

SOCIAL RENT PROGRAM FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

Organized by the Working Group on Housing and Street Dwellers within the Housing and Urbanism Support Centre of Paraná State Public Prosecutor's Office

- **How those who are homeless and other stakeholders have been included in the design and implementation of the housing strategy:** The National Movement of Homeless People was essential to the construction of this program, with its leaders actively participating in the meetings of the Working Group. The first draft of this program was presented in the movement's national seminar, in a way that all of the participants provided critics, resolved doubts and evaluated similar initiatives from other cities. The information gathered served to improve the current design of the program.
- **Social rent for homeless population:** The social rent program aims to guarantee access to housing for homeless people. The program was oriented by the principle of 'housing first', considering that when the State gives basic conditions of habitation, the costs of other public services (like health, food, transport) are severely reduced. This program was drawn thinking in the needs of the homeless people, incorporating an intersectional view and anticipating possible individual exceptionalities due to the heterogenic profile of this group.
- **The news of the social rent program:** Created in a participatory manner by State agents and civil society representatives, the program innovates while it moves forward from the stagist approach, according to which temporary shelters for homeless people would be sufficient for addressing their human rights. Comparing to other housing strategies that run in a lucrative logic, one of the basic objectives of the program is the State participation, acknowledging that social programs should not support themselves solely with the monetary contributions made by its beneficiaries. On the other hand, people with financial conditions to contribute in a minimum way will provide a counterpart proportional to their income so that they feel entitled and empowered by an improvement in their lifestyle – from housing to working possibilities. The offering of social rent is a basic way to provide home and reduce the housing deficit in Brazil.
- **The Social Rent Program and other forms of exclusion:** Thinking in terms of other forms of marginalities, the program establishes race,

gender, sexuality and age as criteria for priority when selecting the beneficiaries of the social rent program. Besides, the program emphasizes the need that the apartments offered by the program have basic conditions to be inhabited by people who have previously been in homeless situation. The location of the units, near the city center, is a requirement in order for the beneficiaries to count with a supportive infrastructure, absent if otherwise.

- **How the roles of multiple levels of government and other authorities are coordinated or incorporated:** The program has not been implemented by the local government yet. Previously, the competent authorities have been contacted concerning how to implement the social rent. These authorities were informed that one of the most important principles of this program is that the offering of social rent cannot be isolated from other public programs. In this way, the authority responsible for the execution of the program must search for an integration of the social rent policy and related areas like health, education and income generation. This integration should be promoted amongst all state organs and in the three levels – municipal, state and federal. In terms of budget, the municipality must identify and allocate appropriate resources. One of the suggestions is to use the municipal fund of social interest housing for funding. Originally, the local public company responsible for housing (COHAB) will be responsible for managing the program.
- **The program and the private sector:** It is necessary to emphasize that the houses used for the program could come from different origins: 1) constructed by the State, in a “public park” model; or 2) offered by the private sector. In the case of the latter, the suggestion is that the social quotas established by the Director Plan of Curitiba (a local norm that orients the grown of the city) could be used. They determinate that some edifices must have a percentage of units destined to people of low income – in a way that State and private property owners provide, together, for human rights programs.
- **Housing is a right, not merely a good:** The social rent program was constructed in a logic that considers housing as a human right that must be provided by the State, not a private benefit spawn from individual efforts. Housing is a social right recognized by the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the National Policy on People Living on the Streets. Regarding the group to which this program was created, the lack of fixed abode is a common factor. If being on the streets is not exclusively a problem of housing, it is nevertheless always a problem of housing.

- **The social rent program and the New Urban Agenda:** Temporary shelters have been historically set up as total institutions, of a police-like, overcrowded, repressive and disciplinary nature. This model is outdated, costly, ineffective and, above all, violates human rights. Contrary to it, the strategy of this program acknowledges housing as a social right that has to be fulfilled, and not a privilege that has to be deserved. This strategy aligns with the New Urban Agenda, especially in paragraph 33 where states commit “to stimulating the supply of a variety of adequate housing options that are safe, affordable and accessible for members of different income groups of society” mentioning homeless people expressly.
- **The Social Rent and the Sustainable Development Goals:** The social rent strategy is a good way for States to implement objective 11.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Diversifying tenure options and reducing the habitation deficit addresses property speculation that hinders the existence of affordable housing units for the poorest, ensuring the social function of land and combating urban speculation. Sustainable cities and communities can only be built if no one, and particularly homeless people, is left behind.
- **Making the social rent program possible:** The program has diverse ways to be subsidized. As explained in this report, the beneficiaries can provide contributions proportional to their income and there is also a municipal fund of social interest housing capable of making the program financially possible.
- **What goals and timelines have been set and whether these have been met:** It is necessary to emphasize that the social rent program was designed in spite of timelines for the beneficiaries. In other words, it will last as long as its users have compatibles conditions with the program. Before implementing its guidelines the group has been discussing with other social movements and, soon, will provoke public authorities.
- **The Social Rent Program in the international scenery:** Because the Social Rent Program has not been implemented yet, the support of the international community can pressure local authorities into putting it into practice. The program was presented in a report of violations experienced by people living on the streets on September 19th in Geneva, when the need to address the lack of housing strategies was presented to special rapporteurs as a way to overcome part of the human rights crisis we face in Brazil.