

SUPPORTING HOMELESS' MENTAL HEALTH

Challenge

The public health system in the city of Buenos Aires has collapsed. Partly due to the effects of the Pandemic, but also due to the extremely high demand from the increasing amount of people who can no longer pay for private medicine and go to the public system, which does not have the necessary capacity to respond to such demand.

Among the people who depend on the public health system are more than 7,251 people who live in extreme social vulnerability in the streets or, in the best of cases, in state shelters.

For someone who has the "privilege" of having a home and their basic needs satisfied to a certain extent, it is an odyssey to access medical consultations, appointments, treatments, studies and follow-up, in public hospitals of the City of Buenos Aires, imagine for people living on the streets: it is impossible.

And even more impossible, if there is a word to describe it, is the access to mental health services. These services are only reachable in moments of crisis, when the police or the state emergency service intervenes and takes homeless people to the ER, where they are assessed,

medicated, observed for a few hours, and then returned to the street, without any further treatment, subsequent follow-up, or no interdisciplinary team assigned for their treatment.

The vast majority of homeless people want to leave the street through a job. But for them, getting a decent job involves more



than drafting a resume. They face 5 main challenges: i) lack of means of contact (cell phone or internet access, etc.), ii) inability to access personal hygiene and “work” clothing, iii) need for preparation to build self-confidence and an optimal degree of effectiveness for job interviews, iv) a place to sleep before those interviews or when they get the job, v) access to equal job opportunities. These challenges are enormous and become unbeatable without the possibility of access to physical and / or mental health services.

Solution

Our project provides both individual and group psychotherapy, occupational therapy, addiction groups and group coaching, since according to our experience and professional evaluation, it is the necessary approach so that they can achieve the highest degree of autonomy possible and the development of optimal social and work skills to get a job and to be able to keep it over time.

We have a Mental Health Department within the Organization, but it is overwhelmed by the demand we have from the users of our programs. We also have the collaboration of Mental Health professionals who do it on a voluntary basis, but again, the time they can set aside for providing their services is limited and is far exceeded by demand.

That is why we need to expand our Professional Team and be able to cover the demand for all psychotherapy, occupational therapy, addiction counseling and job coaching, and this project aims to ensure that no user of our programs is left without mental health care.



Long-Term Impact

Our project seeks to provide mental health care to 100 homeless people, taking part in our programs, since by ensuring this provision, we know that the possibilities of getting a decent job and maintaining it over time, is closer to being a reality.

We also believe that the impact will not be limited to the 100 people directly involved, but that their families (if they have one) and friends or people who are in the same situation of extreme social vulnerability, will see that the path to a better quality of life is possible and with the validity of all their rights.



Last, but not least, this approach with focus on mental health goes along the de-stigmatization process of our target population, favoring social integration, and fostering greater involvement in the problem, both at the individual and company level, through strategic alliances.

The Bigger Picture

This project is framed into a bigger program we call Employment Training Center (ETC), which is the core program of our Foundation.

In the ETC, Fundación Multipolar implements a systemic approach to the homelessness situation by giving people the opportunity (and resources) to change their quality of life and get out of the streets for good, through decent jobs. In order to make this process happen, we provide users with a Personal Development Plan, which includes Mental Health Care, Occupational Training and Reskilling, Crafts Training, Digital Literacy, a wide variety of workshops, from Employment and Autonomy related to Arts and Recreational ones.

This is how a regular week at the TEC looks like:

TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT CENTER									
	MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
8:00	Breakfast		Breakfast		Breakfast	Breakfast		Breakfast	
9:00	Addiction Counseling	Group Otologic Coaching	Training Workshop	Training Workshop	Employment Workshop	Training Workshop	Training Workshop	Scholar Workshop	Digital Literacy Workshop
10:00									
11:30	Scholar Workshop	Digital Literacy Workshop	Art Workshop	Art Workshop	Employment Workshop	Occupational Therapy		Addiction Counseling	Group Otologic Coaching
12:30									
1:00	Lunch		Lunch		Lunch	Lunch		Lunch	
2:00	Individual Psychotherapy sessions (15 therapists / 35 patients)		Craft Training Workshop	Craft Training Workshop	Individual Psychotherapy sessions (15 therapists / 35 patients)	Craft Training Workshop	Craft Training Workshop	Individual Psychotherapy sessions (10 therapists / 30 patients)	
3:00									
4:00									
5:00									

We are convinced that the streets are not a place to live, and we aim our work, our efforts, and most importantly, every single person that takes part in our ETC gives their best in order to get the opportunity to access decent job posts.

Now, we invite you to be part of this change we are trying to make and support our projects with your donations. We can make the difference for those the system has cast away.