



A2 - Research on the state of the art of homeless theatres in Europe

COMMON COUNTRY REPORT

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Introduction



In the project ThEatRe foR hOmeless peRsons, supported by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, we focus on the connection between theatre and homeless people. When we talk about theatre, we mean theatre in the broadest sense of the word. As an art form that encompasses other arts (visual and performing arts, music and singing, dance and movement, literature, etc.). Theatre as a physical space where the whole team meets and creates and where there is contact between the theatre team and the audience, the public. Theatre as a free space where one can express oneself creatively. Theatre as a place where one can share and cooperate with others. Theatre with its enormous educational dimension and outreach. Theatre with its powerful healing potential - both for actors, actresses and theatre-makers, as well as for audiences. Theatre as a safe space, as a space to nurture relationships, theatre as home.



If we want to address the topic of theatre for and with homeless people, it is important to first approach who a homeless person is. Many stereotypes are still associated with this phrase today. Defining a homeless person can be very similar to answering the question of who is a person with a home. So the reality is very varied indeed.



Slovak legislation does not recognise the terms or phrases "homeless people, homeless person, homeless person". Many definitions and categorizations can be found in the professional literature (especially in the field of social sciences - social work, sociology, psychology, ethnology, economics) dealing with homelessness. Sometimes broader, sometimes narrower, there may always be a greater emphasis on one or another of the many aspects of the phrase.

In the context of the European Union, the most commonly used definition and typology is the ETHOS (European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion) developed by the European Federation of organisations working with the people who are homeless (FEANTSA).

The ETHOS typology begins with the conceptual understanding that there are three domains which constitute a „home“, the absence of which can be taken to delineate homelessness. Having a home can be understood as: having an adequate dwelling (or space) over which a person and his / her family can exercise exclusive possession (physical domain); being able to maintain privacy and enjoy relations (social domain) and having a legal title to occupation (legal domain). This leads to the 4 main concepts of Rooflessness, Homelessness, Insecure Housing and Inadequate Housing all of which can be taken to indicate the absence of a home. ETHOS therefore classifies people who are homeless according to their living or „home“ situation. These conceptual categories are divided into 13 operational categories that can be used for different policy purposes such as mapping of the problem of homelessness, developing, monitoring and evaluating policies.



Here, too, it can be seen that homeless people do not form a homogeneous and clearly definable group. Specific cultural, social, economic or political contexts (migration, social policy, housing policy, the status of national minorities or ethnic groups, the level of respect for human rights, etc) can also play an important role.

Homeless people especially need food, a place to sleep, to warm up, to take a shower. Why theatre for homeless people? For what? We have often encountered such questions in the past, and they still come up occasionally today. The best answers would surely come from our actors. But we don't want to get ahead of ourselves. The aim of our project, a small partnership between 2 theatre and educational organisations from different parts of the EU - Theatre Without a Home from Bratislava (SK) and Sutta Scupa from Palermo, Sicily (IT) - is to share, exchange and inspire each other. Going forward, our goal is also to share our experience and know-how with other organisations, individuals, professionals or activists.



photo 1 : Divaldo bez Domova poster



photo 2 : Sutta Scupa "Hems"



The first output of the project is this overview of the current state of theatre for homeless people in the context of the participating countries and their surrounding areas. When we talk about theatres for homeless people, we mean organisations or groups where a substantial part of the acting team is made up of homeless people. At the same time, we are primarily focusing on theatres and organisations that are involved in theatre work and production with homeless people on a long-term and regular basis. Thus, we do not focus on one-off or short-term projects that result in, for example, the creation of one performance with homeless people, but then their activity ends. There may be many more such projects or activities, but we want to focus on organisations and projects that continue their activities over a longer period of time, develop and thus offer examples of good practice to others.

Divadlo bez domova has been involved in finding and contacting homeless theatres for a long time practically since its inception. Indeed, at that time there was no national or international know-how on how to create, run, maintain and develop this type of theatre. So, in addition to pioneering, learning from our own experiences, failures and successes, mutual inspiration and sharing with similar types of companies and organisations was key. The perfect platform for such encounters was the International Festival of Homeless Theatres ERROR, which has been organised by Divadlo bez domova in Bratislava since 2007. The beginning of the Divadlo bez domova's search to find and connect with other homeless theatres in Europe can be dated back to this period.

Currently active homeless theatres and homeless theatre events in Europe



Slovakia



DIVADLO BEZ DOMOVA BRATISLAVA

Divadlo bez domova (Theatre with no Home) is a civic association that since 2006 (informally since 2004) has been working artistically with homeless people, people with physical disabilities, people with psychiatric diagnosis, Roma people, seniors, people after serving a prison sentence and other(wise) disadvantaged people. These people are actors and actresses. It is based in Pistori palace in Bratislava, where they have created a theatre space on our own. Here they regularly rehearse, present their theatre performances for the public, organise workshops, trainings and other activities. They combine and bring together theatre, art, non-formal education and drama therapy.



photo 3 : Divaldo bez Domova poster

Slovakia



International Festival of Homeless Theatres ERROR

ERROR festival is probably the only international festival of homeless theatres in the world. It is organised by Divadlo bez domova in Bratislava, Slovakia since 2007. Every year, last Friday and Saturday in November, theatre companies and groups with homeless actors and actresses come and perform for international and local audience. Since there are just few homeless theatres, organisers regularly invite also theatre groups with other(wise) disadvantaged performers, e. g. people with hearing impairment, LGBTIQ+ people, migrants and refugees, people working in sex business, disadvantaged youngsters, people with Down syndrome, people after serving a prison sentence etc.



photo 4 : Error Fest, Bratislava 2025 poster

Hungary



AHA SZÍNPAD BUDAPEST



photo 5 : AHA Theatre performance

AHA Színpad (AHA Theatre) is a homeless theatre group founded in the autumn of 2001, in the Homeless Shelter of Madridi Road, in Budapest, under the Hungarian Red Cross (Magyar Vöröskereszt Budapest Fővárosi Szervezet) and Műhely Alapítvány. Since that time, the AHA Színpad has grown and produced more than 25 plays. It focuses mainly on homeless people, but has involved different groups of society as well. has already worked with both children and adults coming from normal family circumstances, with children who live under state care and also with professional actors. Today, the AHA Színpad is renowned both nationally and internationally. It has appeared at several festivals, fundraisers, and has taken part in a number of Hungarian and European projects. It offers a quality leisure time for homeless people, but in addition to that, the AHA Theatre Company aims to enable an interactive artistic communication between homeless people and the society using theatre as a method. Every year since its first edition, the AHA Színpad performs at ERROR festival in Bratislava.

