to as “blue employment”) pay reduced tax contributions, while being eligible for social security payments.<sup>74</sup>

The **Italian report** mentions the Law no. 68/99 which favours the inclusion into work through supported employment for people who are homeless with a certified disability.<sup>75</sup>

In **Belgium**, there are special provisions for people who are younger than 25 and have no income. The employment agencies are obliged to find work for these people within three months, which may include supported employment in a social enterprise.<sup>76</sup>

In **France**, there is the “Loi de 98” (law of 98) which stipulates the “right to reintegration”. It sets out that training and employment as well as housing support are key elements of a holistic support framework that aims to promote the reintegration of socially excluded people in society.<sup>77</sup>

Although people who are homeless can benefit from these policies, many reports highlight the risk that barriers which are specific for people who are homeless, such as housing barriers, are not adequately taken into account.

Several national reports criticise that the policies main aim seems to be to reduce the official number of people who are unemployed instead of promoting the long-term social reintegration of people with multiple needs. There is a tendency to only allow for two options:

- Working, i.e. the person is able to work full-time and does not require additional social benefits or minimum income.
- Not working, i.e. the person is not able to work and therefore not considered to be a target group for employment policies.

The **Spanish national report** emphasises the need to develop a holistic understanding of “activation”: “[...] activation must be understood as the social activation of the person in a holistic way and achieve the motivation of the person.”<sup>78</sup>

### 4.2.2 Coordination of homelessness and employment policies

Many national reports highlight the lack of coordination between employment policies for disadvantaged groups and

74 National Report: Hungary, 10.

75 National Report: Italy, 17.

76 National Report: Belgium (Flanders), 14.

77 National Report: France, 8-9.

78 National Report: Spain, 13.

homelessness policies. While employment policies often are not geared for people experiencing homelessness, homelessness policies often lack an “employability” strand.

26

Homelessness is often dealt with under the general framework of anti-poverty and social inclusion policies. Countries that have an explicit homelessness strategy mainly focus on housing and social support. While this creates the necessary preconditions for people who are homeless to move out of poverty and exclusion, less attention has been paid on combining this with support in relation to training, education and employment.

There is, however, some evidence that more countries are looking at the training and employment dimension of homelessness policies in the future. Some examples:

The **Irish homelessness strategy** includes a strand that deals with work education and training. Three specific actions are defined:

- the assessment of skills and training needs of people who are homeless,
- the integration of literacy skills in forms of vocational training provided by the National Training and Employment Organisation (FAS),
- the provision of outreach tutors.<sup>79</sup>

In the **UK**, the national homelessness strategies in England and in Scotland make some reference to the importance of training, education and employment:

- In England, the revised strategy guidance issued by the DCLG (Department for Communities and Local Government) in 2006 for local authorities raises the issue of training and employment, even though it is not a firm requirement.
- In Scotland, the Homelessness Task Force recommendations, which underpin homelessness strategies, specifically include five employability recommendations.<sup>80</sup>

In the **Netherlands**, 43 local authorities are currently developing Action Plans for Social Relief, which are expected to include a mix of measures ranging from education and training to volunteer work, meaningful occupation, day

jobs, supported employment and, if possible, paid jobs.<sup>81</sup>

While homelessness strategies in **Finland** focus on arranging housing and social support for people who are homeless, suggestions have been made to include the prevention of homelessness and the evaluation of housing options in individual activation plans made in the employment services.<sup>82</sup>

#### 4.2.3 Coordination of prevention policies

The relative lack of coordination between employment and homelessness policies is also reflected in policies aimed at preventing both unemployment and homelessness. Most of the national reports say that there is no mutual support between unemployment prevention and prevention of housing exclusion.

The **Luxembourg** report particularly stresses the importance of the prevention of housing exclusion in case of unemployment. If a person has the security of an effective social protection system and the possibility to continue living in their home, the negative consequences of unemployment can be minimised and prevent the person from falling in a vicious circle of exclusion. For this a better coordination between unemployment prevention, currently focusing on skills development, and prevention of housing exclusion, currently focusing on the construction of housing that remains too often inaccessible for low-income or other vulnerable groups, is crucial.<sup>83</sup>

Several reports describe what efforts have been made in order to improve the coordination of prevention policies in relation to unemployment and housing exclusion:

The **UK report**, for example, mentions that in **England** questions regarding a better coordination of prevention policies are discussed in relation to the “Hills Review of Social Housing” which revealed disproportionately high levels of worklessness in social housing tenure.

In **Wales**, the National Homelessness Strategy emphasises the prevention of homelessness and there are schemes to address unemployment and economic inactivity.<sup>84</sup>

79 National Report: Ireland, 13.

80 National Report: United Kingdom, 12.

81 National Report: The Netherlands, 5.

82 National Report: Finland, 10.

83 National Report: Luxembourg, 14.

84 National Report: United Kingdom, 14.

## 4.3 Employment programmes and projects for disadvantaged groups

### 4.3.1 Examples of employability programmes and projects

In addition to employment policies for disadvantaged groups, a variety of employment programmes and projects exist in EU member states. These include initiatives that specifically aim to improve the employability of people who are homeless.

Many programmes and projects are run by individual NGOs or in partnership between public bodies, NGOs and other stakeholders. A significant number of projects have established transnational partnerships with projects in other countries, mainly through EU initiatives such as EQUAL.

The following examples are programmes and projects that:

- Aim to support the person's reintegration in the mainstream labour market or in the social economy, and/or
- Aim to develop the skills and competencies of this group.<sup>85</sup>

In **Scotland**, people who are homeless are recognised within the Employability Framework as an excluded group. Some local authorities have set up programmes that specifically target this group. The services were usually run by the voluntary sector with short term funding from the New Futures Initiative.<sup>86</sup>

In **Wales** there are several programmes run by the employment office (Job Centre Plus) for people with difficulties. "Progress to Work – LinkUp" is an example of a pilot programme in two areas of Wales that targets ex-offenders and people who are homeless and that is operated by two external agencies for Job Centre Plus. Another employment programme by Wales Cares for people who are homeless is "Business Action on Homelessness". Wales Cares is part of Business in the Community, a membership of companies that aims to improve their social impact on society.<sup>87</sup>

In **England**, no national employment targets exist for people who are homeless and consequently there are no specific

ic programmes to address their specific needs. What exists are a variety of employment support and training services provided by individual NGOs and partnerships<sup>88</sup>

In **Hungary**, there are some new national pilot projects for people who are homeless. One is an employment strand which is connected to the supported housing project. A second pilot programme of the National Employment Public Foundation (OFA) for people who are homeless will be launched in October 2007. This project includes 14 months of supported employment and 12 months of obligatory further employment for the participants. The Hungarian report highlights that the scope of these projects is very limited. While the first reaches 120 people throughout the country, it is estimated that the second will have 70-80 participants in total.<sup>89</sup>

Several different local projects and programmes for people who are homeless exist in **Ireland**. The City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee, for example, established the Foundations Project in 2000 to work with homeless services in order to increase access to education for people experiencing homelessness. In addition, homelessness organisations run local projects that offer people experiencing homelessness the chance to take part in training, education and employment programmes. There are also examples of initiatives for people experiencing homelessness that are focused on providing supported employment activity as part of the intervention (e.g. Ready for Work programme and FAS Community Employment Scheme).<sup>90</sup>

In **France**, there is a whole sector of initiatives and programmes aimed at promoting the reintegration of excluded groups in society through work and which also targets people experiencing homelessness, in particular people who are houseless. This sector is called "Inclusion through economic activity" (IAE – l'Insertion par l'Activité Economique). L'IAE brings together more than 5000 services and institutions that provide training, education and supported employment for people experiencing social exclusion in France.<sup>91</sup>

A similar official social economy sector also exists in **Belgium**, which employs 45,000 people. In Flanders there are

85 For more details regarding different support schemes, see also Chapter 5.

86 National Report: United Kingdom, 15.

87 National Report, United Kingdom, 15-16.

88 National Report: United Kingdom, 15.

89 National Report: Hungary, 12.

90 National Report: Ireland, 17-21.

91 National Report: France, 2.

currently 101 “workplaces” which provide training and supported employment for disadvantaged groups in society, including people who are homeless.<sup>92</sup>

28 The **Czech national report** states that several programmes targeting people who are homeless are currently being developed, using the experiences from EQUAL.<sup>93</sup>

Also the **Polish report** highlights several interesting ESF and EQUAL projects (e.g. Agenda of Homelessness and Back on Track), which had people who are homeless as their main target group and that might be used for the development of similar programmes in the future.<sup>94</sup>

#### 4.3.2 *Challenges in relation to the lack of a legal and policy framework*

The examples demonstrate that employment programmes and projects for people who are homeless exist in many EU countries. However, it is clear from the different national reports that it is more difficult for NGOs to provide training, education and employment services for people who are homeless in countries where no supporting national or regional legal and policy framework exist.

