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PUSH

Guidelines

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INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT

The PUSH project aims at promoting equal opportunity and social inclusion through sport for homeless people and all those living situations of social hardship by expanding the expertise of entities dealing with them and social workers following them. After a first phase of research of good practices and knowledge exchange at EU level, the consortium defined a set of guidelines to allow social workers and sports trainers in collaborating and creating sports programs for homeless people. The guidelines have been tested in the partners countries (Netherlands, Italy, Hungary and Portugal) and then disseminated among other entities of the third sector, policymakers and all relevant services and stakeholders – to reinclude marginalized people in social life and foster social cohesion.

After an initial phase of research, including the study of successful practices and knowledge exchange at the European Union level, the consortium is committed to creating comprehensive set of guidelines. These guidelines will serve as a roadmap, facilitating collaboration between social workers and sports trainers to design and implement effective sports programs tailored to the unique needs of homeless individuals.

The last phase involves testing these guidelines within the partner countries, ensuring their practical applicability and efficacy. Following successful testing, the guidelines will be disseminated among entities in the third sector, policymakers, and all relevant services and stakeholders. The goal is to reintegrate marginalized individuals into social life, foster social cohesion, and contribute to a more inclusive and compassionate society.

Now, let's look into the guidelines that is created by the consortium to realize the vision of the PUSH project.

Consortium Push Project:

- Il Cigno Cooperative Sociale
- Stichting Life Goals
- Megálló Csoport Alapítvány
- APDES

1. BUILD A COALITION AND DEFINE MUTUAL GOALS

Creating a coalition and establishing a common goal in sports programs for homeless individuals is vital. It combines resources and expertise from diverse organizations, enhancing the program's impact. Community engagement and stigma reduction are facilitated through collaboration. Additionally, it ensures accountability, sustainability, and empowerment while advocating for systemic changes.

How to do this?

- ❑ **Identify Key Stakeholders:** Determine the organizations, agencies, and individuals interested in addressing homelessness through sports. This may include local shelters, social service providers, sports clubs, community groups, and volunteers. It can help to make a structured overview of the coalition [like this](#).
- ❑ **Define a Common Vision:** Bring all stakeholders together to discuss the shared vision of using sports to benefit homeless individuals. Clearly articulate the goals, objectives, and the expected impact of the coalition.
- ❑ **Agree on Roles and Responsibilities:** Define the roles and responsibilities of each coalition member. Establish what contributions, resources, and expertise they will bring to the initiative.
- ❑ **Create a covenant:** Formalize the coalition's structure and commitments through a covenant. This document should outline the mission, goals, roles, and responsibilities. [See here](#) an example of the covenant of the coalition in Utrecht, a Dutch city.

2. NEEDS ANALYSIS

Starting a sports program for homeless people is a great idea, but it's important to first figure out exactly what these individuals need, what they like, and what challenges they face. This analysis is crucial to make sure the program helps them effectively and is relevant to their specific situations. By customizing the program based on their needs, it can become a strong tool to support them in their journey to recovery and rehabilitation.

How to do this?

- ❑ **Collaboration:** Work closely with the target group and partner organizations to conduct a comprehensive needs analysis. This collaboration ensures a well-rounded understanding of the homeless population's requirements in the context of sports programs.
- ❑ **Specific Needs and Preferences:** Identify the distinct needs, preferences, and challenges of homeless individuals related to sports and recreational activities. This involves gathering insights into their physical, mental, and social well-being to tailor the program effectively. You can [use this](#) questionnaire for participants or make your own.
- ❑ **Participant Involvement:** Engage homeless participants in the research process by establishing a participant advisory board, [see example of Inspirators of Life](#)

[Goals](#). This allows them to actively participate in decision-making, ensuring that the sports program aligns with their preferences and fosters a sense of ownership and inclusivity

3. RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND FUNDING

In this section, we will do two important things. First, we'll study other programs to see what works and what doesn't. We want to understand the problems and what's been successful in helping homeless people with sports and recreation. Second, we will figure out how to get the money and things we need to run our program. We will make a plan that shows how much money and time we need, what supplies we need, and where to get them. By doing this, we'll be ready to create a great program that helps homeless people while making sure we have enough support to make it work.