Czech Republic



DIVADELNÍ SOUBOR ROZKOŠ PRAGUE

Ochotnický divadelní soubor ROZKOŠ (The amateur theatre group BLISS) is project of Czech NGO Rozkoš bez rizika (Bliss without risk). It was founded as a form of therapy and training of work skills for their clients – people working in sex business. The roles that are not filled are performed by supporters, staff and people from other marginalized groups, mainly by homeless people. The company has written 15 original plays, participated in many amateur theatre festivals and won numerous awards.

[Website](#)





Poland

JUBILO FOUNDATION

WROCLAW

Based in Wrocław, Jubilo is a theatre group founded in 2011, driven by the need for artistic intervention against cultural exclusion. They collaborate with marginalized communities, including the homeless, to foster social inclusion through theatre.

BRAVE FESTIVAL

WROCLAW

Also in Wrocław, the Brave Festival—organized by the Song of the Goat Theatre Association—focuses on marginalized cultures and communities. While not exclusively dedicated to homelessness, it has featured performances highlighting the experiences of the socially excluded, including the homeless.

TEATR BEZDOMNYCH, UNDER TEATR BAZA

WARSAW

Teatr Bezdomnych, part of Teatr Baza in Warsaw, is a theatre company that works with homeless actors, providing them with creative opportunities and social inclusion. The company has carried out projects such as community theatre workshops and performance series in public spaces, fostering social engagement and giving a voice to marginalized groups.

Slovenia

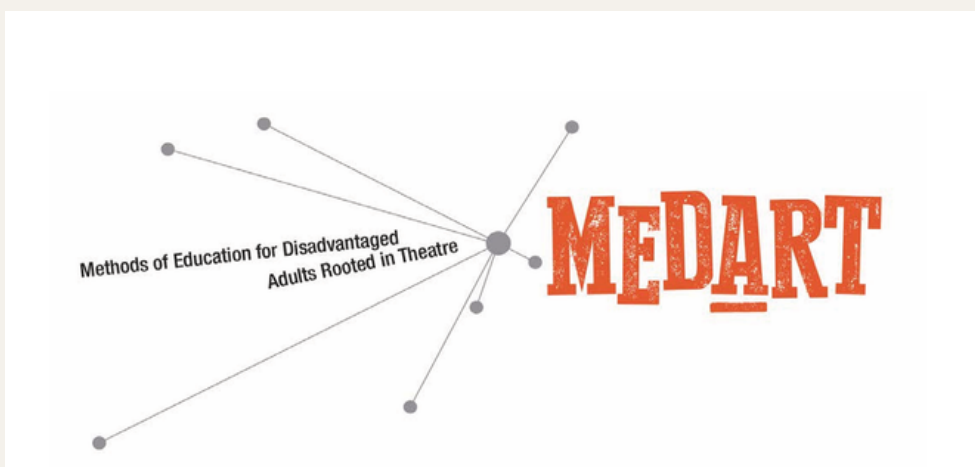


Regarding Slovenia, specific theatre companies focusing exclusively on working with homeless individuals are less prominently documented. However, broader European initiatives have been initiated such as:

MEDART PROJECT

This European project aims to enhance the skills of professionals working with disadvantaged adults—including the homeless—through theatre techniques. Partners from several countries, including Slovenia, have participated, sharing methodologies and practices to promote social inclusion.

While dedicated theatre companies in Slovenia focusing solely on homelessness are not widely reported, these collaborative projects indicate a regional commitment to using theatre as a tool for social inclusion across various marginalized groups.





ZORICA JEVREMOVIĆ'S COMMUNITY THEATRE PROJECTS

The late Zorica Jevremović was a Serbian dramaturge and activist known for establishing alternative theatres aimed at marginalized groups. Her initiatives included the "Performative Children's Street Theater" in Belgrade's Skadarlija district, involving Romani children and local artists, and the "Pocket Theatre M" at the "Dr Laza Lazarevic" Psychiatric Clinic, which integrated convalescents, local children, and professionals. These projects provided platforms for creative expression and social integration for vulnerable populations.

HEARTEFACT BELGRADE

Based in Belgrade, Heartefact is a cultural organization dedicated to fostering cultural cooperation in the Western Balkans. While not exclusively focused on homelessness, Heartefact produces theatre performances that address pressing social issues, contributing to broader discussions on marginalization and social justice. These initiatives demonstrate the potential of theatre to address social issues and support vulnerable populations in Serbia.

Germany



THE RATS

BERLIN

Established in 1992 following a production of Camus' *The Plague* at Berlin's Volksbühne theatre, directed by Jeremy Weller, this company incorporated both resident actors and homeless individuals. The desire to continue theatre activities with the homeless led to the formation of "The Rats," providing a platform for creative expression and social integration.

AUFBRUCH KUNST GEFÄNGNIS STADT

BERLIN

Based in Berlin, AufBruch is a theatre project that collaborates with incarcerated individuals to produce performances within prison settings. While primarily focused on the prison population, AufBruch's work highlights the transformative power of theatre in marginalized communities.

OPERNWERKSTATT AM RHEIN

HÜRTH

This non-profit opera theatre combines opera, cabaret and improvisational theatre. Dedicated to promoting young artists, it also pursues social projects aimed at integrating socially disadvantaged groups, demonstrating a commitment to social inclusion through the arts.