The **Spanish national report** argues that the lack of employment policies for people who are homeless explains the lack of employment support services and the provision of supported employment in the social economy for this group.<sup>95</sup>

The **Polish national report** says that without a clear national homelessness policy, there is a lack of strategy in relation to the fight against homelessness.<sup>96</sup>

#### 4.3.3 *Challenges in relation to the definition of employment*

Another problem is linked to the provision of pre-vocational, low-threshold services, such as life-skills training and meaningful occupation. Several reports explain that the ongoing participation of people who are homeless in “employability” measures might have negative consequences for them. Some of these schemes are not officially recognised as “employment” because they do not respect the work against

payment or profit rule. Participants in these measures therefore often do not receive earning related pension rights or the right to unemployment benefits and remain dependent on social benefits payments.

While this may contribute to a situation of long-term service dependency and “institutionalisation” of service users, there is also the argument that schemes which are not recognised as employment at least allow people to engage in a meaningful occupation without losing their right to social benefits.<sup>97</sup>

Participants of supported employment are usually covered under the definition of employment. There are, however, also short-term job placements, where people are not covered by general labour regulations and employers do not pay social security for them.

## 4.4 Unemployment benefits, social benefits and compulsory participation

### 4.4.1 *General overview*

It is not possible in the framework of this European report to provide a detailed overview about the benefit entitlements of people who are homeless in the different EU countries. This chapter only aims to indicate some general findings and trends.

In principle, people who are homeless have the same access to social security and benefits as the general population. Access is only limited for people from ten of the new Member States in many of the EU-15 countries, for Third-Country Nationals and asylum seekers. In general, undocumented migrants have no access to social security or other social benefits payments.

In most countries, there is a separation between earnings related unemployment or job seekers benefits and minimum income or other forms of social benefits.

Unemployment benefits are generally higher, available only for a shorter period of time and are dependent on the availability and willingness of the person to find new employment. Minimum income or social benefits payments are usually lower and do not necessarily depend on the person’s

92 National Report: Belgium, 15.

93 National Report: Czech Republic, 16.

94 National Report: Poland, 10.

95 National Report: Spain, 10.

96 National Report: Poland, 9.

97 National Report: United Kingdom, 18.

ability and efforts to gain new employment.

In addition, people of working age who are homeless may be entitled to housing benefits or benefits for specific disadvantaged groups such as disability or work incapacity benefits.

Unemployment and social benefits are an important element of the inclusion process of people who are homeless. However, social benefits may also constitute an obstacle. These problems may relate to the level of benefits, their structure, the obligations linked to them as well as the lack of an effective access to benefits.

#### 4.4.2 Conceptual problems

##### *Level of benefits*

Several reports state that the main problem with benefits, in particular social benefits and minimum income, is that they are just not high enough to ensure a sufficient income for a person to live decently and secure adequate accommodation.

Many people are obliged to seek work in the informal economy or to engage in other forms of income generating activities, such as begging, prostitution and drug dealing. While this may help to alleviate urgent financial problems in the short-term, it also contributes to the further exclusion and vulnerability of people.

The **Italian report** highlights that one of the key shortfalls of Italian legislation is the lack of a minimum income for people experiencing social exclusion.<sup>98</sup>

The **Hungarian report** states that the most frequent benefit that people who are homeless people receive is the minimum income. It is only around 95 euros per month and most people will try to earn an additional income in the informal economy.<sup>99</sup>

The report from the **Czech Republic** argues that social benefits are rather too high compared to the possible income through work, which discourages people to look for a job in the mainstream labour market.<sup>100</sup> This problem is closely related to the structure of benefits and the conditions that are linked to them.

##### *Structure of benefits*

Unemployment and social benefit systems are often very complex and not transparent. Many national reports highlight that for people who are homeless it is often very difficult to understand what rights to entitlements they have.

In many countries, there is also the risk of the “benefits trap”. This means that it might not be financially attractive for people to find work as this would lead to the loss of certain social benefit entitlements. In the **UK**, for example, this is a major problem for people living in temporary accommodation with high rents. If they start working, they risk losing their housing benefits.<sup>101</sup>

In order to avoid this “benefits trap”, a number of national reports highlight the importance for people with multiple disadvantages in the labour market to have the possibility of combining minimum income and other social benefits, such as housing benefits, with their salary, at least for an initial period of time after a job has been taken up.

#### 4.4.3 Willingness to work and compulsory participation

In most countries there is a strong link between benefits on the one hand and the availability and willingness to work on the other hand (“sticks and carrots” policy). This is the case for unemployment benefits, but also minimum income (or the amount of minimum income) may depend on the ability and willingness of a person to seek employment.

Several reports point out that obligations, such as to participate in training and to actively seek employment, can constitute a risk for very vulnerable as they may be pushed into trainings or jobs that are not adapted to their needs. Due to their living situation, many people who are homeless might also have more difficulties to comply with the obligation to come to a specific appointment.

“Intensifying sanctions and cutting benefit levels increase the employment of low-skilled workers [...]. However, there is a price to pay as lowering benefit level generates more inequality and less insurance for the low-skilled.”<sup>102</sup>

98 National Report: Italy, 11.

99 National Report: Hungary, 14.

100 National Report: Czech Republic, 17.

101 National Report: United Kingdom, 18-19.

102 National Report: The Netherlands, 4.

There is, however, also a risk that the exoneration from sanctions and obligatory participation constitutes a de facto exclusion of these people from all forms of employment support, including participation in training and education.

30 The **UK report** highlights that in practice sanctions are usually not applied to people who face issues such as homelessness and argues that whilst this undoubtedly has benefits, it also often means an effective exclusion from services.<sup>103</sup>

In **Germany**, a major problem concerns the lack of an effective interaction between certain forms of unemployment benefits (responsibility of the employment office ARGE) and other social benefits for people with multiple needs and experiencing difficult living situations (responsibility of the social services).

Although many people who are homeless might be able and ready to work and would therefore qualify for the unemployment benefit, the employment office generally disregards their right to entitlements. As the people also qualify as people with multiple needs and experiencing difficult living situations, it is automatically assumed that they cannot work and therefore do not qualify for entitlements administered by the employment office. As a result of this de facto exclusion of certain entitlements, people who are homeless also often have limited access to employment services such as vocational training or supported employment.<sup>104</sup>

There is a general scepticism about the effectiveness of existing obligations in relation to benefits.

The **Polish national report** points out that although a number of obligations exist for benefit recipients, they are not implemented effectively, due to the lack of social workers and work advisors. As a consequence, people who are able to work remain dependent on social benefits.

According to the **French national report**, the whole logic of obligations linked to benefits is a questionable approach. What is needed instead is the development of a positive concept of activation:

“Inviting a person to participate in the organisation, be it the material, housing or day-to-day aspects, of their own life is much more effective than swinging Damocles’ sword over their social benefits.”<sup>105</sup>

#### 4.4.4 *Young people and compulsory participation*

Many reports state that young people under 25 are affected by particularly strict obligations and sanctions to actively seek employment, to participate in training etc.

In the **Netherlands**, the social services can reduce the benefit of school leavers during the first six months after the school or training course has ended. People between 21-22 years may also receive less benefit if the social services consider that full benefit payments will make employment financially unattractive.<sup>106</sup>

In **Austria**, people under the age of 25 only have to prove 26 weeks of contributory employment within the last 12 months in order to claim unemployment benefits. However, the benefit is only granted if no employment or educational training can be organised.<sup>107</sup>

In **Finland**, there are special rules for people under 25 years to receive unemployment allowance. A young person that has not completed an apprenticeship or another form of professional education is only allowed to receive unemployment allowance if he/she participates in trainings or job placements.<sup>108</sup>

#### 4.4.5 *Access problems*

In addition to problems relating to the concept and structure of benefits, certain categories of people who are homeless might also face difficulties in claiming their rights.

People who are roofless who cannot provide any address are often automatically excluded from many social benefits payments. And even if the person has a registered address, the person might not understand his/her rights to entitlements or have problems to follow the necessary administrative procedures.

Several reports explain also in more detail the restrictions to social benefits for migrant workers from the new EU member states.

103 National Report: United Kingdom, 20.

104 Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe e.V.: Empfehlung der BAG Wohnungslosenhilfe e.V. zur Kooperation der Wohnungslosenhilfe mit den Agenturen für Arbeit und zur zukünftigen Organisation von Arbeitshilfen, 2004.

105 National Report: France, 10.

106 National Report: Netherlands, 4.

107 National Report: Austria, 20.

108 National Report: Finland, 14.

In **Ireland**, the Habitual Residence Condition with regard to receipt of social benefits excludes people from the new Member States that have resided within the country for a period of less than two years from social welfare payments. This has an increasingly prominent impact on homeless services as new migrants often arrive with no income and no accommodation and need emergency assistance to avoid rough sleeping.<sup>109</sup>

In the **UK**, EU citizens from Romania and Bulgaria are specifically excluded from receiving state support. In addition, support is hard to access for asylum seekers and undocumented migrants who would be entitled to support under the 1948 national assistance act.<sup>110</sup>

## 4.5 General context and trend

Most of the national reports include an assessment of the general political and economic context and trend for the employment of people experiencing homelessness.

As mentioned earlier, all of these reports highlight that the changing economical context (restructuring, privatisation, loss of low-skilled jobs, migration) has made it more difficult for people experiencing homelessness to gain employment.

