What Were the Outcomes of the Housing Led Programs for Young Homeless People in Hungary?

18th European Research Conference on Homelessness
12-13th September 2024, Budapest

Seminar 17: Youth Homelessness I.

Presenters:
Eszter Somogyi (MRI)
Nóra Vágó-Katona (MRI)

Content

- About the Housing First program
- Nine different projects and the youth
- Research questions
- Vulnerability index
- Evaluation of the results of the HF programmes
- Services involved in HF projects
- Concluding notes

About the Housing First program in Hungary

First Housing First program in Hungary (ESF) (2018-2023) → Housing Led program

Call:

- Broader target groups than the original HF
- Wide range of services tailored to the individual needs of the clients
- Did not required the adaptation of HF principles
- No methodological support and guidance for the implementers
- No housing allowance /rent subsidy after the projects ended

Altogether 17 projects were implemented - 9 were included in the original evaluation (2020-2021)

- Surveying clients with questionnaire entry and exit point (in Budapest)
- social workers were interviewed about each client: questionnaire based on the self-sufficiency matrix (other cities)
- Qualitative research, secondary analysis of the original survey data and interviews.

Nine different projects - youth

Compulsory to involve young people under 25 in each projects (except in Budapest)

- Difficulties: few young people are in the provision system
- They are less visible
- Drug abuse is more common among them.

In this research we define young people as over 18 and under 30 – altogether 41 people

Research questions

- What are the housing outcomes of the projects for different groups of young people?
- Which characteristics of the clients and the projects may have led to positive outcomes in terms of increasing the chances of leaving homelessness in the long term?
- Which key characteristics of the projects were bottlenecks to more positive outcomes?

Constructing a vulnerability index

	Variable	Scoring
Severity of homelessness	Form of homelessness	0-3
	Duration of homelessness	0-3
	Homeless parent	0-1
Mental condition	Mental illness	0-2
	Substance abuse	0-3
Indication of trauma	Client was in foster care	0-1
	Client's child is in foster care	0-3
	Severe abuse in the past	0-2
	Current abusive relationship with a household member	0-2
Personal network	Contact with family members	0-3
	Toxic relationships	0-2
Work	Labour market position	0-5

We constructed a vulnerability index to examine

- the extent to which the vulnerability factors cumulate in case of young clients
- the differences between projects in terms of the level of young clients' vulnerability
- the impact of the of vulnerability levels to housing retention.

Vulnerability index: variables and their categories

	5	4	3	2	1	0
Form of homelessness/ housing position			Roofless (public space, shack, tent etc.),	Improvised housing/ closed structure but not for habitation (lack of utilities etc)	Institutions (homeless, hospital, psychiatric institution)	In housing but directly threatened by homelessness (no legal title, and have to leave the housing soon)
Duration of homelessness			3 years or longer	1-2 years	Less than 1 year	Not homeless yet, still in housing
At least one of the client's parent is homeless					Yes	No
Mental illness				Yes, diagnosed	No diagnosed mental illness/ strong symptoms of mental distress	No mental illness, no symptoms for mental distress
Substance abuse			Drug with or without alcohol abuse	„Only" alcohol abuse	Earlier addiction problem, but not at the time of the entry	Never had addiction issues

Vulnerability index II.

	5	4	3	2	1	0
Childhood trauma – client was in foster care					Client was in foster care	Client was not in foster care
Clients child is in foster care?			Client's child is in foster care	Client is the caregiver but the housing situation is uncertain (family institution, uncertain housing, exploitation)	Client has a child (at least one) but other relatives are the caregiver	Does not have any child
Client suffered severe abuse in the past				Client suffered severe physical/ sexual abuse	Client suffered severe neglect, exploitation	No
The client was in an abusive relationship with a household member at the time of entry into the program				Client lives in a household with several members and have an abusive relationship with a household member	Client lives alone	No and client lives in a household with several members
Client keeps contact with family members not living in the same household			Client does not keep contact with any family member	Only rarely	Yes, regularly but the supportive nature of the relationship is uncertain	Yes, regularly and the relationship is supporting

Vulnerability index III.