Belgium

LE SONGE ("THE DREAM") BY LA NOMAD HOUSE

This production tells the story of a theatre troupe that encounters a group of impoverished migrants and integrates them into their performances. The play emphasizes humanity, empathy, and solidarity, reflecting the real-life inclusion of migrants and asylum seekers alongside professional actors. While specific theatre companies exclusively dedicated to working with homeless individuals in Belgium are limited, organizations like La Nomad House demonstrate the potential of theatre to address social issues and support vulnerable populations.



photo 5 : La Nomad House / Selene Magnolia



CANTIERI METICCI

BOLOGNA

Based in Bologna, Cantieri Meticci is a cultural association that fosters intercultural exchange and community development. They actively involve migrants, refugees, and marginalized individuals in theatrical productions, promoting dialogue and integration through art. Cantieri Meticci is a theatre company and social promotion association based in Bologna, founded in 2014 by director and playwright Pietro Florida. Born from the experience of the Compagnia dei Rifugiati of Teatro dell'Argine, the organization is dedicated to artistic and cultural projects involving people from over twenty different countries, including refugees, migrants, young artists, activists, and Italian citizens.

Work with homeless people and disadvantaged groups

Cantieri Meticci is actively committed to the social inclusion of homeless individuals and marginalized groups through art and theatre. One significant initiative is the MET Space, a former warehouse renovated in Bologna that now hosts exhibitions, performances, intercultural events, and public gatherings. Within this space, they run a day centre for unaccompanied young migrants and young adults, offering a safe place for self-expression and integration into the community. (eurocities.idloom.events)



The company also conducts theatre workshops in schools, libraries, parishes, and reception centres, involving people who are often marginalized or in transit—such as migrants and the homeless. These workshops aim to support Italian language learning, promote social integration, and provide professional training opportunities in the arts.



photo 6 : Cantieri Meticci

Projects and collaborations

Cantieri Meticci has participated in numerous European projects focused on intercultural integration, including Europe for Citizens, Actors of Urban Change, Creative Europe, and Atlas of Transitions. The company has also collaborated with the Municipality of Bologna and other local institutions to foster active citizenship and social cohesion.

In 2024, Cantieri Meticci took part in the Integrating Cities conference organized by Eurocities, performing in Bologna's Piazza del Nettuno and offering guided tours of MET Space, highlighting its role in promoting inclusion through art.



Italy

Impact and sustainability

The company has become a point of reference for many migrants and Italian citizens interested in social integration through the arts. Through its workshops and performances, Cantieri Meticci has supported Italian language acquisition and the creation of social bonds, helping participants enter the cultural labour market. The project's economic sustainability is ensured through public grants, ticket sales, and support from foundations and European funding. (isgi.cnr.it)

For more information and updates on Cantieri Meticci's activities, visit their official website: www.cantierimeticci.it

COMPAGNIA PIPPO DELBONO

Founded by Pippo Delbono, this company collaborates with socially marginalized individuals, including those who have experienced homelessness. Their productions often feature performers from diverse backgrounds, providing a platform for voices often unheard in mainstream theatre. Pippo Delbono is an Italian theatre director known for his commitment to including marginalized individuals in his performances. His theatre company, founded in the 1980s, has worked with people from difficult backgrounds, including the homeless and those with disabilities.

One of the most significant collaborations was with Bobò, a deaf-mute man with microcephaly whom Delbono met in a psychiatric asylum in Aversa, where Bobò had been institutionalized for 45 years. Bobò became a central member of the company, participating in numerous performances until his death in 2019.



Performances and themes

Delbono has created shows that explore themes of fragility and rebirth, such as *Il Risveglio* ("The Awakening"), which delves into personal and collective experiences of pain and hope. The show includes tributes to figures like Bobò and Pina Bausch, emphasizing the importance of memory and shared experience.

In 2009, Delbono received the Europe Theatre Prize, an award celebrating his innovative and inclusive approach within the European theatre scene.

To learn more about Pippo Delbono's work, you can visit the [official website](#) of his company.

Recommended works:

Pippo Delbono dopo la battaglia. Scritti poetico-politici

A collection of writings offering deep insights into Delbono's theatrical philosophy and aesthetics.

Grido - DVD

A film reflecting Delbono's theatrical approach, blending autobiography and performance.



MARE NOSTRUM THEATRE PROJECT

This initiative brings together Italian actors and immigrants to create performances that explore themes of migration, citizenship, and social conflict. By weaving together personal stories and broader societal issues, the project aims to foster understanding and integration. The Mare Nostrum theatre project is an artistic and social initiative that addresses the themes of migration and inclusion, involving marginalized individuals, including migrants and refugees. The Mare Nostrum Theatre Project was developed in Italy with the aim of bringing migrants' stories to the stage, offering them a platform to express their experiences. The project involves actors and musicians from over ten countries, including Mali, Gambia, Guinea, Brazil, Ghana, New Zealand, Italy, France, Ethiopia and others. Through workshops and performances, the project seeks to raise public awareness about migration and climate crises, giving a voice to those who are often unheard.



photo 7 : Mare Nostrum Project



CENTRO SOCIALE LEONCAVALLO

MILAN

Located in Milan, this self-managed social centre hosts a variety of cultural activities, including theatre performances. While not exclusively focused on homelessness, it provides a space for marginalized communities to engage in artistic expression and social activism. The Leoncavallo Social Center, founded in 1975 in Milan, is one of the most well-known self-managed spaces in Italy, recognized for its political, cultural, and social engagement. Over the years, it has promoted numerous initiatives aimed at the inclusion of marginalized people—including migrants, refugees, and the homeless—through artistic and theatrical projects.

Theatrical activities and social inclusion

Leoncavallo has organized open theatre workshops, with a special focus on disadvantaged individuals. These workshops provided a space for personal expression and growth, encouraging integration and active participation in the centre's cultural life.

Shelter and support

In addition to artistic activities, the centre has offered shelter services for migrants and homeless individuals, including hot meals and a safe place to sleep. These efforts helped build a network of solidarity and support for people in need.



Collaborations and projects

Leoncavallo has collaborated with various organizations and artists engaged in social theatre, promoting projects that use art as a tool for inclusion and social change. These collaborations have expanded the centre's cultural offerings and helped engage an increasingly diverse audience. For more information about the activities and projects of the Leoncavallo Social Center, visit their official [website](#).