Regarding the political context the picture emerging from the different national reports is less clear. While many challenges in relation to the benefits system or the provision of employment services for people affected by homelessness remain, there are also some developments which might be positive. Some examples:

In **Denmark**, there is a strong focus on “activation” measures as a means to combat social exclusion. A variety of services that are aimed at helping people who are unemployed to find a job have been developed, such as on-the-job training, vocational training, flexible jobs etc. However, some initiatives that were tailored for people with

multiple needs and aimed at encouraging employers to employ this group of people have been abolished.<sup>111</sup>

Although access to employment, training and education is part of the national homelessness strategy in **Ireland** since 2000, there has been limited activity in this regard. In recent years, there are increasing indications of renewed attention being directed on barriers to employment and a number of specific initiatives have been established.<sup>112</sup>

The **Austrian report** notes a positive change in the political context due to the change of government. There are discussions on enforcing the right to housing in Austria as well as a basic income for everybody.<sup>113</sup>

The **Polish national report** judges the overall situation as favourable. More knowledge and tools are available in order to fight against social exclusion. However, there is a lack of prevention initiatives and a lack of coordination between the social, health and employment services. Other problems relate to the ineffective and the lack of a transparent benefits system.<sup>114</sup>

In the **UK**, current discussions on welfare reforms (“Freud Review”) pose a new opportunity and include some positive proposals, including:

- greater personalisation of employment support;
- greater balancing of rights and responsibilities, and
- the continued advocacy of a simplification of the benefits system.<sup>115</sup>

This chapter aimed to provide an overview about the different employment initiatives for people experiencing homelessness that exist in the different member states as well as their political and legal context. The next chapter will look in detail at the different employment services that have been developed across Europe, ranging from life-skills training, vocational training over supported employment to ongoing support after job placement.

<sup>109</sup> National Report: Ireland, 15-16.

<sup>110</sup> National Report: United Kingdom, 19.

<sup>111</sup> National Report: Denmark, 3.

<sup>112</sup> National Report: Ireland, 16.

<sup>113</sup> National Report: Austria, 23.

<sup>114</sup> National Report: Poland, 12.

<sup>115</sup> National Report: United Kingdom, 20.

## 5. Employment services for people who are homeless

### 5.1 Mainstream employment services and services for people with multiple needs

32 In all countries covered in this report people experiencing homelessness have the right to use mainstream employment services. These services are open to all people who are legally residing in a country and are looking for a job.

For some people the support offered by mainstream employment services is sufficient in order to help them gain employment. However, many highlight that people experiencing homelessness often cannot benefit from these services, as they are not adapted to their multiple needs. The **Finnish report** states, for example, that a large group of people experiencing homelessness cannot benefit from the services offered by the mainstream employment office due to substance abuse and mental health problems.<sup>116</sup>

In addition to the mainstream employment office, employment services for disadvantaged groups have been developed in all countries. In **Luxembourg**, for instance, the RTPH (Réseau pour le Travail et la Promotion Humaine) provides training and counselling for all people who are unemployed or at risk of losing their job. Due to its close links with employers and its personalised support, RTPH has also helped people experiencing homelessness to find work.<sup>117</sup>

In most countries at least a small part of the services specifically target people experiencing homelessness. They are mainly provided by NGOs and the not-for profit sector. In a few countries, mainstream employment services provide targeted support, often in cooperation with NGOs and other not-for-profit organisations.

In the following section, we will describe in more detail the range of activities and tools that exist in the different EU countries for people experiencing homelessness. The examples either refer to general services for people with multiple needs, including people who are homeless, or services that specifically target this vulnerable group.

For the purpose of this report we will try to group these services according to the type of support they offer. However, one should bear in mind that in many cases there is an overlap of services within one project or organisation in order to flexibly adapt them to the individual needs and skills of participants.

### 5.2 Advice and counselling

In most homeless services provide at least some form of advice and counselling for people to find work or access training. This support is either

- offered on an ad-hoc basis through social workers or volunteers; or
- constitutes an official part of the services of the homeless centre.

Employment services that are widespread include: access to Internet;

- assistance with CV writing;
- access to telephone and help to make phone calls.

In addition, many organisations provide:

- information regarding vacancies and training opportunities that are likely to be of interest for people who are homeless;
- practice of interview skills; and
- help to set up a bank account.

In a number of countries, homeless organisations closely work together with mainstream employment services in order to help their residents to gain employment or access training and education. In some countries special job centres for people experiencing homelessness have been established:

In **England**, the homeless charity St. Mungo's has provided a job club to its residents since 1991 and reports that this has been an effective way to help people who are homeless to find work.<sup>118</sup>

116 National Report: Finland, 16.

117 National Report: Luxembourg, 24.

118 National Report: United Kingdom, 21.

In **Hungary**, the Shelter Foundation in Budapest and BM-SZKI in cooperation with the employment office established two job centres for people experiencing homelessness. The staff consists of specially trained social workers. The job centre offers specific job search, individual counselling and job search trainings for people who are homeless. In addition, the job centre tries to establish contacts with potential employers and has close links with related support services in the area of housing, employment and addiction. The Hungarian national report points out that this initiative has helped a significant number of people into employment and could serve as a model for other homeless services.<sup>119</sup>

### 5.3 Supported employment

People experiencing homelessness in most countries have the possibility to participate in supported employment. Supported employment means that a person is working and receives a salary as well as different forms of ongoing support. This support can be just financial, i.e. (parts of) the salary and/or social security are subsidised by a third party. In addition, a whole range of support may be provided, including health, housing, educational and personal/emotional support.

In some countries (e.g. Belgium, France, Finland and Italy) supported employment is regarded as one of the main tools to help people with multiple needs to reintegrate into the labour market. In a number of countries, however, this sector is much less developed and where it exists, its main target group are people with disabilities (e.g. Czech Republic, Poland and Spain).

Supported employment is often organised as a cooperation of different stakeholders, including mainstream employment services, NGOs, social economy organisations and specialised employment agencies.

#### 5.3.1 Supported employment in the mainstream labour market

In most countries supported employment schemes include job placements in the mainstream labour market. A large part of these schemes target people with disabilities. The

employer receives financial support to adapt the workplace to the special needs of the person. In addition, (parts of) the salary is paid by a third party, in most cases public authorities. People experiencing homelessness can benefit from these job placements if they qualify as mentally or physically disabled.

What is more, in some countries specific programmes for people experiencing homelessness also organise job placements in the mainstream labour market.

One example is the Ready for Work programme in **Ireland**. Since 2002, people who are homeless can follow two days of training and a two-week placement within a company. This is followed by a period of ongoing support.<sup>120</sup>

A similar scheme in **Wales** is provided through the programme Business Action on Homelessness (see above). It is running in Cardiff and includes 2-week work placements for people who are homeless as well as job coaching.<sup>121</sup>

#### 5.3.2 Supported employment in social enterprises or homeless organisations

In many countries the social economy plays an important role in relation to the provision of supported employment opportunities for people experiencing homelessness. The participants are either working in a social enterprise which often closely cooperates with homeless organisations or within the homeless organisation/hostel itself. Some examples:

In **Italy**, supported employment is organised within homeless organisations and in social cooperatives. The latter are spread across the whole country, with more cooperatives in the North than in the South. These so-called "Type B cooperatives" aim to help people who are disadvantaged into work, including people who are roofless and houseless. Participants in these supported employment schemes receive a cash benefit (borsa lavoro = work scholarship) usually granted out of government subsidies. Work scholarships are not taxed and there are no pension or social security contributions with it. The amount of the "work scholarships" varies between 100 and 500 euros per month. The idea is to help people who are roofless and houseless to acquire

119 National Report: Hungary, 15.

120 National Report: Ireland, 21.

121 National Report: United Kingdom, 16.

the necessary skills to enter the mainstream labour market. It is, however, often not possible for the people to “move on” and the *borsa lavoro* risks becoming the sole income for participants.<sup>122</sup>

34 In **France**, job placements for people with multiple needs are organised in special “insertion companies” which are part of the IAE sector (Insertion through economic activity – Insertion par l’activité économique). In addition, disadvantaged groups have the possibility of benefiting from supported employment in other kinds of social enterprises and work in the social economy in general.<sup>123</sup>

In **Belgium**, people experiencing homelessness have the possibility of participating in social workshops that are tailored for their specific needs. Social workshops combine production of goods and services with ongoing support for its workers.<sup>124</sup>

The FAS Community Employment Scheme in **Ireland** does not specifically target people experiencing homelessness but has been successful in providing a practical means for service users and former service users to access work, sometimes within homelessness services. The initiative aims to assist participants to enhance and develop both their technical and personal skills which can then be useful in the workplace.<sup>125</sup>

In **Portugal**, the “Ver” project offers job placements for people experiencing homelessness in not-for profit organisations. The participants receive ongoing support and counselling. However, they do not receive a salary or financial recognition for their work but only compensation in the form of *aliments*.<sup>126</sup>

In **Spain**, the creation of social enterprises that aim to promote the inclusion of vulnerable groups is recent. In 2003, there were 147 social enterprises in Spain working with 3550 people suffering from exclusion. Around 28% of these social enterprises worked with people experiencing homelessness.<sup>127</sup>

### 5.3.3 Other forms of organised job placements

The **Dutch national report** highlights different innovative employment schemes for people experiencing homelessness which also include supported employment.

