

# Street Papers

a guide to getting started



By Layla Mewburn and Timothy Harris

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## a guide to getting started

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This guide is produced jointly by the International Network of Street Papers and the North American Street Newspaper Association. Written by Layla Mewburn and Timothy Harris



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## INTRODUCTION

Street papers are now a worldwide phenomenon, representing a global independent media movement sold in the streets of every continent. What are they and where did it all begin? A street newspaper or magazine is a publication that is sold on the streets by homeless, socially excluded or marginalised people. Street papers vary in their specific objectives, but all of them aim to provide homeless people the opportunity to work as well as giving them a voice. The common motto used is 'a hand up, not a hand out,' as providing work is seen as more sustainable than simply providing aid.



The first street papers began emerging in the late 1980s across Europe and USA. It wasn't long before people realised this innovative idea was easy to replicate in any country. There are now estimated to be well over 100 street papers around the world, with new ones emerging all the time.

So, do street papers work? It is estimated that over 38 million copies of street papers are sold each year. They provide employment for thousands of homeless people, as well as a path out of social exclusion. Street papers are not rocket science: they are a simple idea that has proven to be successful in providing a springboard out of homelessness.

National and international networks of street papers have been formed to provide a forum where ideas, editorial and working practices can be exchanged and where street papers can go for advice and support. There are national networks in USA (NASNA, see [www.nasna.net](http://www.nasna.net)), Netherlands, Austria, UK, Germany, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Most street papers belong to The International Network of Street Papers (INSP). You can find out more about INSP and contact details for street papers at [www.street-papers.com](http://www.street-papers.com)

Most street papers are committed to the values of placing the vendors' interests first, financial transparency, quality content, and being a voice of the poor. For a sample street paper charter, please see the appendix.

## Aim of this Guide

This guide is based on the methods and practices of the 'experts' who have started and run street papers themselves. It is a collaboration of examples, advice and suggestions. It does not aim to offer one blue print for how things should be done.