COMPAGNIA "I SENZA DIMORA"

PALERMO

based in Palermo, the "I Senza Dimora" (The Homeless) theatre company is made up of individuals who have experienced homelessness. It was created as part of a broader social and artistic initiative called "Generazione Z," organized by the Don Calabria Foundation for Social Work and funded by the Regional Department for Family, Social Policies and Labor of Sicily. The company formed in October 2024 and includes 14 participants from Palermo's day and night shelters. Under the guidance of theatre director Orazio Bottiglieri, they engaged in weekly workshops focused on body language, miming, personal expression, and storytelling. Participants were free to choose their roles: performing on stage, working behind the scenes, or simply observing.



The Performance: “Mai capitato al mondo” (“Never Happened to the World”)

The culmination of the project was the play “Mai capitato al mondo”, performed on March 28, 2025, at the CineTeatro Colosseum in Palermo. The title was chosen by the performers themselves, who include: Hamza Bhihi, Alessandro Raso, Giusy Milazzo, Nicola Oliveri, Liboria Nicoletti, Daniela Samperi, Nevena Simonsson

The play explored personal stories, humour and social commentary, giving visibility and dignity to those who are often overlooked. According to Marco Guttilla, project leader, this initiative helped turn people once considered “invisible” into actors and storytellers. The project showed that even in extreme situations, individuals retain talents, dreams and the capacity to build new connections and meaning through creativity.

Key partners in the project included:

- La Panormitana
- Istituto Valdese
- Croce Rossa Italiana (Red Cross)
- Fondazione San Giuseppe dei Falegnami
- Magweb

The performance had a profound impact on the audience, helping challenge stereotypes and raise awareness about homelessness. The real-life experiences presented on stage created a strong emotional connection and encouraged public reflection on the theme of social exclusion.



FRATERNAL COMPAGNIA BOLOGNA



FRATERNAL
COMPAGNIA APS

Founded in Bologna, the Fraternal Compagnia has become a reference point in Italy and abroad for its work with homeless individuals. The company has developed theatrical projects that involve people without fixed residences, offering them opportunities for expression and integration. Their work has been recognized internationally, including tours in Japan.

The Fraternal Compagnia is a theatre company based in Bologna, founded in 2000 by Massimo Macchiavelli and Tania Passarini. It is recognized by the Ministry of Culture as a Production Company and supported by the Emilia-Romagna Region, the Municipality of Bologna, and the Monte di Bologna e Ravenna Foundation.

Origins and mission

The company takes inspiration from the oldest Italian theatre company whose public founding act has been found, symbolically marking the beginning of professional theatre, namely the Commedia dell'Arte. Since its foundation, Fraternal Compagnia has defined itself as an "Artisan of Commedia," focusing on popular theatre, theatre of memory, and social theatre.



Social theatre and inclusion

A distinctive aspect of Fraternal Compagnia is its commitment to social theatre. The company has developed projects involving homeless people, drug addicts, and people with disabilities, offering them opportunities for artistic expression and social integration. Through Commedia dell'Arte adapted into contemporary languages, the group seeks new ways to express inner worlds, combining its professional activity with projects specifically designed to help those living on society's margins.

Educational and international activities

Fraternal Compagnia offers performances and lessons on Commedia dell'Arte, both in Italy and abroad. It has participated in international festivals, such as the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, where it presented the show Masquerade Mask, receiving enthusiastic reviews from critics. Additionally, it has brought its shows to Brazil and China, collaborating with cultural institutions and universities.

Collaborations and venues

The company manages the Teatro 1763 at Villa Mazzacorati in Bologna, where it hosts performances and organizes cultural events. It collaborates with various theatrical and cultural organizations, promoting projects that use art as a tool for inclusion and social change. For more information, you can visit the official website of Fraternal Compagnia: www.fraternalcompagnia.it.



TEATRO SOLIDALE PER L'ESTATE BOLOGNESE: ON STAGE DISABLED PEOPLE, HOMELESS PEOPLE AND INMATES

BOLOGNA

In Bologna, the "Esteso" festival showcased performances by disabled individuals, homeless people and prisoners, involving 32 theatre companies and 450 artists. This initiative aimed to promote cultural welfare and social inclusion through the arts. redattoresociale.it

KASPAR PROJECT - TEATRO DEI VENTI

MODENA

Supported by Creative Europe, the Kaspar Project by Teatro dei Venti focuses on raising awareness and participation in the performing arts for social inclusion. The project includes workshops and performances that engage vulnerable groups, including the homeless.

The Teatro dei Venti from Modena is a theatre company active since 2005, engaged in producing performances and developing socio-cultural projects that promote inclusion and social cohesion. The company has worked with various disadvantaged groups, including homeless people, prisoners, individuals with mental health issues, migrants, children, and the elderly, through artistic activities and workshops.



One of their significant projects is the "Freeway Project", which offers training for socio-cultural operators in the field of prison theatre and audience development. This project is co-funded by Creative Europe.

Additionally, Teatro dei Venti has staged performances in urban spaces, involving local communities and using large-scale theatrical machines, as in the project "Moby Dick," which saw the participation of communities across the areas where the performance was held.

For more information on the activities and projects of Teatro dei Venti, you can visit their official website: (teatrodeiventit.it).

RE.STO.RE PROJECT

The Re.STo.Re Project emphasizes theatre as a support activity for vulnerable individuals at risk of exclusion. It involves workshops and performances designed to foster social integration and personal development. (<https://www.restore-project.com/it/il-progetto/>)

GLI SCARTI (LA SPEZIA)

The cultural association Gli Scarti operates in La Spezia, producing innovative theatre and performance art. They run social inclusion projects targeting marginalized groups, including the homeless, disabled, and adolescents, promoting access to culture and artistic expression. italiachecambia.org



TEATRO DELL'ARCA

GENOVA

Located within the Marassi prison in Genoa, the Teatro dell'Arca is Europe's first theatre built inside a correctional facility and open to the public. Managed by the association Teatro Necessario, it hosts performances involving inmates and external artists, fostering rehabilitation and social dialogue. The theatre is known for its commitment to promoting social inclusion and rehabilitation through theatre.

Activities with homeless people

Although the theatre primarily focuses on involving inmates, its activities also have a positive impact on people in marginalized situations, such as homeless individuals. Public performances offer opportunities to raise community awareness about social justice and inclusion issues.

Workshops and training

The project includes acting, stagecraft, and other theatre discipline workshops that provide participants with skills useful for social and professional reintegration. These workshops are also open to people from disadvantaged backgrounds, offering them a chance for personal and professional growth.