A first example is the “daily wage projects” which were developed to suit people living on the streets in the Netherlands. The idea is to provide this group with work opportunities on days that they felt they were able to work. In return, participants receive direct cash payments. Different types of projects exist. In Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht, for example, special temporary agencies for these work placements exist. The participants of “daily wage projects” belong to the most vulnerable groups of people who are homeless. The average wage they earn is between 15-20 euros.

Other job placements for people who are homeless in the Netherlands are integrated in their reintegration process. One example is the Housing & Work project in Amsterdam. Over a period of two years, it helps to reintegrate people who are homeless into housing and a paid job. A second example is located in Helmond, where people who move on from daily wage occupations can participate in employment training schemes, e.g. production of seats and backs of wheelchairs. Participants work eight hours a day and have to arrive on time. They earn three euros per day on top of their social security allowance. When they succeed in finding a paid job they can receive a bonus of 1200 euros.<sup>128</sup>

### 5.3.4 Challenges for supported employment

There is unanimity in the national reports that supported employment should constitute an integral part of employment services for people experiencing homelessness. In particular in those countries, where supported employment schemes are a rather recent phenomenon, there is a strong call for further investment in these kinds of services for people experiencing homelessness. Several reports, however, also mention limits of supported employment schemes and the need to make them more effective for people who are homeless:

122 National Report: Italy, 15-19.

123 National Report: France, 11.

124 National Report: Belgium (Flanders), 15.

125 National Report: Ireland, 21.

126 National Report: Portugal, 11.

127 National Report: Spain, 16.

128 National Report: The Netherlands, 5-7.

If people who are homeless are not specifically targeted or included in supported employment schemes, there is a risk that not all people in need have equal access to it.

The report from **Luxembourg** refers to supported employment schemes organised by the trade unions. People who are roofless and houseless are usually not participating in these. The only groups of people who are homeless that might be included are women living in supported housing and ex-prisoners.<sup>129</sup>

The **Italian national report** mentions several problems in relation to supported employment in so-called type B social cooperatives. In order to qualify as a disadvantaged worker, the person needs to have a certificate of their “disadvantage”. In most cases these certificates are accredited by the health services while the social services only rarely certify a “social disadvantage”. A particular group who are at risk of being excluded from supported employment in Italy are ex-prisoners. While many prisoners are working during their custody, they lose their right to benefit from supported employment schemes for people with disadvantages on their release, which is precisely one of the most vulnerable points during their inclusion process.

Another problem mentioned is the lack of move-on options for people who are homeless after the participation in supported employment.

The evaluation of the project in Helmond in **the Netherlands** shows that 40-60% of the participants do not succeed in finding a paid job in the mainstream labour market after the programme.<sup>130</sup>

The **Belgian national report** points out the risk that people experiencing homelessness are “blocked” in social workplaces. There are people who have the skills and competencies to find work in the mainstream labour market but their potential is not always seen by the responsible social workers.

What is more, the Belgian report refers to a cost-benefit analysis of the social economy in Flanders. The study showed that while in the medium-term supported employment has

had a very positive effect on the people, there is some evidence that in the long term people are at risk of becoming homeless again.<sup>131</sup>

Several national reports also highlight the limits of the social economy as a long-term solution for people who are homeless. While there is still a clear need to invest in supported employment schemes for people experiencing homelessness, the social economy cannot compensate for the lack of job opportunities for low-skilled workers or people in need of support in the mainstream labour market.

## 5.4 In - Work Support

Ongoing in - work support is a possibility to enable people to move on from supported employment and to access and sustain a job in the mainstream labour market. Although many national reports highlight that in-work support is a crucial element of the support chain, its provision remains insufficient.

Some examples of in-work support:

In **Hungary**, the organisation BMSZKI provides a 3-months mentor programme for people who moved from supported employment to a job in the mainstream labour market.<sup>132</sup>

In **Scotland**, some employers offer in-work support to vulnerable workers such as mentoring and “buddying” schemes.<sup>133</sup>

## 5.5 Vocational training and education for people experiencing homelessness

Vocational training aims to support a person to develop essential job skills that will help the individual to find a paid job in the mainstream labour market or in the social economy. Vocational training may include: CV writing, personal development, IT training, office administration and more specialised vocational trainings. Education in this context often refers to basic skills training, such as literacy and numeracy.

One can distinguish between general programmes for disadvantaged groups and special initiatives for people ex-

<sup>129</sup> National Report: Luxembourg, 22.

<sup>130</sup> National Report: The Netherlands, 7.

<sup>131</sup> National Report: Belgium (Flanders), 16- 17.

<sup>132</sup> National Report: Hungary, 15.

<sup>133</sup> National Report: United Kingdom, 21.

periencing homelessness. While the general programmes usually take place outside of the homeless services, the specialised programmes often constitute an integral part of service provision of homeless organisations.

36 In most countries, vocational training and education constitute an important part of the available support for people experiencing homelessness to move closer to employment. Also service users consider education and vocational training to be important. The Hungarian national report cites a recent survey of Shelter Foundation which shows that 70% of homeless service users consider retraining for people experiencing homelessness a useful idea.<sup>134</sup>

Some examples:

In **Ireland**, a variety of training and education initiatives are provided by different homeless organisations and agencies. These include:

- The Spokes programme run by Focus Ireland which provides accredited training programmes in IT, photography, maths, preparation to work and childcare. There are also one-to-one classes focusing on Computers, maths and English.
- Two stand-alone initiatives of Cork Simon Community: The Parks and Gardens Work Scheme, which offers a wide range of certified trainings, including Amenity Horticulture and Meitheal Mara, a cooperation with a community maritime boat building organisation.

In **Hungary**, service users had the possibility to participate in 19 vocational courses in the context of the EQUAL project “United Force” led by BMSZKI. According to the Hungarian national report, there was a considerable need for these kinds of training courses: During the project period (2005 – January 2007), 507 people used these training services.<sup>135</sup>

## 5.6 Occupational activities and prevocational training

### 5.6.1 Life-skills training

Life skills describe the knowledge, experience and skills necessary to live independently. Life-skills training aims to equip

people with necessary skills to function in society, to keep a tenancy or a job. One can distinguish three broad categories of life skills:

- Core or basic skills (e.g. numeracy, literacy and information technology);
- Independent living skills (e.g. managing a household, budgeting, appointment keeping and contacting services) and;
- Social skills (e.g. inter-personal skills, avoiding and/or dealing with neighbour disputes, and developing social networks).<sup>136</sup>

All national reports highlight the importance of life-skills training for people experiencing homelessness. The UK national report stresses that many elements of life skills are also soft skills for employment: “Self-presentation and self-confidence, telephone and communications skills, time-management and punctuality are all soft skills that employers report to look for in employees.”<sup>137</sup>

Life-skills training is often a prerequisite before a person can participate in ongoing training, education or supported employment. Life-skills training is particularly important for the most vulnerable groups of people, including people with long term experience of street homelessness.

The provision of life-skills training, however, still varies from country to country and also within the different member states covered in this report. In some countries, life-skills training is a central and widespread element of service provision for people experiencing homelessness. The Irish national report highlights, for example, that levels of life skills training by people experiencing homelessness are significant. Although the scope for such activity is more limited in emergency shelters, there is nonetheless the possibility to access life skills training through external services.<sup>138</sup>

In other countries, life skills training are less widespread: The **Hungarian report** notes that while life skills training is not yet an important element of homeless services in the country, it is expected to receive more attention in the future with the development of supported housing schemes.<sup>139</sup>

134 National Report: Hungary, 16.

135 National Report: Hungary, 16.

136 Scottish Homes: Life Skills Training for Homeless People – A Review of the Evidence, 2001.

137 National Report: United Kingdom, 22.

138 National Report: Ireland, 4.

139 National Report: Hungary, 17.

In the **Czech Republic**, life skills training is only provided by NGOs working with people who are roofless.<sup>140</sup>

### 5.6.2 Meaningful occupation

Meaningful occupation is closely related to life skills training. Meaningful occupation helps a person to move away from a homeless lifestyle and to rejoin the wider community through finding something purposeful to do. Although some people participating in meaningful occupation might receive a financial compensation, the main aims of these activities are.

- Building self-esteem;
- Developing skills; and
- Reconnecting people into social networks away from the streets.

Another important issue is preventing the boredom that may lead people to turn back to the streets, or to alcohol or drugs. Meaningful occupation may constitute an important step on a person's pathway into employment. In addition, it is also a longer-term solution for people that have no or little chances to reintegrate into paid employment in the mainstream labour market or in the social economy.