	5	4	3	2	1	0
Client has toxic relationships				Mostly toxic relationships	Only a few, and their impact is not substantial on the client's life	Not at all
Labour market position	Client is involved in illegal activities or prostitution	Client does not work at all	Irregular and undeclared work	Client has regular but undeclared work	Client is inactive but covered by social security (student, maternity leave)	Client has regular declared work

Average of the Vulnerability Index (VI) by projects 1.

Project	Number of young clients (under age 30)	Average of vulnerability index	Minimum value of the index	Maximum value of the index
L	5	20	17	24
SZ	9	14.6	3	21
BP	4	14.5	10	20
D	6	14	10	19
B	6	9.83	5	17
M	5	9.8	3	15
K	6	9.3	2	21
Total	**41**	**13.1**	**2**	**24**

Projects involved young clients with very different level of vulnerability

Average of the Vulnerability Index (VI) by projects 2.

Projects with low average Vulnerability Index:

- Projects B and K: no street homelessness, mainly threatened by homelessness, or temporary staying with friends, relatives
- Projects B, K and M: no substance abuse problem or just very few clients (no drugs), no diagnosed mental illness
- Very few young clients who stayed in foster care but emotional trauma is more common - troubled family relations

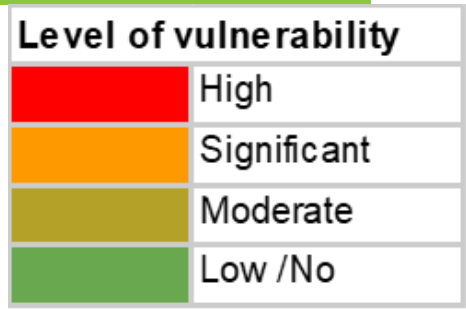
Projects with higher average Vulnerability Index :

- Almost every client are from street homelessness,
- Mental illness/ disorders and substance abuse problems are more common,
- Project L (rehabilitation institution): all clients street homelessness, almost all stayed in foster care, mental illness and substance abuse problems with toxic relationships.

“Map” of the Vulnerability Index by clients

Project	Form of homelessness	Duration of homelessness	Mental illness	Substance abuse	Client was in foster care	Client's child is in foster care	Client is in abusive relationship with a household member - entry time	Client suffered severe abuse in the past	Client keeps contact with family - entry time	Client has toxic relatonships - entry time	Client's labour market position	Client's parent is in homelessness	Value of the Vulnerability index
L	3	2	2	3	1	0	1	2	3	2	5	0	24
L	3	3	2	3	1	0	1	99	3	2	4	99	22
SZ	3	2	1	3	1	0	0	0	3	2	5	1	21
SZ	3	2	1	3	1	0	0	0	3	2	5	1	21
SZ	3	2	2	2	0	0	1	2	3	2	4	99	21
K	3	3	0	3	1	0	1	1	3	2	3	1	21
BP-1	3	3	2	3	1	0	0	2	3	1	2	0	20
L	3	2	2	3	0	0	1	0	2	2	4	0	19
D	3	1	1	3	0	3	1	0	1	2	4	99	19
SZ	3	2	0	0	0	3	2	0	1	2	5	0	18
SZ	3	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	5	0	18
L	3	3	2	1	1	99	1	1	2	1	3	99	18
B	2	1	2	2	0	0	1	1	3	2	3	0	17
L	1	1	2	3	1	0	1	0	2	2	4	0	17
M	3	3	0	0	1	3	0	0	1	1	3	99	15
M	3	2	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	4	1	15
D	3	3	0	3	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	15
D	3	2	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	4	0	15
K	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	0	3	0	14
BP-1	3	3	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	3	1	14
BP-3	3	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	4	0	14
B	2	1	2	0	0	2	0	1	2	2	1	0	13
SZ	3	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	2	1	13
D	3	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	4	0	13
D	3	2	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	12
M	3	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	11
SZ	3	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	2	99	11
D	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	10
BP-2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	3	0	10
B	2	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	99	8
B	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	8
B	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	3	0	8
K	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	1	0	0	7
K	0	0	0	0	0	99	1	0	2	0	3	0	6
K	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	6
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	5
M	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	5
SZ	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	5
M	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3
SZ	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	3