Italy



A bridge between “Inside” and “Outside”

Teatro dell'Arca acts as a bridge between the prison environment and the external community, helping to reduce prejudice and promote a culture of legality and respect. Its activities foster integration and social cohesion, benefiting not only inmates but also people in vulnerable situations. For more information about the activities and projects of Teatro dell'Arca, you can visit the official website of the association: www.teatronecessariogenova.org.





THE ACTING PROJECT BY CARITAS HELLAS:

Initiated in November 2017, this project explores how theatre can support the integration of refugees and migrants into Greek society. It began with 28 young participants from Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, aiming to bridge cultural gaps and promote social cohesion through theatrical expression.

PIRAEUS MUNICIPAL THEATER'S "ALLILEGII" (SOLIDARITY) PROGRAMME:

Launched in 2016, this initiative brings theatrical performances to unconventional venues such as hospitals, cafes, cultural centres, detox centres and prisons. By engaging audiences in their everyday environments, the programme aims to foster community engagement and address social tensions through art.

RESTART THEATER ATHENS

Since 2010, this organization has facilitated annual community theatre workshops for non-actors, involving over 400 participants in more than 20 productions. Their approach emphasizes active civic participation and utilizes the unique "Chorus Method" to encourage collective storytelling and community building.

Greece



HELLENIC THEATRE/DRAMA AND EDUCATION NETWORK (TENET-GR)

In collaboration with UNHCR Greece, TENet-Gr has been implementing the "It Could Be Me; It Could Be You" project since 2015. This program focuses on raising awareness about human rights and refugee issues through educational workshops and seminars, supporting schools and teachers engaged in relevant projects.

ANAMUH

Founded by Francesco Argenio Benario, ANAMUH is dedicated to participatory social theatre practices. The organization has coordinated and facilitated community theatre processes in various countries, including Greece, aiming to empower diverse communities through artistic expression.

EXODUS THEATER GROUP

Established in 2018 as part of the non-residential therapeutic community ARGO, EXODUS comprises members, volunteers and staff who collaboratively work on theatrical productions. The group provides a creative outlet and fosters a sense of community among its participants.



WALKABOUT - THE HOMELESS THEATRE

Walkabout is a theatre group made up of people who have experienced homelessness. Through drama therapy and daily collaboration in rehearsals, members aim to transform their lives and reintegrate into society. This unique project in Greece provides them with a platform to express their stories and raise public awareness about issues related to social marginalization.

The "Walkabout" theatre group in Greece is an initiative of the organization Equal Society. This group comprises individuals who have experienced homelessness, and it serves as an innovative educational tool and a means of raising public awareness on issues related to vulnerable groups. The Walkabout theatre group is part of Equal Society's efforts to promote social inclusion and combat discrimination. Through theatrical performances, the group aims to raise awareness about homelessness, destigmatize the condition, and inspire members of other vulnerable groups to find their own path. Just as the members of the theatre group found an outlet through the art of theatre, other vulnerable groups can be inspired and motivated through actions tailored to their abilities.

Greece



In addition to performances, the group engages in various activities designed to empower participants and enhance their social skills. For instance, they have conducted exercises such as "What I like in you," aimed at promoting self-consciousness, communication, teamwork, and tension release. These activities are implemented in the context of daily rehearsals, providing a supportive environment for personal growth. The Walkabout theatre group has also received support from organizations like the Kostopoulos Foundation, which funded two of their performances in 2020.

THE THEATRE OF THE OTHER HUMAN

The "Theatre of the Other Human" is an initiative that offers an open space for anyone needing a bathroom, breakfast, or coffee. Beyond practical support, the space is used for theatre rehearsals and teaching students with the help of volunteer teachers. This initiative aims to create an environment of solidarity and inclusion through theatre and education.



SHEDIA - A SOCIAL LIFELINE

Shedia is a non-profit organization working to employ and empower homeless and socially excluded people in Greece. Besides projects like a football team, an upcycling art project, a street newspaper, and a café-restaurant in the historic centre of Athens, Shedia also offers educational city tours guided by homeless individuals. These tours allow participants to share their stories and raise awareness about the challenges of life on the streets



photo 8 : Shedia street newspaper, pagenews.gr

Malta



In Malta, while there aren't theatre companies exclusively dedicated to working with homeless individuals, several initiatives have utilized theatre and the arts to address homelessness and engage marginalized communities.

"ZAYDEN" - A ONE-PERSON PLAY ON HOMELESSNESS

Zayden is a one-hour monodrama written and directed by Tyrone Grima, performed at The Splendid in Valletta. The play is based on the real-life experiences of a young man who lived through homelessness in Malta, aiming to challenge the misconception that homelessness isn't a significant issue on the island. Through a blend of humour and poignant storytelling, it offers an unfiltered look at life on the streets, highlighting both the struggles and resilience of those affected.

YMCA MALTA'S "EGO SUM" - REDEFINING HOMELESSNESS THROUGH ART

YMCA Malta launched Ego Sum, a multi-venue exhibition funded by Arts Council Malta, focusing on redefining the identity of individuals experiencing homelessness. The project emphasizes that homelessness is just one aspect of a person's life, showcasing that individuals can simultaneously be professionals, parents, artists, and more. By highlighting these multifaceted identities, the exhibition aims to combat stigma and promote social inclusion.

Malta



Organizations supporting homeless individuals in Malta

- **YMCA Malta:** Beyond artistic initiatives, YMCA Malta offers comprehensive support to homeless individuals, including shelter, counseling, and reintegration programs.
- **Caritas Malta:** This organization provides a range of services to vulnerable populations, including social work interventions, counseling, and community educational programs, aiming to support individuals facing homelessness and other challenges.



Spain



TEATRO DE LA INCLUSIÓN SEVILLE

"Teatro de la Inclusión" is an amateur theater group based in Seville, mainly composed of homeless people. Founded in 2010, the group received the 2011 Solidarity Award from the Association of Actors of Andalusia for its commitment to social inclusion through theatre. It is aimed at homeless individuals. It serves as a platform for participants to express their experiences and challenges, fostering social inclusion through artistic collaboration. The initiative emphasizes collective creation and activism, providing a space for marginalized voices to be heard and recognized.