Some examples of life skills training and meaningful occupation initiatives:

In the **Netherlands**, several smaller projects exist. In Amsterdam, people who are homeless can work in furniture recycling or a clothing and music project. In Helmond, service users can work in a biological garden, in a social restaurant, a bicycle repair shop, arts and crafts workshop etc.<sup>141</sup>

In **Ireland**, the Dun Laoghaire Step Up Project, for instance, provides a range of courses for homeless adults, including Cookery, Positive Thinking and Motivation, Literacy and Computer Skills. A summer programme has been recently launched delivering 'softer' courses such as reflexology and music skills.<sup>142</sup>

In **Poland**, life-skills training is provided through so-called "mentors" that show people experiencing homelessness how to deal with institutions, visit cultural places like the cinema and establish a social network.<sup>143</sup>

## 5.7 Challenges for employment services for people who are homeless

The national reports highlight the need to further investment and development in the provision of a wide range of occupational activities and employment opportunities for people experiencing homelessness. The possibility to participate in an employment initiative that is adapted to the current living situation and needs of an individual helps the person to move out of homelessness and social exclusion.

In order to provide sufficient and effective education, training and employment services for people experiencing homelessness, adequate long-term funding as well as the establishment of cooperation between different stakeholders is important. These issues will be further discussed in chapters 6 and 7.

Other challenges that are cited in the different national reports relate to the participation of service users and the geographical distribution of services.

### 5.7.1 Participation of service users

While there is recognition in the national reports that service users' involvement in the design of structures, services and policies are important, possibilities for effective participation remain limited.

Several national reports point out that service users are mainly involved in the development of their action plan through individualised needs assessment and personalised case management.

Some reports also refer to general service user participation tools and initiatives that exist in the different homelessness services, such as meetings of service users or suggestion boxes.

In **France**, employees of insertion companies have the same rights as the other workers and are represented through the employee committee.<sup>144</sup>

The **UK national report** says that although participation in designing services is not compulsory it is increasingly

140 National Report: Czech Republic, 20.

141 National Report: The Netherlands, 6.

142 National Report: Ireland, 19.

143 National Report: Poland, 14.

144 National Report: France, 11.

deemed a good practice and a standard part of planning and/or improving services. The levels of participation, however, vary from scheme to scheme.<sup>145</sup>

### 5.7.2 Geographical distribution of services

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In all countries, the majority of homeless employment services are located in larger cities. This is also where most people who are homeless live.

Some reports refer to the principle of universal services in their country. The Finnish report, for instance, highlights that all people have equal access to services on the whole territory of the country.<sup>146</sup> The French report argues that de-

spite this principle, access can still be limited in areas where there is a lack of political support for these initiatives.<sup>147</sup>

Many national reports explicitly cite the lack of services in smaller cities and rural areas as a problem.

The **Hungarian report** stresses that supported employment is only provided in a few bigger cities, including Budapest, Szombatehley, Győr and Pecs.<sup>148</sup>

The report from the **United Kingdom** specifies that all areas of the country are not sufficiently covered with employment services for people experiencing homelessness.<sup>149</sup>

## 6. Cooperation of different stakeholders and awareness-raising

### 6.1 Cooperation of different stakeholders

All national reports mention the importance of cooperation between different services and stakeholders in order to cater for the multiple needs of people experiencing homelessness in a holistic way.

Several countries certify good cooperation with public authorities and services related to homelessness but a lack of (formal) cooperation with businesses and private companies. There is no mentioning of cooperation with trade unions at an operational level and little reference to cooperation with universities.

The **Dutch national report**, for instance, highlights that the majority of initiatives are joint ventures between local authorities, vocational training schools, service provider organisations, employment offices, social welfare authorities and health care organisations. Cooperation with private companies and businesses remains low.<sup>150</sup>

The **French national report** certifies a good cooperation at local level between the different civil society organisa-

tions and public authorities. There is also some cooperation with private companies but these relations are often informal.<sup>151</sup>

In **Ireland**, employment services are usually provided as a partnership between different stakeholders, including NGOs, employment offices and some businesses.<sup>152</sup>

In **Denmark**, cooperation exists between homelessness services and the employment office. People who are moving into homeless services are immediately referred to the municipal job centre.<sup>153</sup> The report from **Luxembourg** mentions that the inhabitants of women shelters and supported housing for women are automatically registered with the employment office if they are able to work.<sup>154</sup>

In many countries, levels of cooperation are more variable or differ from organisation to organisation. Some examples:

In **Spain** cooperation exist between service provider organisations for people experiencing homelessness and with organisations that offer and develop training and employment programmes. In contrast to many of the other EU

145 National Report: United Kingdom, 22.

146 National Report: Finland, 19.

147 National Report: France, 11.

148 National Report: Hungary, 17.

149 National Report: United Kingdom, 22.

150 National Report: The Netherlands, 7.

151 National Report: France, 12.

152 National Report: Ireland, 17-21.

153 National Report: Denmark, 2.

154 National Report: Luxembourg, 5.

countries, there is almost no cooperation with public authorities in relation to employment and training.<sup>155</sup>

In **Hungary**, cooperation exists with some private companies, other NGOs, several local employment offices and local authorities. In some cases, homeless organisations also cooperate with universities. The Hungarian report says that the level of cooperation depends very much on the respective organisation and the kind of services provided.<sup>156</sup>

The **Belgian report** criticises the fact that only 33% of homeless services have permanent cooperation agreements with social employment agencies.<sup>157</sup>

In **Germany**, there is a lack of cooperation between social services and the employment office (ARGE) in relation to work opportunities for people who are homeless and able to work. This considerably reduces the possibilities for this group to access training, education or employment.<sup>158</sup>

The cooperation of different stakeholders remains a major challenge in **Portugal**. As an example, the Portuguese national report refers to the lengthy decision making procedures and bureaucratic hurdles in relation to setting up the “Dar Sentido à Vida” (“Give meaning to life”) project in Porto.<sup>159</sup>

## 6.2 Awareness-raising initiatives for employers or public administration

Many National Reports discuss the need for awareness raising activities for employers and public administration about the employment profiles and needs of people experiencing homelessness.

None of the countries have organised a specific training for employers or public administration yet. Some reports also express their doubts about the usefulness of a specific training that tries to encourage employers to hire people experiencing homelessness for reasons of charity.

However, the majority of national reports welcome general initiatives that aim to raise awareness about the skills and potential of people who are homeless.

Many negative prejudices towards people experiencing homelessness prevail.

The **Spanish national report**, for instance, cites a survey of employers in the Autonomous Region of Madrid which shows that after people with drug addiction people who are homeless are the least likely to be employed.<sup>160</sup>

The **Hungarian national report** points out that most awareness raising activities focus on the Roma population. In addition, it states that employers would only be open to attend trainings if there was a financial incentive for them to employ people experiencing homelessness.<sup>161</sup>

A number of reports refer to positive examples of initiatives that helped to raise awareness about the employment situation of people who are homeless. In several countries, the development of partnerships and cooperation between the homelessness sector, businesses and other stakeholders has been very useful.

In **Ireland**, for example, the involvement of Business in the Community in the Ready for Work programme raised significant awareness among high profile employers about the value of providing employment opportunities to people experiencing homelessness and the potential for participants to become full-time employees.<sup>162</sup>

The **Dutch national report** notes that national and local authorities inform employers as much as possible about tax benefits and financial advantages to employ a person with a disability or from a disadvantaged group.<sup>163</sup>

In **Wales**, an interactive IT Package is being developed by Equinex at the University of Wales which targets (potential) employers with the intention of addressing negative pre-conceptions towards people who are homeless.<sup>164</sup>

155 National Report: Spain, 19.

156 National Report: Hungary : 18.

157 National Report: Belgium (Flanders), 12.

158 BAG W e.V.: Empfehlung der BAG Wohnungslosenhilfe e.V. zur Kooperation der Wohnungslosenhilfe mit den Agenturen für Arbeit und zur zukünftigen Organisation der Arbeitshilfen, 2004.

159 National Report: Portugal, 12.

160 National Report: Spain, 17.

161 National Report: Hungary, 18.

162 National Report: Ireland, 22.

163 National Report: The Netherlands, 7.

164 National Report: United Kingdom, 24.

## 7. Funding of employment services for people who are homeless

### 7.1 Funding sources

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Most of the National Reports mention multiple funding sources for employment services, including services that specifically target people experiencing homelessness. These sources include State funding, European funding and in some countries also charitable foundations and fundraising. Some organisations and social enterprises also receive an income through their workforce and/or by selling their products. Membership fees are mentioned as a funding source but play no or only a minor role for the provision of employment services.

In a number of countries, most of the funding for employment initiatives is provided directly by the State or regional and local authorities. If there are specific initiatives in relation to the employment of people who are homeless, the funding is often part of a general funding package for the provision of homelessness services. ESF funding, which is European funding but distributed at national level, as well as the European Community Initiative EQUAL exist but they are less important in relation to employment for people who are homeless.

Some examples:

In the **Netherlands**, employment services for people who are homeless are usually funded within the framework of homeless services. Service provider organisations receive funding to offer a complete inclusion programme ranging from emergency services to labour market inclusion.<sup>165</sup>

In **Finland**, the majority of funding for general employment services comes from the State and people experiencing homelessness are entitled to the same services as everyone else.