How to do this?

- ❑ **Review Existing Programs:** Start by searching online and speaking with organizations that run programs for the homeless. For instance, you might find that a nearby shelter offers a soccer program. Contact them, visit if possible, and gather information about how it operates and benefits the homeless participants.
- ❑ **Create a Budget:** Make a detailed list of all the things you need for your program, like sports equipment, transportation, and staff salaries. Estimate the costs for each item. [Click here](#) for some inspiration.
- ❑ **Identify Funding Sources:** Look for sources of money, like grants from local governments, donations from businesses, or crowdfunding from the community. For instance, you might find a local charity that supports sports programs for vulnerable groups.
- ❑ **Write Grant Proposals:** If you apply for grants, write clear and compelling proposals. Explain what your program is, what it aims to achieve, and how the grant money will be used. Be sure to include your budget and the impact you expect. For example, you could write a proposal to a youth sports foundation outlining your plan to provide homeless youth with a safe space for physical activity.

4. SKILLED SPORT COACH RECRUITMENT

In this crucial step, we are focused on recruiting and educating a sports coach who possesses both skill and empathy, with a proven track record of working with vulnerable populations. Additionally, we'll involve a peer educator who is well-versed in sports knowledge. The chosen coach should not only understand the distinctive challenges faced by the homeless but also have the capacity to leverage sports as a tool for empowerment and personal growth. Furthermore, we will emphasize the importance of collaborative learning by providing joint training to the sport coach, peer educator, and healthcare professionals, ensuring they can effectively and holistically contribute to the project's success.

How to do this?

- ❑ **Collaborative Screening:** Engage partner organizations and stakeholders in the coach selection process, including interviews, reference checks, and feedback from homeless individuals to assess suitability for working with vulnerable populations.



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- ❑ **Training and Empowerment:** Provide the selected coach with specialized training to understand homelessness challenges and the power of sports. This equips them to connect with participants on a deeper level and adapt their coaching to individual needs. See the [Social Sport Coach course](#) from the Life Goals Foundation as an example.
- ❑ **Multi-Disciplinary Training:** Organize joint training sessions for the coach, peer educator, and healthcare professionals, focusing on effective communication, addressing health needs, and integrating sports into holistic well-being. Foster a collaborative project environment through open dialogue and teamwork during these sessions.

5. PROMOTION PLAN

The promotion plan needs to be designed to effectively reach the homeless population. We leverage diverse communication channels, from social media to community centers, to emphasize the inclusive nature of our sports activities. By highlighting that they are free, social, and suitable for all skill levels, we aim to engage and inspire participants with success stories showcasing the positive impact of our program.

How to do this?

- ❑ **Audience Understanding:** Understand the unique needs and preferences of the homeless population to tailor your messages effectively.
- ❑ **Key Messages:** Craft compelling messages that highlight the program's benefits, such as well-being and community involvement. Use storytelling to share (positive) outcomes of the participants. In Amsterdam (city in the Netherlands), they [made a personal story](#) about one of the participants.
- ❑ **Digital Presence:** Establish a strong online presence through social media and regularly update it to reach a wider audience.
- ❑ **Community Engagement:** Collaborate with local partners and use outreach teams to directly connect with the homeless population in accessible locations. [See here](#) a Dutch example of a sport project with refugees in an urban area in Alphen aan den Rijn.

6. SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE SPORTING CLIMATE

To create a safe and accessible sporting climate it is important to create an environment where personal engagement and the enjoyment of sports take center stage. This initiative places a strong emphasis on making sports activities free of charge, ensuring social inclusivity, and catering to individuals of all skill levels. Furthermore, it advocates for a mainstreaming approach that seamlessly integrates participants into the broader community, emphasizing the significance of sports as a unifying force.

How to do this?

- ❑ **Safe and Accessible Environment:** Start by securing a suitable location for sports activities, ensuring it is free of charge. Implement a socially welcoming atmosphere that focuses on



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personal contact, having fun and accessible for individuals at every skill level. Make rules and agreements together with the group instead of making them yourself. [See here](#) for an example used by the Homeless World Cup. A global organisation that organises the World Cup street soccer for Homeless People.