Activities and goals

The group uses theatre as a tool to give voice to those living on the margins of society, addressing issues such as social exclusion, poverty, and discrimination. The performances not only aim to raise public awareness but also to strengthen participants' self-esteem and group cohesion.



photo 9 : Teatro de la inclusión

Spain



Collaborations and recognition

Teatro de la Inclusión has taken part in various events and festivals, including the "Ético" cycle organized by Teatro TNT in Seville, which promotes inclusive and community theatre. This participation helped establish the group as a leading example of social art in Spain.

Research and social impact

Academic studies have examined the group's impact, highlighting how applied theatre can create spaces of visibility and recognition for homeless people. These studies emphasize the importance of theatre as a means to affirm human rights and fight social exclusion.

Spain



FUERA DE LA CAMPANA SEVILLE

Similar to "Teatro de la Inclusión," "Fuera de la Campana" is another applied theatre project in Seville focusing on homeless individuals. This initiative also aims to build spaces of visibility and recognition for participants, using theatre as a tool for social change and personal empowerment.

The project emerged from a contemporary theatre workshop conducted at an association dedicated to supporting homeless people. It was created by Belén Massó Guijarro, one of the authors of the study "Applied Theater with Homeless People in Spain: The Cases of 'Teatro de la Inclusión' and 'Fuera de la Campana'.

Objectives and activities

The primary goal of Fuera de la Campana is to provide a platform for homeless individuals to express themselves through theatre, challenging stereotypes and fostering social inclusion. The group engages in creative social interventions, using theatre as a tool for empowerment and visibility.

Recognition and impact

Fuera de la Campana has been recognized for its innovative approach to social inclusion. Academic studies have examined the group's impact, highlighting how applied theatre can create spaces of recognition and emancipation for marginalized individuals.

Spain



PALOMA PEDRERO'S WORKSHOPS

Renowned Spanish playwright Paloma Pedrero has conducted theatre workshops with individuals at risk of social exclusion, including the homeless. These workshops culminated in the production of "Caídos del cielo," a play that has been performed in various festivals and theatres, highlighting the talents and stories of marginalized individuals.

MUJEREANDO SEVILLE

"Mujereando" is a theatre company formed by Andalusian women, some of whom have experienced homelessness. Supported by the creative community Cuenta3, the group has been active in producing theatre and has expanded into film, using their platform to address issues of gender, homelessness, and social justice.

VIDDA PRIEGO'S WORKSHOPS BARCELONA

Actress and activist Vidda Priego conducts theatre workshops for cis and trans women facing homelessness or poverty, as part of the Metzineres cooperative in Barcelona's Raval district. These workshops aim to empower participants through artistic expression, fostering a sense of community and resilience.



France

LETTRES SANS ABRI - COMPAGNIE D'UN JOUR

Lettres Sans Abri is a theatrical production by the French company Compagnie d'un Jour, created and directed by Achille Jourdain. The play brings to the stage the real-life stories of individuals experiencing homelessness in France, aiming to challenge stereotypes and foster empathy. This theatre piece is based on real-life testimonies from homeless individuals in cities like Paris, Marseille and Lille. Each show is organized in partnership with local associations supporting people in precarious situations. The production has toured various regions in France, fostering dialogue and awareness about homelessness.

Origins and concept

In 2018, while volunteering during Paris's "Plan Grand Froid" (Emergency Winter Plan), Achille Jourdain, then a student at the Cours Simon drama school, engaged with people living on the streets. These encounters inspired him to collect and adapt their stories into monologues, forming the basis of Lettres Sans Abri. The play presents six "capsules"—portraits of individuals whose lives have been upended, highlighting the fragility of circumstances that can lead to homelessness. Jourdain emphasizes avoiding clichés, portraying the nuanced realities of those affected.



France

Performances and collaborations

Since its inception, Lettres Sans Abri has toured various cities across France, including Paris, Marseille, Lille, and Aix-en-Provence. Each performance is organized in partnership with local associations that support people in precarious situations, facilitating post-show discussions to encourage community engagement and awareness.

Artistic direction

The production features a minimalist yet evocative set design, utilizing mirrors, cubes, fabrics, and candles to create a versatile stage that adapts to each monologue. Choreography by Valen Rivat-Fournier and original music composed by Eugène enhance the emotional depth of the performances. Costumes designed by Gauthier Colrat contribute to the distinct identity of each character portrayed.

For more details on upcoming performances or to learn more about the project, you can visit the official website: compagniedunjour.com/lettres-sans-abri



photo 10 : Lettres Sans Abri



France

LA CLOCHE MONTPELLIER

La Cloche is an association that facilitates inclusive theatre workshops in Montpellier, bringing together housed and unhoused residents. Led by volunteer director Amandine from the company La Grande Échappée, these workshops focus on self-expression, creativity and community building. Participants engage in activities that enhance listening skills, body awareness and collective improvisation, culminating in the creation of a theatrical piece. Founded in 2014 to fight social exclusion by building connections between people with and without housing. Since March 2022, La Cloche has been active in Montpellier, particularly in the central neighbourhoods of Ecusson, Gambetta, and Beaux-Arts, through its Le Carillon program.

Activities in Montpellier

The Montpellier branch organizes inclusive initiatives that bring together housed and unhoused residents, including:

- Theatre, writing, and yoga workshops: Weekly sessions open to all, encouraging self-expression and personal well-being.
- “Dînons Ensemble” (Let’s Dine Together): Seasonal community meals designed to foster sharing and solidarity.
- Collaborations with social workers and local institutions: Projects that aim to strengthen integration and inclusion of vulnerable individuals.

One participant described the experience by saying: “Two hours like that are worth six months of therapy!”

France



Key Programmes and initiatives

La Cloche Montpellier is also part of broader national initiatives:

- Le Carillon: A solidarity network of local shops offering free basic services (e.g., phone charging, toilets, Wi-Fi) to people in need.
- Les Clochettes: Civic and urban community projects such as shared gardens and art installations.
- Cloche Culture & Cloche Gourmande: Cultural and culinary programs that promote inclusion through creativity and food.