NGOs who are organising work skills training and supported employment receive funding for projects from Ray (Finland's Slot Machine Association) and the ESF.<sup>166</sup>

The national report from **Luxembourg** refers to a complex system of funding possibilities for employment services for vulnerable groups and points out two general funding models:

The first model concerns employment initiatives, where the participating partners have to provide 25% of the funding and the State contributes the remaining 75% of the costs. The second model concerns supported employment and meaningful occupation workshops, for which the State provides 100% of the funding.<sup>167</sup>

In some countries, ESF and EQUAL are at least equally important as State funding for the provision of employment services that specifically target people who are homeless. Some examples:

In **Poland**, EQUAL has been the key funding source for supported employment, work placements in the social economy, life-skills training as well as in-work support. The other main funding sources are ESF and State funding.<sup>168</sup>

In **Hungary**, ESF and EQUAL are the dominant funding sources with only a limited amount of State funding.<sup>169</sup>

In the **UK**, ESF is the major funding source. There is little State funding aside from programmes in some areas called 'Progress2Work'. EQUAL funding as well as Charitable foundations and fundraising are other important funding sources.<sup>170</sup>

### 7.2 Security of funding

The vast majority of National Reports state that most funding for homeless training, education and employment services is secured for one to three years.

While in some countries, funding for less than a year does not apply (e.g. **United Kingdom**), the **Polish national report** indicates that State funding is usually only provided for shorter periods of time.

165 National Report: The Netherlands, 8.

166 National Report: Finland, 20.

167 National Report: Luxembourg, 27.

168 National Report: Poland, 16.

169 National Report: Hungary, 19.

170 National Report: United Kingdom, 25.

In several countries, at least part of the funding is perennial. The **Finnish report** mentions that funding for employment services is secured for more than three years.<sup>171</sup>

In **France**, some fixed State funding for employment schemes exist. In addition, State contributions to the wages of people participating in supported employment are usually perennial.<sup>172</sup>

## 7.3 Effectiveness of funding

Most of the national reports evaluate the effectiveness of the funding regimes in their countries and highlight challenges and shortfalls.

### 7.3.1 Lack of stable and long-term funding

A major challenge cited in many reports is the lack of funding for employability services which are adapted to people who are homeless. In many countries the demand for schemes such as supported employment or life skills training is much higher than the actual offer. Many organisations face difficulties in ensuring quality, professionalism and continuity of services due to the limited financial resources. Some countries also report problems in relation to delayed funding which affected the quality and scope of service provision.

The inclusion process of a person experiencing homelessness may require several years of holistic and individualised support. Homelessness is an extreme experience for the individual and not every attempt to move out of it will be an immediate success. In order to ensure adequate and professional support that goes beyond emergency services for this vulnerable group, funding needs to be stable and secure for several years:

“Often a pathway to employment for a person experiencing homelessness involves several years of development, building of life skills, literacy and numeracy capacity, accessing vocational training, work placements for experience before eventually securing a mainstream job.”<sup>173</sup>

### 7.3.2 Conditions and structure of funding

Several national reports mention the fact that many donors do not recognise people experiencing homelessness as a target group for employability initiatives. Many services are not adapted to the multiple needs, including housing needs, of people who are homeless, which results in their de-facto exclusion from participation.

“It is intensively frustrating that these types of services that tick so many boxes of the government’s agenda of social inclusion are continuously fighting for survival. They should not have to compete with mainstream education and employment advice providers but should be appropriately supported for the specialised provision they are and resourced accordingly.”<sup>174</sup>

The **Italian national report** explains that social enterprises have to employ a certain percentage of people with certified disadvantages in the labour market and benefit from important financial advantages if they do so. Most certificates, however, refer to health rather than to social disadvantages and social enterprises often do not have an interest in employing people who are homeless who do not qualify for such a certificate for health reasons.<sup>175</sup>

Some reports also criticise the focus on hard outcomes of many donor institutions. There is a real risk that people who are homeless are disregarded and priority is given to the “best few” amongst the group of disadvantaged people, which are more likely to help to reduce unemployment rates. This tendency is also reflected in the fact that key low-threshold services such as life-skills training and meaningful occupation often suffer from underfunding in many EU countries.

The **Austrian report** indicates that organisations that provide employment schemes for disadvantaged groups have to fulfil certain numbers of successful transfers into the mainstream labour market. As a consequence, these organisations are obliged to screen the target group and exclude persons who are multiply disadvantaged.<sup>176</sup>

171 National Report: Finland, 20.

172 National Report: France, 12.

173 National Report: Ireland, 23.

174 Quotation from National Report: United Kingdom, 26.

175 National Report: Italy, 16.

176 National Report: Austria, 20.

Several national reports mention the vulnerability of funding due to the multiplicity of funding sources. The **French national report** points out difficulties in relation to the different sources of State funding (State, regional councils, local authorities etc.) due to the lack of coordination and shared responsibility.<sup>177</sup>

The **Polish national report** describes problems in funding projects, which combine employability initiatives with housing support under the ESF funding regime. While ESF focuses on labour market inclusion, there needs to be the possibility to also fund a holistic support framework within the context of the project. Otherwise ESF funding will not be effective for the inclusion into employment of people experiencing homelessness.<sup>178</sup>

## 8. Indicators, data collection and research

### 8.1 Indicators

The right choice of indicators constitutes the basis for an effective evaluation of employability initiatives for people experiencing homelessness. Many reports highlight the need to further develop adequate indicators for training, education and employment programmes for people experiencing homelessness.

Most of the national reports state a complete absence and/or inadequacy of national indicators that would take into account the impact of services on people who are homeless. Indicators that specifically look at people experiencing homelessness only exist at project and/or organisation level.

Until now, indicators linked to funding programmes often focus on hard outcomes (e.g. number of people who have gained employment) and lack “soft” indicators that look at improvements concerning the overall situation of each person who is homeless (e.g. skills, health and housing situation).

The **Polish national report** refers to good practice with indicators used during the “Agenda of Homelessness” project. The evaluation of the project takes into account the economical, housing, employment, health, mental well-being and social situation of its participants.<sup>179</sup>

In the **UK**, there is interesting evidence in relation to indicators that look at the cost-effectiveness of programmes. It shows that initiatives which succeed in bringing people who are homeless into sustainable work are less costly than a long-term dependency on emergency services.<sup>180</sup>

### 8.2 Data collection

Data collection on homelessness, including the profiles and needs of people experiencing homelessness, is crucial in order to better understand this phenomenon and develop effective policies. However, only few official statistics on homelessness exist and these are generally not comparable between different countries. Regarding the employment profiles of the specific group of people experiencing homelessness, no official national statistics exist in any of the EU countries.

Data on employment and homelessness is collected mainly at the level of homelessness organisations and social services. In addition, there are examples of local studies on homelessness that included indicators relating to homelessness as well as research that take stock of existing data. However, these statistics usually only cover people who are homeless and/or people who are roofless. Some examples:

In **Austria**, data on the employment, income and educational profiles of women and men entering and leaving homelessness organisations, as well as after their successful inclusion is collected in the City of Vienna.<sup>181</sup>

177 National Report: France, 12.

178 National Report: Poland, 16.

179 National Report: Poland, 17.

180 National Report: United Kingdom, 28.

181 National Report: Austria, 5-12.

In **Hungary**, BMSZKI introduced a new documentation system in 2000, which also monitors the employment status of service users and helps them to identify job opportunities adapted to their skills and needs.<sup>182</sup>

In **Poland**, a survey on ETHOS categories 1 and 2 is carried out every two years since 2001 which includes data on the participants economical and employment situation.<sup>183</sup>

The National Report from **Luxembourg** suggests the development of national databases on homelessness which develop indicators and collect and monitor information about people experiencing homelessness. This database could serve for policy development at national as well as European level.<sup>184</sup>

### 8.3 Research

In general, there is a lack of research on homelessness and housing exclusion. Several national reports mention research in the area of employment and homelessness. Most of the studies deal with homelessness in general and include a part on the issue of employment. A few also looked specifically at the relationship between employment and homelessness.

The **UK report** points out a number of relevant pieces of research, including studies that specifically looked at the profiles of single homeless people in London as well as costs and benefits of formal work for people who are homeless.<sup>185</sup>

The **Spanish report** refers to three different studies that dealt with employment and homelessness. One is a recently published book from the San Martin de Porres Foundation in Madrid, which includes examples of employment initiatives for people experiencing homelessness from other European countries.<sup>186</sup>

## 9. The right to work for people who are homeless – a political issue?

There is a discussion in the national reports about the usefulness of adopting a rights based approach in relation to the employment of people experiencing homelessness and/or to use this concept for media campaigns.

While a number reports state a growing interest regarding the right to housing for people who are homeless in their countries, they remain sceptical about a legal approach to the right to work for this group.

Several reports, however, state that the employment situation of people who are homeless and/or disadvantaged groups is a political issue in their country. What is more, many reports consider it a useful idea to organise a media campaign on this issue.

Two reports also mention media campaigns in relation to homelessness and employment:

In **Spain**, Caritas Spain and Faciam organised a campaign on the right to work for people who are homeless in 2002.<sup>187</sup>

The **UK report** refers to a number of media campaigns which have dealt with issues, such as access to learning and skills support and funding for employment and training provision.<sup>188</sup>

<sup>182</sup> National Report: Hungary, 21.

<sup>183</sup> National Report: Poland, 18.

