

# CITIZENSHIP AND HOMELESSNESS

Réseau SOLIDARITÉ Itinérance du Québec

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- Members : 12 local coalitions throughout PQ
- RSIQ represents 250 agencies working with homeless people or people at risk in large/small urban/rural areas
- Mission : activism at federal & provincial levels
- Means of actions : campaigns, advocacy, public & media events, exchange forum, information sheet,...

# What is citizenship?



- A complex concept to define
- A process more than a static state
- It concerns the « live-together »
- The opposite of marginalization
- It requires : a will to commit oneself, abilities to involve & that decision spaces are open to people
- It is not only an individual process ; it requires collective changes (within structures, institutions, communities)

# Is an homeless person considered as citizen?

- ❑ Recognition of rights by Canada and provinces (right to housing, etc.)
- ❑ Lack of application of governments' engagements (condemned by UN)
- ❑ Criminalization in many cities of « homeless ways of living »
- ❑ Difficulty to make one's rights respected, including to vote for elections
- ❑ Feeling of exclusion reinforced by public reactions against the homeless and NIMBYism
- ❑ People don't feel as they have any right, neither entitled to ask anything

# How to reinforce citizenship



- To give better information and awareness on spaces for participation, opportunities & rules (work on availability and accessibility)
- To have « models »
- To support people in their efforts
- To provide collective actions and tools

# DROIT DE CITÉ for the excluded



- A set of rights : income, health, housing, education, work + A PLACE IN THE CITY + a network of help and solidarity
- A place in the city means: 1) no repression 2) no « not in my backyard » syndrom (NIMBYism)
- Collective actions & advocacy on criminalization are done in Quebec supported by research efforts

# How to reinforce the rights

- RSIQ struggles for a provincial Policy on homelessness where these rights would be central
- Development of a platform of demands
- Parliamentary commission where homeless people had a chance to testimony  
(Fall 2008 at National Assembly)





How we deal with citizenship issues

To promote users' participation into our campaigns and public actions (rallies, etc.)



- Give back a certain power to people who experience(d) homelessness
- A positive experience of involvement
- Some fear to expose themselves to police repression
- Some may have difficulties to identify themselves as homeless



THE FORCE OF THE NUMBER gives power to the individuals



WE ORGANIZE LOCAL & PROVINCIAL EVENTS TO  
SHARE ON OUR PRACTICES AND REALITIES WHERE  
USERS HAVE THEIR PLACE

Forums to exchange and enhance our struggles



## STREET SOCCER : SELF-ESTEEM, PHYSICAL CONDITION AND GROUP SOCIALIZATION

Participation initiatives within agencies



# LEARNING ON ONESELF BY ART APPROACHES

Participation initiatives within agencies

OTHER FORMS OF  
PARTICIPATION INCLUDE:

street schools,  
work programs,  
street media,  
supportive housing programs,  
advocacy by peers, volunteering,  
political involvement,  
activism, etc.

Participation initiatives within agencies

# Discover more:



- [www.rapsim.org](http://www.rapsim.org) to more information on our coalition
- [www.homelessnation.org](http://www.homelessnation.org) to discover a great initiative of participation