How to Get Involved

La Cloche Montpellier hosts a weekly drop-in session called Le Repère every Thursday from 2:00 to 4:00 PM at 3 rue de la Poésie. This space is open to anyone interested in learning more, joining activities, or becoming a volunteer. For more information, visit their website: www.lacloche.org



LA CLOCHE
RÉSONNONS SOLIDAIRE



France

CIE SANS DOMICILE FIXE (CIE SDF) NORMANDY

Founded in 1992, Cie SDF is a street theatre company that performs burlesque and improvisational shows across Normandy and Europe. Their performances often take place in public spaces, inviting audience participation and focusing on themes of social marginalization. The company's name, "Sans Domicile Fixe," reflects its commitment to addressing issues related to homelessness and social exclusion through humour and human connection.

Specializing in burlesque and improvised street performances, the company tours throughout France and across Europe. Their shows take place primarily in public spaces, actively involving the audience, who become an integral part of the performance. The company's collective creations are characterized by humour and humanity, offering a unique and engaging theatrical experience. For more information about their performances and activities, you can visit their official website: ciesdf.fr.

GOOD CHANCE THEATRE

Originally established in the Calais "Jungle" refugee camp, Good Chance Theatre set up a temporary dome theatre in Paris in 2018. This space provided refugees and migrants with opportunities for creative expression through theatre, art and music, fostering community and dialogue.

France



EMMAÜS COMEDY CLUB

Inspired by the Jamel Comedy Club, the Emmaüs Comedy Club is an initiative by the Fondation Abbé Pierre that offers theatre workshops to homeless individuals. These workshops provide participants with an opportunity to explore self-expression and storytelling, helping them regain confidence and find a sense of community. The program has been instrumental in aiding individuals to transition from life on the streets to more stable living situations. ([TF1 INFO](#))

These initiatives demonstrate the transformative power of theatre in addressing social issues and fostering inclusivity. By providing platforms for expression and community engagement, they contribute significantly to the empowerment and reintegration of individuals experiencing homelessness.

THEATRE OF WAR PRODUCTIONS

An international company that presents dramatic readings of plays to address public health and social issues, Theatre of War has collaborated with various organizations in France. Their performances aim to engage diverse audiences, including those experiencing homelessness, in meaningful conversations about complex societal challenges.



France

GAÏTÉ LYRIQUE THEATRE OCCUPATION

In a notable event, over 250 African migrants occupied the Gaîté Lyrique theatre in Paris to demand housing. This occupation highlights the intersection of theatre spaces and social activism related to homelessness and migrant rights.

These initiatives demonstrate the potential of theatre to address social issues and support vulnerable populations in France.





Portugal

SOM DA RUA - "SOUND OF THE STREET" PORTO

Established in 2009 by Casa da Música in Porto, this music ensemble consists of homeless adults who participate in rehearsals and performances supported by professional musicians and social educators. The project aims to build a sense of belonging and group identity among participants, fostering self-confidence and social skills. Founded in 2009 by Jorge Prendas, the director of the Educational Service at Casa da Música, the project aims to foster social inclusion through collaborative music-making.

Project overview

Som da Rua was established as an inclusive initiative to integrate marginalized individuals into society via music. The ensemble welcomes participants without requiring auditions or prior musical experience, encouraging personal expression and shared creativity. Members, often residing in shelters or supported by social services, engage in weekly rehearsals and public performances, which have become significant cultural events in Porto.

Social impact

The project emphasizes democratic participation, allowing members to contribute to musical decisions and fostering a sense of ownership and belonging. This approach has been instrumental in rebuilding self-esteem among participants, many of whom have faced prolonged periods of marginalization. Through music, they develop skills such as active listening, mutual respect, and collaboration, which are essential for social reintegration.

Portugal



International recognition

Som da Rua has garnered international attention for its innovative approach to social inclusion. The ensemble has participated in global events like the International Arts and Homelessness Summit in Manchester and has been featured in various academic studies exploring the role of the arts in addressing homelessness. For more detailed insights into Som da Rua's activities and impact, you can refer to the study "Singing Against Loneliness: Songs of a Homeless Choir in Porto" published in Music and Arts in Action.

ASSOCIAÇÃO DOS AMIGOS DO TEATRO DA LIBERDADE DA PALESTINA

Founded in 2015 by a network of artists and activists, this association supports The Freedom Theatre in Palestine and promotes its activities in Portugal. While not exclusively focused on homelessness, the association emphasizes social inclusion and community engagement through theatre.

Turkey



While there are no widely known theatre companies in Turkey exclusively dedicated to working with homeless individuals, several organizations and initiatives focus on social inclusion through the arts, potentially involving or inspiring collaborations with homeless communities.

DÜŞLER AKADEMİSİ - DREAMS ACADEMY

Located in Istanbul and Kaş, Dreams Academy offers free cultural and artistic education to disabled and socially disadvantaged individuals. Their programs include drama, dance, and music workshops.



photo 11 : Dreams Academy

While not specifically targeting homeless individuals, their inclusive approach may encompass them. The academy also supports initiatives like the Social Inclusion Band, which raises awareness around disability and social issues through music.

Turkey



TIYATRO KOOPERATIFI - THEATRE COOPERATIVE

This umbrella organization supports private theatres across Turkey through a social cooperative model. While their primary focus isn't on homelessness, they emphasize decentralization, democratic participation, and self-management, aiming to develop solutions tailored to various regional contexts

MEKÂN SAHNE

An independent theatre company in Istanbul, Mekân Sahne produces monodramas that reflect street life and marginalized voices. Their performances, such as the character Avzer who lives on the streets, aim to bridge the gap between everyday experiences and theatrical expression.

TIYATRO BEREZE

Based in Istanbul, Tiyatro BeReZe explores various theatrical styles, including storytelling and physical theatre. While their work doesn't specifically focus on homelessness, their commitment to diverse narratives and social themes may intersect with issues faced by homeless communities.

Potential collaborations

Organizations like the Çorbada Tuzun Olsun Association (ÇOTUN) focus on reducing homelessness in Turkey through humanitarian aid and social integration programs. While not directly involved in theatre, partnerships between such associations and theatre groups could foster initiatives that empower homeless individuals through the arts.



Palestine

While there may not be theatre companies in Palestine exclusively dedicated to working with homeless individuals, several organizations focus on social inclusion through the arts, engaging marginalized communities and addressing issues such as displacement and trauma.

