

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

FEANTSA, S.A.D., NADĚJE,
ARMÁDA SPÁSY
PRAGUE 2003

Homelessness is demonstrated as one the saddest form of social exclusion. Lost of employment, breakage of family, debts on rents, return from prison, leaving children home, often in connection with physical or mental illness, are the most common starting elements leading to absence of a place called home. Assistance with return to the society to people, who already lost their homes, is more difficult, more demanding and definitely more expensive than prevention.

This publication brings good practices of experiences from different European countries. It is selection of experiences of individual people and organisations working with homeless people, which were presented within our international project *Building European Partnerships in the Fight against Homelessness 2002 – 2003*.

**EXAMPLES OF BEST
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FIGHT AGAINST
HOMELESSNESS**

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HOMELESSNESS

Text: collective of authors

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FOREWORD

I live in a high-rise building on the edge of Prague and board the tram at its first stop. Every day I see homeless people running from a tram that has just arrived to one that is just about to leave, sometimes they don't even get off. Sometimes I can see one emerging out of the early morning darkness, hoping to warm up a bit on the tram. They are easy to recognise. In their plastic carrier bags they carry everything they own. In winter you can see at least one on each tram carriage, but more often it will be two or three or four. Let's do the arithmetic: there are about five hundred trams driving around Prague every day, most of them consist of two cars. If there's just one homeless person on each, that makes one thousand of them, if there are two on each, that makes two thousand, if there were three...

That's just talking about Prague. There are hundreds and thousands more in the other big cities like Brno, Ostrava or Pilsen, and many others in smaller towns. Homeless people are starting to appear even in villages, coming mainly from the ranks of the elderly or people with various handicaps.

As I write I can see certain faces before me, I can even recall names and the special stories that are attached to them. I remember a man named Rudolf, somewhere around eighty, originally from Slovakia with no personal documents, who used to come for his food parcel every day. Usually he wouldn't come in, only to see the doctor if he was really poorly. Even in winter he would sleep outside, making his bed in the snow, believing he was still a guerrilla fighting in the Slovak national uprising. None of his six children were willing to take care of him. He doesn't come any more, he probably died. A lonely death no doubt.

Then there was Jaroslav, just under fifty, who came to us shortly after being released from prison, having served a long sentence. He had no documents and no money. His wife had divorced him during his sentence and would not let him into the house. He was skilled with his hands and hard working, even worked for us for a while. He did anything that needed doing – bricklaying, carpentry, calligraphy, helping in the kitchen. Then he came to say goodbye – told us he had a new girlfriend – and we lost sight of him for a while. Later though, he came to introduce his new wife to us, told us he now lives not far from us. After a couple of years, I met him again recently. He is still happily married, has a job and a home and is doing well.

There are many stories like that. Sometimes a "lost" person can find his way back to society, sometimes it is too late. But it's always worth reaching out a hand, offering a listening ear, offering help, because we never know beforehand who can make it with our help. The aim of this publication is to share best practices in prevention, specific help for the homeless and follow-up care.

Ilja Hradecký

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PROJECT INTRODUCTION

BUILDING EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIPS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

Project introduction

Homelessness emerged as a visible and acute issue in our society, but also in Central and Eastern Europe following the political and economic transformations at the beginning of the 1990s. At the same time, homelessness in Western Europe continues to be a major social and economic burden to the whole society.

Several years have passed and now the European Union is leading dialogues with Accession countries with the view to enlarge the Union. This reality offers us new opportunities – where Europe was split into two parts, we are now given the possibility for open co-operation, dialogue and uniting our strengths and experience that would lead to solving questions that no single country has an answer for.

This gave us the idea to prepare a European project that would open the possibility for partnership, exchange of ideas and transfer of know-how. This project is also expected to lay down strong foundations for future bilateral co-operation between EU and Accession countries. There are 14 national organisations from 10 EU and Accession countries involved in this project, the duration of which is 15 months.

Project Objectives:

- To reinforce the institutional capacity of NGOs delivering services to homeless people in the Accession countries, both on a national and European level.
- To reinforce and improve the partners' global response in fighting homelessness.
- To develop partnerships and set up a strong basis for post-project bilateral or multilateral co-operation between accession and EU partners.