<sup>184</sup> National Report: Luxembourg, 30.

<sup>185</sup> National Report: United Kingdom, 28.

<sup>186</sup> National Report: Spain, 22.

<sup>187</sup> National Report: Spain, 23.

<sup>188</sup> National Report: United Kingdom, 32.

## 10. Conclusions

This report has looked at the inclusion of people experiencing homelessness into employment and through employment in the European Union.

44

Despite the different national contexts, it clearly emerges from the findings from all countries covered in this report that this inclusion will only be successful if it is based on a holistic approach that is adopted to the individual needs of every person.

### 10.1 A holistic approach

The majority of people experiencing homelessness has multiple needs and requires support in more than one area in order to engage in occupational activities and to move closer to employment, including:

*Housing support:* People who are homeless need help to access adequate and affordable housing. In addition, some people may require ongoing support to keep a tenancy.

*Health and psychological support:* Many people experiencing homelessness suffer from mental health problems, alcohol or substance abuse and/or an overall bad health situation. They need access to adequate treatment as well as the possibility to participate in rehabilitation programmes and therapies.

*Counselling:* People who are homeless often need support to deal with mainstream social and employment services and to apply for social or unemployment benefits. In addition, people experiencing homelessness might require debt counselling, assistance to set up a bank account or to register an address.

*Emotional/motivational support:* Homelessness is an extreme and very stressful experience that affects and destabilises the whole life of a person. Homelessness often results in the social isolation of a person and affects the person's self-confidence. Emotional support such as buddying or mentoring schemes can help a person to establish new social contacts and to regain motivation and a positive self-image.

In particular for the most vulnerable groups of people who are homeless, support in the areas mentioned above may be a precondition to further engagement in occupational activities or other forms of employment schemes. However, for many people the immediate provision of low-threshold occupational and employment services can be an important factor to improve the overall situation of the person, despite ongoing health, social and housing problems. If a person is waiting for a place in a rehabilitation programme, for instance, access to low-threshold occupational activities can prevent boredom and frustration as it provides the person with something meaningful to do.

*Employability support:* As discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of this report, employment support may range from low-threshold services, such as one-to-one educational training, life-skills training and meaningful occupation, to supported employment schemes and ongoing in-work support.

### 10.2 An individualised approach

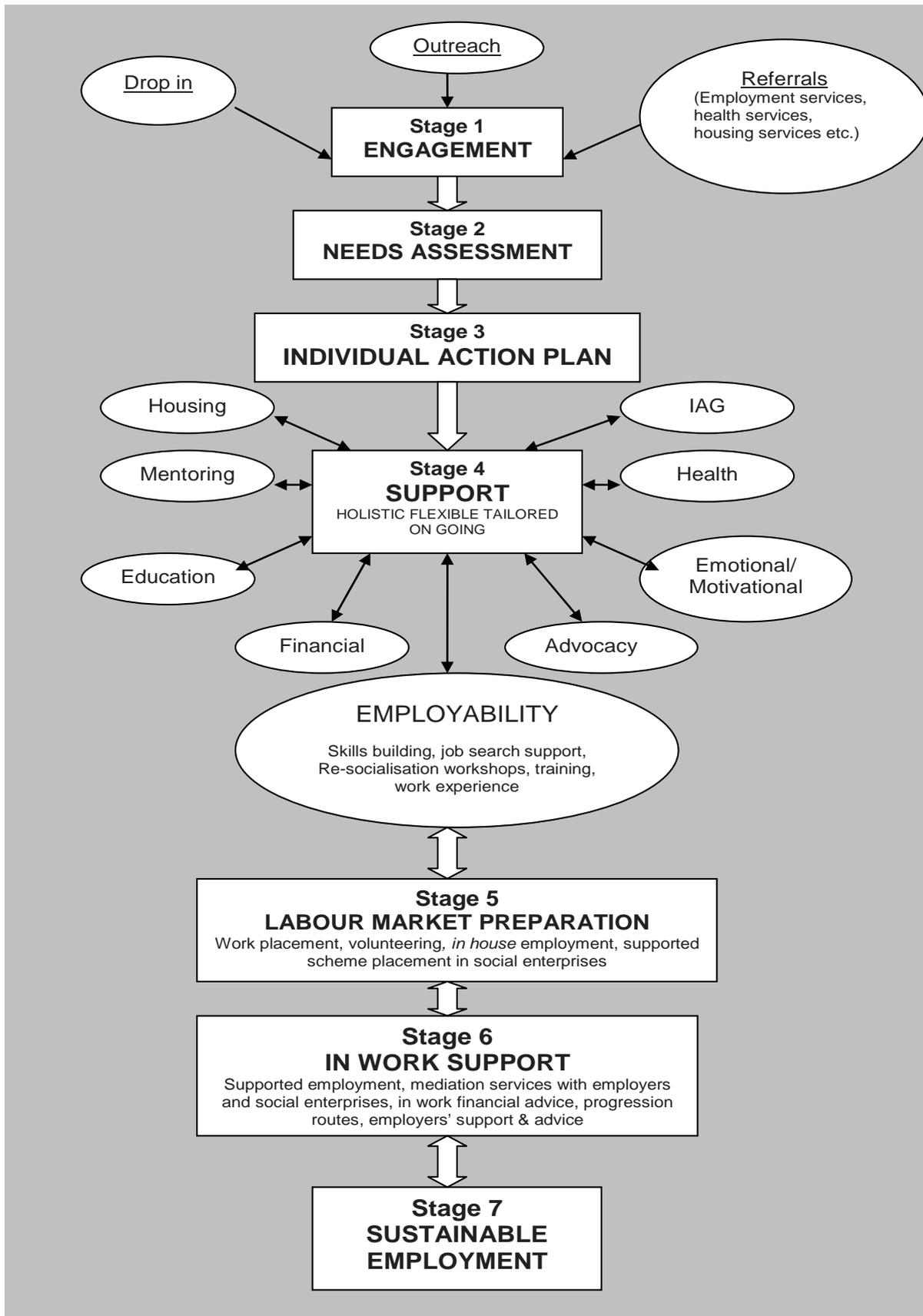
Not all people will require support in all of the areas, but many will need support in at least two or three of them. The barriers to occupational activities and employment are multiple but also individual for every person.

In order to ensure that the support is adapted to the person, an **initial as well as ongoing assessment** of the needs and aspirations of an individual is crucial. This needs assessment helps to develop a personalised action plan that is realistic and that the person can identify with.

As an example how to integrate the two dimensions, holistic and individualised, in a single approach, we would like to refer to a diagram that has been developed in the context of the recent European Research Study into Homelessness and Employment<sup>189</sup>. This study has been commissioned by UK FEANTSA member OSW and complements the findings of this FEANTSA European Report:

189 Off the Streets and Into Work (OSW): European Research Study into Employment and Homelessness, Final Report prepared by the Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion, September 2007.

*Stages of employability:*



The diagram shows the different possible, though not obligatory stages of an inclusion process into employment for people experiencing homelessness. Stage four describes the moment when employability measures and support in other areas are combined in a holistic and individualised way.

46

The two-sided arrows indicate that the pathway out of homelessness and into employment is not linear. People may require several attempts or a revision of support and employability measures. Services therefore have to be able to flexibly adapt to these changes.

### 10.3 Recommendations

FEANTSA believes that homelessness interventions that are based on such a holistic and individualised approach will be effective in improving the employability of people experiencing homelessness and helping them to move out of poverty and social exclusion.

To promote this approach, FEANTSA makes the following recommendations:

#### 1. Recognise the right to work and to participate in a meaningful occupation of people who are homeless

Employment and occupational activities are realistic options for people who are homeless if the right support framework is provided. Employment policies for disadvantaged groups have to be adapted in a way that they take into account the multiple barriers to employment of people experiencing homelessness, including the lack of access to adequate and affordable housing.

#### 2. Focus on improving employability and skills

Employment for people who are homeless is more than the reintegration into the mainstream labour market. Inclusion into employment aims to improve the overall situation of an individual through the person's involvement in all kinds of occupational activities and supported employment schemes. These employability services help people to gain skills, competencies and motivation and to possibly move on into employment. They include low threshold services such as meaningful occupation and life-skills training as well as vocational training and supported employment schemes.

#### 3. Provide a holistic support framework

Most people who are homeless require support in more than one area. Employment support has to be linked to housing, health or other forms of social and emotional support. This requires a better coordination between employment policies and homelessness as well as a better integration of an employment dimension in strategies to combat homelessness.

#### 4. Adopt a personalised approach

A personalised approach is needed that includes an initial as well as ongoing assessment of the needs and aspirations of the person as well as ongoing support after a work placement. Many people experiencing homelessness may require extra time and support before being able to take up and sustain employment or to participate in occupational activities. Flexibility is needed to change track, work on one's own pace and also "fail" sometimes.

#### 5. Create real incentives for people to gain employment and ensure adequate levels of minimum income

Badly structured benefits may constitute a barrier for people to seek work in the mainstream labour market as they risk losing benefits. Taking up a job has to pay in real terms for people that are ready to do so. Having the possibility to combine social benefits with income through work for an initial period of time may be essential for job retention. People who are not ready to work need guaranteed access to adequate minimum income and social benefits.

