

Seminar 17: Youth Homelessness I (Room: TBD) - Chair: Masa Filipovic Hrast, SI

Eszter Somogyi, Nóra Katona, Vera Horváth, HU: What Were the Outcomes of the Housing Led Programs for Young Homeless People in Hungary?

The paper examines the results of the ESF-funded (“Housing First” - actually housing led) projects for young clients in Hungary. A total of 17 projects were implemented between 2018 and 2022, of which nine were included in the original program outcome evaluation in 2021. Of the 187 clients, 24 were under 2

5 years old at the time of entry into the programme. Due to the small sample size, the analysis uses mainly qualitative methods. In the original research, case manager social workers were interviewed using a questionnaire about the clients’ condition at the time of entry and exit point of the program. These databases and interview descriptions will be used to further analyse the group of young people.

The project implementers generally classified young people as belonging to the higher risk group, both because they are more likely to use drugs in the case of addiction and because they are more mobile and therefore they are less likely to stay in the program. At the same time, the call made it compulsory to involve 1-7 young people, depending on the amount of the grant. The young people included in the programme came from a wide range of living situations (street, inadequate/makeshift housing, couch-surfing and insecure housing) and had very different social, family backgrounds and mental health conditions. Some were still living with their parents, others fell into the category of multi-generational homelessness, some still had supportive family backgrounds, and others had no family at all or were in toxic and abusive relationships. Another group of young people already had children of their own, and/or partners. Mental illness and alcohol and substance abuse were also common, and the experience of childhood trauma was common to all clients. The paper examines the outcomes of the projects for different groups of young people, and classifies 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, and which key characteristics of the projects were bottlenecks to more positive outcomes.



Eszter Somogyi (MA in Sociology) works at Metropolitan Research Institute, a Hungarian think-tank, has more than twenty years of experience in research and policy consultancy related to urban regeneration, housing policy and complex policy making targeting vulnerable people. She took part in several research and consultation activities targeted to the most marginalized social groups, such as homeless people and Roma communities. Her expertise also includes national and local strategy development aiming to secure affordable housing and linking housing policies with employment and education policies.



Nóra Katona (MA in Sociology and MSc in Survey Statistics) is a researcher at Metropolitan Research Institute, based in Budapest. She has three years of experience in social research related to homelessness, marginalized groups, Roma communities and social inequalities among young people in urban settings. She also has experience with both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, data analysis and policy evaluation.



Vera Horváth (MA in International Relations, PhD student in Sociology) has worked at Metropolitan Research Institute and From Streets to Homes! Association. She has extensive experience in policy analysis, social research, and qualitative methods, which covers research and policy advisory regarding vulnerable populations. She contributed to the evaluation of Hungary’s ESF funded “Housing First” programmes.

Nia Ffion Rees, UK: "It started at home": A Critical Examination of Family Mediation as an Intervention to Prevent Youth Homelessness

This paper is part of a wider study which critically examines a highly dominant, yet under-researched approach to the prevention of youth homelessness – mediation, a political priority in Wales and the global north. Dominant service responses have received limited academic scrutiny within international literatures. This study begins to address this fundamental gap by critically examining mediation as an approach to youth homelessness prevention. Mediation services seek to support young people and their families to bridge differences that risk unplanned exits from the home. Fundamental to the approach is the maintenance/re-establishment of ties with family, ultimately aiming to prevent homelessness.

This paper draws upon findings from participatory research undertaken in the case study country of Wales, addressing this fundamental gap in understanding. It focuses upon in-depth biographical interviews and an innovative network activity with young people at risk of homelessness, who have experienced family mediation. Semi-structured interviews with mediation workers also drawn upon in order to comprehend the inner workings and complexities of mediation. Focusing upon themes of conflict, care, networks and home, this paper offers a rare critique of the merging homelessness prevention paradigm - challenging the conceptualisation of prevention by considering the importance of the extent to which interventions enable ontological security and the feeling of 'home'. In addition to offering insights into the way in which relationships, connections and network interactions are re-established through the processes of mediation for young people at risk of homelessness. It fills a gap in research within housing and youth studies by critiquing this intervention, innovatively drawing upon these concepts. By critiquing the dominant intervention mechanism of mediation, this research has direct implications for service provisions in Wales and internationally.



Nia Ffion Rees' areas of interest broadly lie within housing insecurity, homelessness, youth studies and inequality. Her PhD examines the dominant responses to tackling youth homelessness – mediation, aiming to offer a rare critique of this intervention mechanism. Nia has undertaken research at a global level, including exploring the housing pathways of young people, Peru; informal trade and child labour, Tanzania. As Research Consultant for The Wallich and Policy and Research Manager for Llamau, Nia has undertaken research which has impacted on service provision for homelessness young people in Wales. Nia appreciates the contributions of service users and peer researchers and aims to ensure their voices are heard through participatory research. Nia is an active member of the Housing Studies Association, UK; Royal Geographical Society with IBG, UK; and works closely with End Youth Homelessness Cymru, Wales; and the Youth Experiential Learning Simulation Wales, in collaboration with BakerMcKenzie, USA.