THE FREEDOM THEATRE JENIN REFUGEE CAMP

Located in the Jenin refugee camp, The Freedom Theatre is a community-based cultural center aiming to empower children and young adults through art. Their programs include drama workshops and applied theatre techniques to help participants express themselves and address social issues. In Istanbul, Mekân Sahne produces monodramas that reflect street life and marginalized voices.

FRAGMENTS THEATRE JENIN

Fragments Theatre conducts workshops and productions involving youth from Jenin and its refugee camp. Their play "From the Beginning Till the Endless" is based on participants' personal experiences, reflecting the harsh realities of life in the region. The theatre also offers workshops for children and adults, focusing on self-expression and community building.

Palestine



AL-HARAH THEATRE BEIT JALA

Al-Harah Theatre is a non-profit organization that produces performances addressing social and political issues. They organize festivals and workshops, aiming to raise awareness and create positive change in society. Their initiatives include training programs for youth and collaborations with international organizations.

ASHTAR THEATRE RAMALLAH

Ashtar Theatre specializes in interactive theatre, particularly Forum Theatre, to engage audiences in discussions about social issues. Their projects, like "The Gaza Monologues," provide platforms for youth to share their stories and experiences, fostering dialogue and understanding.

BASMA SOCIETY FOR CULTURE AND ARTS GAZA

The Basma Society introduced a project to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in cultural life through community theatre. Their programs include training in theatre production and scriptwriting, aiming to empower individuals and raise awareness about disability rights.

Palestine



THE HANDS UP PROJECT

This initiative supports drama clubs in Palestinian schools, encouraging storytelling and creative writing among children. They have developed "remote theatre," allowing students to perform plays via webcams, fostering creativity and self-expression despite challenging circumstances.

These organizations demonstrate the transformative power of theatre in engaging marginalized communities, including those affected by displacement and social exclusion.





Lebanon

CATHARSIS - LEBANESE CENTER FOR DRAMA THERAPY

Founded by Zeina Daccache, Catharsis utilizes drama therapy to work with marginalized populations, including prisoners and individuals in rehabilitation centers. Their projects, such as 12 Angry Lebanese, have brought attention to the transformative power of theatre in addressing social issues and advocating for legal reforms.

SEENARYO

Seenaryo is a British-Lebanese NGO that collaborates with local groups to produce theatre productions with marginalized youth, including refugees. Their participatory approach empowers participants to create and perform original works, fostering self-expression and community engagement.

ZOUKAK THEATRE COMPANY

Zoukak focuses on psychosocial interventions through theatre, working with youth, women, and marginalized communities across Lebanon. Their projects aim to address social issues and promote dialogue through performance.

Lebanon



ISTANBOULI THEATRE / LEBANESE NATIONAL THEATRE

Led by Kassem Istanbuli, this initiative has revitalized abandoned cinemas into cultural spaces that offer free access to the arts. Their programs include training for children and youth, promoting cultural engagement in underserved areas.

WHEN I SAW THE SEA

This performance project brings together migrant domestic workers to share their experiences through theatre, highlighting issues of injustice and resilience. The production addresses themes of displacement and social exclusion, offering a platform for marginalized voices.

Cyprus



In Cyprus, while there are no theatre companies exclusively dedicated to working with homeless individuals, several initiatives and programs focus on social inclusion through cultural activities, which may encompass individuals experiencing homelessness or social exclusion.

DRA.S.E.+ (ACTIONS FOR SCHOOL AND SOCIAL INCLUSION+)

This top-level program aims to prevent and reduce poverty and overcome cultural diversity and discrimination among the general population, including young people. Activities include art and music classes and other relevant cultural engagements. While not specifically targeting homelessness, the program contributes to social inclusion through cultural means.

FESTIVALS FOR INCLUSION IN NORTHERN CYPRUS

Research has examined the politics of cultural events in Northern Cyprus, exploring how festivals can serve as platforms for social inclusion. These events aim to address social inequalities and promote community engagement through cultural participation



SUPPORT SERVICES FOR HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS IN CYPRUS

SCHEDIA - Centre for Support and Reintegration of Homeless People (Limassol)

Opened in 2019, SCHEDIA is the first center in Cyprus providing specialized support services to homeless individuals. The center offers emergency care, overnight placement, and programs aimed at social reintegration, such as assistance in finding employment and housing.

Opportunities for theatre-based social inclusion

While direct theatre programs for homeless individuals in Cyprus are limited, the existing cultural initiatives and support services provide a foundation for potential collaborations. Organizations interested in developing theatre projects aimed at social inclusion could consider partnering with programs like DRA.S.E.+ or centres like SCHEDIA to reach marginalized populations.

United Kingdom



photo 12 : Cardboard Citizens

CARDBOARD CITIZENS

Based in London, Cardboard Citizens has been creating theatre with and for homeless people for over 25 years. They employ participatory methods, particularly the Theatre of the Oppressed, to inspire change and provide a platform for marginalized voices.

STREETWISE OPERA

Operating in London, Manchester, and Nottingham, Streetwise Opera is a charity that offers homeless and formerly homeless individuals the opportunity to engage in opera performances. Their programs aim to build confidence and community through music and theatre.

BESPOKEN THEATRE COMPANY

An award-winning community theatre company that promotes understanding of mental health issues. They began their journey as the resident theatre company at The Bethlem Hospital School in 2019.



Conclusion

Theatre for homeless people in Europe is a dynamic and evolving field, demonstrating how artistic expression can bridge social divides and foster inclusion. By providing platforms for storytelling, self-exploration, and public engagement, these theatre groups not only change the lives of their participants but also challenge societal perceptions of homelessness. As these initiatives grow and gain recognition, they contribute to a broader movement advocating for dignity, social justice, and cultural participation for all individuals, regardless of their housing status. It's worth mentioning though that theatre companies working with homeless individuals face significant challenges, including funding constraints, lack of stable performance spaces, and the need for sustained engagement. However, their impact is profound—providing a sense of purpose, community, and voice to people often marginalized by society. The continued success of these initiatives depends on broader public awareness, institutional support, and policy frameworks that recognize the role of arts in social reintegration.



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