Target Groups:

- Direct target group: service providers (NGOs delivering services to homeless people).
- Indirect target group: homeless people.

Participants:

The direct beneficiaries are the service providers for homeless people, while the indirect beneficiaries are the homeless people who are recipients of their services. The following indicates the average number per year of homeless people that will benefit from this project as indirect beneficiaries.

- BARKA FOUNDATION (Poland) - direct beneficiaries: 100 staff; indirect beneficiaries: 3.000 homeless people per year
- CASA IOANA ASSOCIATION (Romania) - direct beneficiaries: 9 staff; indirect beneficiaries: 280 excluded people per year.
- KOFOEDS SKOLE (Denmark) – direct beneficiaries: 150 staff; indirect beneficiaries: 4.000 excluded people (homeless people, unemployed, mentally disabled people, immigrants, etc)
- XARXA (Spain) – direct beneficiaries: 6 staff; indirect beneficiaries: around 300 per year
- ADIGSA (non-profit public corporation working for the Catalonian regional authority - Spain) – ADIGSA administers 80.000 social public housings in Catalonia.

- BAWO (Austria) – BAWO is the national Association of Service Providers in Austria, gathering 40 member organisations and 80 individual members, who provide support for around 20.000 homeless people per year.
- BAGW (Germany) – BAGW is the national Association of Service Providers in Germany, representing 70% of the entire homelessness sector in Germany.
- FEANTSA is the European Federation of National Associations working with the Homeless, gathering 70 organisations in all the countries of the European Union and individual members in 8 Central and Eastern European countries.
- Armáda spásy (The Salvation Army - Czech Republic) – direct beneficiaries: 305 staff; indirect beneficiaries: 2 500 homeless and socially excluded people per year.
- Naděje (Czech Republic) – direct beneficiaries: 430 staff; indirect beneficiaries: 2 000 socially excluded people a year.
- S.A.D. (Czech Republic) – S.A.D. is the national Association of Hostels for the Homeless, gathering 80 hostels from the Czech Republic with a total accommodation capacity of approximately 2 100 beds.
- Pokoj a dobro (Pax Et Bonum) (Slovakia) – direct beneficiaries: 60 staff; indirect beneficiaries: 300 homeless and socially excluded people
- Az Udvhadsereg (The Salvation Army - Hungary) – direct beneficiaries: 50 staff; indirect beneficiaries: 300 homeless people
- Hungarian Maltese Charity Service (Hungary)

Project Activities:

Five activities will take place in four countries.

1. Fighting and Preventing Homelessness – field visits, workshops – Prague, Czech Republic (March 2002)
2. From Shelter to Accommodation – field visits, workshops, – Poland (September 2002)
3. Training Seminar for Services' Providers – Prague, Czech republic (November 2002)
4. Study visits to Umbrella Organisations – Austria, Germany (January 2003)
5. Best Practices in the Fight Against Homelessness (May 2003)

Budget:

Total budget for implementation of this project is:	128 540 EUR
Delegation of the European Commission:	102 832 EUR (80% - confirmed)
International Visegrad Fund:	8 300 EUR (14% - confirmed)
Contributions of participants:	2 408 EUR (2%)

With this project, we want to set the base for regular co-operation between non-governmental organisations working for the homeless people in the Accession and EU countries. We wish to create a platform for open discussions, exchange of experience and reinforcing the institutional capacity of NGOs, but mainly seeking the solutions and options that would lead to an effective solution of the homeless situation. By this, we open a way for a closer European integration and greater efficiency in the fight against homelessness. We regard this project as a two-way learning process where all partners will gain from each other.

SPEECH BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IN PRAGUE

Nadja Costantini

Chairman of the Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to address you during the opening session of this seminar. The main victims of poverty and unemployment are those who are often targets of social rejection or discrimination. They include women, elderly people and the disabled. The number of people falling through the social net has been increasing. Such people are dependent on State benefits or charity.

At the European Councils in Lisbon and in Feira, the Member States of the European Union took a major initiative by making the fight against poverty and social exclusion one of the central elements in the modernisation of the European social model. The Heads of State and Government agreed on the need to take steps to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty by setting suitable objectives to be agreed by the Council by the end of the year. They also agreed that policies for combating social exclusion should be based on an open method of co-ordination. Policies should combine national action plans and a Commission programme to encourage co-operation in this field.