#### 6. Abolish sanctions for people experiencing homelessness

Sanctions are not an effective policy measure for people experiencing homelessness. This group is already in a very vulnerable situation and sanctions only risk further contributing to their social exclusion. Social support and empowerment that are adapted to the personal needs and aspirations are more effective instruments and more likely to lead to a sustainable improvement in the living situation of people experiencing homelessness.

#### 7. Promote the effective cooperation of all relevant stakeholders

The inclusion of people experiencing homelessness into occupational activities and employment requires cooperation within homelessness services but also amongst

all relevant stakeholders in related areas, such as social services, training, education and employment. Cooperation is also a means to raise awareness amongst people outside of the sector about the real living situations of people experiencing homelessness.

#### **8. Establish a multi-annual funding system for employment services for people who are homeless**

The inclusion into employment for a person who is homeless usually requires several years of support. In order to accompany and support the person during this process, service provider organisations need to have access to stable and sufficient long-term funding. Budgets for employability measures have to be clearly defined. ESF and Community action programmes such as EQUAL have a vital role to play within this context. There is evidence that tailored ongoing services for people experiencing homelessness will be less costly in the long-term than ad-hoc emergency interventions.

#### **9. Promote the effective participation of service users**

The effective involvement of service users in the design of employment services as well as in decision making processes affecting these services is crucial in order to develop an approach that actually works for people experiencing homelessness.

#### **10. Ensure access to clear and consistent information on rights, entitlements and existing support services**

Many people who are homeless find it hard to access information on the range of services available to them. Many find it even harder to gain accurate and consistent advice on their benefits or tax entitlements, or their right to engage in activities that are related to employment. Clear, consistent and accurate information needs to be easily available and kept up to date.

#### **11. Ensure geographical distribution of services and access to transport**

Most homeless services are located in cities and urban areas, where also the majority of people experiencing homelessness live. However, a significant proportion

of people experiencing homelessness also live in rural areas, where the lack of services as well as the lack of public transport facilities may constitute an important barrier to access the necessary support.

#### **12. Support the role of the social economy as a transitional labour market**

The social economy plays a crucial role for the (supported) employment of people with multiple needs who are not or not yet able to find a job in the mainstream labour market. Many social enterprises have proved to be effective in combining inclusion through training and work with ongoing housing or social support. Social economy employers need adequate financial support for these schemes. There should be incentives for employers to target the most vulnerable groups and to effectively promote the transition into the mainstream labour market for those who are ready to do so.

#### **13. Develop indicators that measure soft outcomes of interventions**

Indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of employment programmes currently focus too much on hard outcomes such as the number of people who have gained employment. Indicators that are mindful to the soft outcomes of interventions, such as an overall improvement of the living situation of participants, are more effective for people who are homeless.

#### **14. Establish homeless data collection systems that look at the employment profiles of people**

There is an urgent need to further develop homeless data collection systems in Europe in order to better understand the profiles and needs of people experiencing homelessness, including people's employment profiles and needs. This system would be an effective tool to further develop policies to combat homelessness at regional, national and European level.

#### **15. Promote research in the area of employment and homelessness**

Although several studies have looked in recent years at the employment situation of people who are homeless, there is still a lot of scope for more detailed research in this field.

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48

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## Annex 1: ETHOS – European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion

Conceptual Category	Operational Category	Living Situation	Generic Definition
ROOFLESS	1 People Living Rough	Public space or external space	Living in the streets or public spaces, without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
	2 People in emergency accommodation	Night shelter	People with no usual place of residence who make use of overnight shelter, low threshold shelter
HOUSELESS	3 People in accommodation for the homeless	Homeless hostel Temporary Accommodation Transitional supported accommodation	Where the period of stay is intended to be short term
	4 People in Women's Shelter	Women's shelter accommodation	Women accommodated due to experience of domestic violence and where the period of stay is intended to be short term
	5 People in accommodation for immigrants	Temporary accommodation / reception centres Migrant workers accommodation	Immigrants in reception or short term accommodation due to their immigrant status
	6 People due to be released from institutions	Penal institutions Medical institutions <sup>190</sup> Children's institutions / homes	No housing available prior to release Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing No housing identified (e.g by 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday)
7 People receiving longer-term support (due to homelessness)	Residential care for older homeless people Supported accommodation (for formerly homeless people)	Long stay accommodation with care for formerly homeless people (normally more than one year)	
INSECURE	8 People living in insecure accommodation	Temporarily with family/friends No legal (sub)tenancy Illegal occupation of land	Living in conventional housing but not the usual or place of residence due to lack of housing Occupation of dwelling with no legal tenancy; illegal occupation of a dwelling Occupation of land with no legal rights
	9 People living under threat of eviction	Legal orders enforced (rented) Re-possession orders (owned)	Where orders for eviction are operative Where mortgagor has legal order to re-possess
	10 People living under threat of violence	Police recorded incidents	Where police action is taken to ensure place of safety for victims of domestic violence
INADEQUATE	11 People living in temporary / non-conventional structures	Mobile homes Non-conventional building Temporary structure	Not intended as place of usual residence Makeshift shelter, shack or shanty Semi-permanent structure hut or cabin
	12 People living in unfit housing	Occupied dwellings unfit for habitation	Defined as unfit for habitation by national legislation or building regulations
13 People living in extreme overcrowding	Highest national norm of overcrowding	Defined as exceeding national density standard for floor-space or useable rooms	

190 Includes drug rehabilitation institutions, psychiatric hospitals etc.

## Annex 2: Glossary - working definitions!

For most of the following concepts, there is **no common definition at European or international level**. Concepts vary from country to country and there is no clear-cut distinction between the concepts.

50

### *In alphabetical order*

**Economically inactive (national definitions may vary considerably from this definition – see also “unemployed”):** Persons between 16-65 who are without work or without paid work and who are not actively seeking work.

**Employability:** Development of skills and competencies that allow a person to connect with the labour market

**Informal economy:** Economic activities are not regulated under national labour law. Employment in the informal economy may involve illegal dealings, such as direct cash payments or the lack of a legal job contracts. A person working in the informal economy usually does not benefit from the same rights and benefits as a person employed in the mainstream labour market (e.g. does not acquire pension rights etc.)

**Life skills training:** Life skills describe the knowledge, experience and skills necessary to live independently. Life skills training aims to promote self-sufficiency and help people re-establish the skills they need to live independently, to sustain a tenancy and to settle into their community. It also aims to develop the service user's communication skills, build self-esteem and the confidence to live independently. One can distinguish three broad categories of life skills:

*Core or basic skills:* e.g. numeracy, literacy and information technology);

*Independent living skills:* e.g. managing a household, budgeting, appointment keeping and contacting services; and

*Social skills:* e.g. inter-personal skills, avoiding and/or dealing with neighbour disputes, and developing social networks.

**Mainstream labour market:** Labour market where workers are employed on the basis of their skills and compete with other workers without discrimination. The labour market is regulated under the national labour law.

**Meaningful occupation:** Helps the person moving away from a homeless lifestyle and to rejoin the wider community through finding something purposeful to do. The main aims are to build the persons self confidence and self esteem. Meaningful occupation is often organised within a shelter. The activity is usually unpaid. Meaningful occupation may make a social or economic contribution. Possible examples of meaningful occupations are: photography, art, crafts, furniture making, computing.

**Occupational activity:** All activities that will develop the employability of the individual

**Seeking work:** Take specific steps to seek paid employment or self-employment. The specific steps may include registration at a public or private employment exchange; application to employers; checking at worksites, farms, factory gates, market or other assembly places; placing or answering newspaper advertisements; seeking assistance of friends or relatives; looking for land, building, machinery or equipment to establish own enterprise; arranging for financial resources; applying for permits and licences, etc.

**Social economy:** Businesses that are “not –for - personal-profit” but offer employment which is regulated under the national labour law. Principles such as solidarity, participation are more important than a personal financial benefit. However, social enterprises may be competing with conventional businesses. Social enterprises may include: community owned businesses; local self help organisations engaged in trading activities with social, economic or environmental benefit. In some countries also: cooperatives, associations, foundations etc.

**Supported employment:** The person is placed (most often temporarily) in a work setting in the mainstream labour market (in the private or public sector) or in the social economy but receives ongoing support.

The support may be a combination of:

- Financial support: e.g. the salary is paid by the government
- Personal support: e.g. counselling, evaluation of job performance etc.

- Practical support: e.g. transport to and from the workplace
- Vocational Training: e.g. participation in professional training every second afternoon

In addition, supported employment is often combined with ongoing health, housing, social and emotional support.

51

**Unemployed (ILO definition – national definitions may vary considerably from this definition)**

All persons above a certain age (usually 16-65 years or similar) who are:

- Without work (i.e. are not in paid employment or self employment)
- Currently available for work (i.e. are available for paid employment or self-employment)
- Seeking work (i.e. have taken specific steps to seek paid employment or self-employment)

**Vocational Training:** the person participates in training courses in order to develop essential job skills that will help the person to find a paid job in the mainstream labour market or in the social economy. Possible examples: CV writing, computer trainings, mechanical trainings etc.





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