- ❑ **Emphasize Personal Contact and Fun:** Encourage personal engagement among participants by organizing team-building activities, social events, and mentoring programs. Create an atmosphere that prioritizes enjoyment and fosters camaraderie among participants.
- ❑ **Mainstreaming Approach:** Develop programs that connect participants to the broader community. Collaborate with local schools, community centers, and social organizations to integrate sports activities seamlessly. Organize events that encourage community involvement and interaction.

7. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND STIGMA REDUCTION

In organizing sports for homeless people, Community Involvement and Stigma Reduction are crucial. Engaging the broader community fosters understanding and support, while stigma reduction initiatives combat negative perceptions linked to homelessness. These efforts create a more inclusive and compassionate environment for homeless individuals participating in sports programs.

How to do this?

- ❑ **Engage the Broader Community:** Involve the community to foster understanding and support for the project.
- ❑ **Reduce Stigma:** Conduct awareness campaigns, community events, and educational programs to combat homelessness-related stigma.

8. SPORTS GOALS AND TOURNAMENTS

When organizing sports activities for homeless individuals it is vital to aim for a Sport goal or tournament. These objectives help provide structure and motivation to the participants' journey, offering a sense of purpose and accomplishment. By setting clear sports goals and regularly organizing tournaments, not only are physical skills honed, but a strong sense of community and achievement is cultivated, making it a fundamental component in the holistic well-being of homeless individuals.

How to do this?

- ❑ **Goal setting workshops:** Conduct workshops or individual sessions with participants to identify their personal sports-related objectives, whether it's improving fitness, mastering a specific sport, or achieving a particular milestone.
- ❑ **Goal Tracking:** Establish a tracking system to monitor the progress of each participant toward their goals. This can include regular assessments, checkpoints, or individual goal plans. The Life Goals Foundation developed a [specific online webapplication](#) to track and measure the impact of their sports programs.



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- ❑ **Organize Regular Tournaments and Competitions:** Plan and schedule regular sports tournaments or competitions within the program. Use these events as opportunities for community engagement. [This is](#) an aftermovie of the European Life Goals Games, an international sportstournament for people in a socially vulnerable position.

9. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In organizing sports programs for homeless individuals, the "Personal Development Plan" is crucial. This plan customizes sports activities to meet their specific needs and interests while also providing opportunities for skill-building, teamwork, and leadership development. It not only enhances physical well-being but also plays a crucial role in rebuilding self-esteem and fostering a path to a brighter future for homeless participants.

How to do this?

- ❑ **Integrate Sport into Broader Personal Plan:** Develop a comprehensive personal development plan with clear goals that includes sports activities. Collaborate with relevant organizations and professionals to ensure alignment with participants' broader life objectives.
- ❑ **Adapt Activities to Specific Needs.** Customize sports activities based on participant surveys and interviews.
- ❑ **Provide Opportunities for Skill Building, Teamwork, and Leadership Development:** Design a structured curriculum that focuses on skill-building and athletic improvement. Organize team-based sports and leadership workshops to promote teamwork and leadership skills among participants.

10. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND ROLES

In the context of sports programs for homeless people, "Future Perspectives and Roles" are vital. It means showing participants a path for the future within the project. This involves finding and encouraging their individual talents, letting them take on leadership roles, and using their skills. This not only helps them now but also gives them hope for a better future in the program, making it an important part of their journey.

How to do this?

- ❑ **Create a Long-Term Vision for Participants:** Conduct goal-setting workshops to outline future aspirations. Pair participants with Social Sport coach to help set achievable goals within the project.
- ❑ **Identify and Nurture Individual Talents:** Assess skills and talents of participants through various activities. Offer leadership opportunities within the sports program, such as coaching or mentoring, based on their abilities.

By following these guidelines, the PUSH Project aims to create a sustainable and empowering sports program for homeless individuals, promoting personal development, community integration, and a sense of belonging.



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