Vulnerability index by quartiles



Map - cases ranged by the Vulnerability Index value - quartiles

For each variable the values were coloured by the level of the vulnerability

Highest quartile: clients are in the worst position by

- Housing and labour market position
- Mental illness, substance abuse,
- Trauma related signs: foster care, abusive/toxic relationships. Homeless parents (in other quartiles as well)
- no family contact.

3rd quartile: higher share of clients have problem related to mental health, foster care, their child is in foster care, abusive relationship in the past.

2nd quartile: highest number of clients who has children (foster care, temporary institutions for families with children), also some have homeless parent, but less toxic relationships and more contact with family members though their supportive nature is questionable

1st quartile: were not in homelessness but in insecure housing situation, some mental problems but no addiction, some psychological, emotional abuse

Evaluation of the results of the HF programs

Housing outcome	Average of vulnerability index	N
Good - retain independent housing	10.61	23
Moderate - not independent housing (with relatives, worker hostels)	13.40	5
Bad - returned to homelessness	17.38	13

- 23 young individuals (56%) achieved independent housing position - including those who entered the program together with their families
- Less complex vulnerability more likely resulted in good, independent housing position
- Follow up information showed similar tendency: having more complex vulnerabilities increased the likelihood of returning to homelessness.

Services provided by the projects 1.

All projects followed the Intensive Case Management model

Life skills development trainings - compulsory

Some projects included psychologists, psychiatrists and addiction specialists in the core support team closely working together with the social workers (projects Sz, B, L, D)

I. Projects where clients had mostly low Vulnerability Index:

Some social workers provided very close, daily help to the young clients (under 25) - “stepmother” role (projects B, K, D) – key to positive outcome

- Mediating between young client and family
- Help to build supportive relationships and
- Get a job were important part of the service provision.

In some projects young clients with higher vulnerability

- did not receive professional mental health support (psychologist, addiction specialist)
- and/or social workers were not able to stimulate them to use the offered support (projects K, M)

Services provided by the projects 2.

Project with higher share of young clients with higher VI (Project SZ) :

- provided mental health services which improved young clients condition
- though the provided housing (less independent housing - worker hostels) very probably limited their progress (conflicts with other clients).

All clients have high vulnerability index (Project L), severe mental health and substance abuse problem, high level of traumas

- received complex help
- but were not in independent housing
- and abstinence was a requirement
- all but one left the program, but most of them returned later.

Generally: Several young clients who had left the program earlier got in touch with the service providers later again.

Concluding notes 1.

- In cases of **less complex vulnerabilities** (considering addiction, mental illness), helping to improve family relationships contributed to positive outcomes (e.g., moving in with a parent or relative, or receiving support from the family), while **in case of severe mental illness or addiction (with previous traumatic experience)**, returning to family the cohabitation was not sustainable
- In case of **higher vulnerability score** more program elements and more intensive care are needed—such as mental health and addiction treatment, as well as trauma management
- **Complex vulnerability** specifically including longer experiences of homelessness, a long history of state care, homeless parents, or parents with long-standing housing instability → also require more intensive and longer-term support such as crisis management and life skills development (several families ended up back in temporary housing shelters)

Concluding notes 2.

- In case of **higher vulnerability score** independent housing seems an important element of the program as it could mean less stress and provide more possibility to develop life skills
- Young people with complex **vulnerability score tend to leave the programs abruptly:**
  - They would need support while they are outside of the program - designated long-term mentor
  - When they return, they should be offered the opportunity to join the programme again.

Thank you for your attention!

Contacts:
Eszter Somogyi (MRI): somogyi@mri.hu
Nóra Vágó-Katona (MRI): katona@mri.hu