At its summit in Nice in December 2000, the European Council approved the European Social Agenda, which defined specific priorities for action for the next five years around six strategic orientations in all social policy areas. This Agenda constitutes a major step towards the reinforcement and modernisation of the European social model, which is characterised by the indissoluble link between economic performance and social progress.

This initiative follows from the inclusion, through the Amsterdam Treaty, of the fight against exclusion in the provisions relating to the Union's social policy.

Poverty and social exclusion take complex and multi-dimensional forms, which require the mobilisation of a wide range of policies under an overall strategy. Alongside employment policy, social protection has a pre-eminent role to play, while the importance of other factors such as housing, education, health, information and communications, mobility, security and justice, leisure and culture should also be acknowledged.

Employment is the best safeguard against social exclusion. In order to promote quality employment it is necessary to develop employability, in particular through policies to promote the acquisition of skills and life-long learning. The implementation of the objectives to which the European Union has committed itself within the European Employment Strategy will, therefore, make a vital contribution to the fight against exclusion. In the Czech Republic this policy was transformed into the National Employment Action Plan.

Social protection systems also play a key role. In this context, the national social assistance and minimum income schemes are important instruments in social protection policy. It is vital, in the context of an active welfare state, to create modern systems of social protection,

which promote access to employment. Retirement pensions and access to health care also play an important role in the fight against social exclusion.

The new knowledge-based society and new technologies offer great possibilities for reducing social exclusion. They do so both by creating the economic conditions for greater prosperity and by opening up new ways of participating in society. The emergence of new information and communication technologies constitute an exceptional opportunity, provided that the risk of creating an ever-widening gap between those who have access to the new knowledge and those who do not is avoided. The Lisbon Council directed that exclusion from informed society should be prevented and that it was necessary to pay special attention to the needs of people with disabilities. The implementation of the Commission's action plan "E-Europe", in which the Czech Republic will participate, should contribute to the achievement of this objective.

Setting appropriate objectives should also involve promoting a better understanding of social exclusion; education and training; health and housing policies; and developing priority actions in favour of specific target groups (for example, minorities, children, the elderly and the disabled).

All Member States of the EU submitted their National Action Plans against poverty and social inclusion during June 2001. The Plans respond to the common objectives on poverty and social exclusion agreed by the EU in Nice in December 2000. A similar strategic document will be prepared by the Czech Republic with the assistance of the EU. A PHARE twinning project just under preparation will contribute to the preparation of this document. In addition, the project will develop training policy and training programmes for social services providers and also improve the quality of social services by the introduction of social services standards and quality assessment. The project will be supported with € 750,000 (CzK 24 million).

The implementation of the European Social Agenda must take account of the principle of subsidiarity. Combating social exclusion is first and foremost the responsibility of a particular country and its national, regional and local authorities, in co-operation with the full range of the bodies concerned, in particular the social partners and NGOs. This is one of the reasons for the continued support of NGOs in the Czech Republic by the European Commission.

To close my presentation, I would like to express my appreciation to the organisers for holding this seminar and for inviting me to this opening session. I wish you all an open and stimulating discussion.

Thank you very much for your attention.

PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS

CARLA – BACK TO WORK-PROGRAMME

Provider:	Caritas of the Vienna Archdiocese, (a Caritas Association) 1160 Wien, Albrechtskreithgasse 19-21
Financing:	The Vienna Employment Centre (Reintegration Aid), Co-financed by the European Social Fund, Caritas of the Archdiocese
Contact:	1050 Vienna, Mittersteig 10,
Telephone/ Fax:	587 59 10 /587 59 10 / 202
e-mail:	jobstart_office@caritas-wien.at
Transitory positions:	33 (16 at Carla mittersteig, 1050 Vienna, 17 at Carla Nord, A-1210 Vienna)
Salary:	€ 975 gross/month
Duration of Support:	12 months

Target Group:

Long-term unemployed men and women with realistic chances to achieve reintegration into the free labour market within one year, providing they receive appropriate promotion and support.

Preconditions for admission into the project are self-examination and the willingness to tackle the problems that have led to unemployment.

Aim:

Reintegration into the free labour market by means of the highest possible level of social and financial rehabilitation.

Support and Promote Measures:

The project 'Job Start' is linked to the regular running of the Caritas shop. Qualified Caritas personnel provide training and professional instruction. Transitory positions are available in the following areas: transport and delivery, repair and renovation, workshop skills, textile collection, textile storage, dry cleaning, sales

Support by social workers aims to clarify the causes of unemployment, tackling them and removing obstacles to employment like homelessness, unsettled debts, social difficulties etc. A priority is to develop and encourage the ability to tackle and solve problems independently.

Job Hunting Support: In the course of the second six months the client, together with an employment assistant, develops a career outlook, works on application papers and prepares for job interviews. They are also supported in looking for an appropriate new position.

WORKING PROJECT in the INIGO

Provider	Support Provision of the Caritas of the Vienna Archdiocese 1160 Vienna, Albrechtskreithgasse 19-21
Financing	The Vienna Employment Centre, Co-financed by the EU Social Fund
Contact:	Caritas of the Vienna Archdiocese, 1010 Vienna, Bäckerstraße 18
Telephone/ Fax:	512 74 51 /512 74 51-30
e-mail:	inigo@caritas-wien.at
Transitory positions:	21

Salary: 910 € gross/month (kitchen bonus 80 €)
for 40 hours/week
Time limits: 12 months

Target Group:

Long-term unemployed men and women with realistic chances to achieve reintegration to the free labour market, providing they receive appropriate promotion and support. Preconditions for admission into the project are self-examination and the willingness to tackle the problems that have led to unemployment.

Aims:

The elimination of personal problems (debts, homelessness...)
Social integration via employment in the project
Attainment of Qualification
Employment in the free labour market

Support and Promoting Measures

The pub INIGO provides 21 transitory positions in food preparation, service and cleaning. It also offers 3 apprenticeships for chefs and experienced restaurant staff. 5 experts in gastronomy provide training and professional instruction.

Support by social workers aims to clarify the causes of unemployment, tackling them and removing obstacles to employment like homelessness, unsettled debts, social difficulties in dealing with colleagues and superiors etc. A priority is to develop and encourage the ability to tackle and solve problems independently.

Job Hunting Support: In the last third of the year the clients, together with employment assistants develop career perspectives, work on application papers, prepare for job interviews and look for appropriate new positions in the free labour market.

JOB START PARISHES

Provider: Caritas of the Vienna Archdiocese, (a Caritas Association)
1160 Wien, Albrechtskreithgasse 19-21
Financing: The Vienna Employment Center (Reintegration Aid),
Co-financed by the European Social Fund,
Transitory Positions: 31 (25 in parishes in Vienna resp. 6 in parishes in Lower Austria
fulltime -positions)
Salary: € 975 grosse/month for 40 h/week
(full or part time possible)
Duration of support: 12 months

Target Group

Long-term unemployed men and women with realistic chances to achieve reintegration to the free labour market, providing they receive appropriate promotion and support. Preconditions for admission into the project are self-examination and the willingness to tackle the problems that have led to unemployment.

Aim

Reintegration in the free labour market by means of the highest possible level of social and financial rehabilitation.

Promotion and Support Measures

The service users work in the parishes of the Vienna Archdiocese in positions that have been created especially for this project (no existing positions are replaced!) Members of the parish provide professional instruction. The following positions exist: caretakers, renovators, cleaners, gardeners and technical assistants.

Support by social workers aims to clarify the causes of unemployment, tackling them and removing obstacles to employment like homelessness, unsettled debts, social difficulties in dealing with colleagues and superiors etc. A priority is to develop and encourage the ability to tackle and solve problems independently. The social workers can be reached during office hours in the office, but pay regular visits within the parish and additionally when required.

Job Hunting Support: In the course of the second six months the clients, together with an employment assistant, develop a career outlook, work on application papers and prepare for job interviews. They are also supported in looking for an appropriate new position.

SAMBAS – CONSULTING FOR HOMELESS JOB SEEKERS

Wolfgang Ryska

What we offer

- access to lists with available jobs, newspapers, brochures, typewriters and telephones
- information on housing possibilities, help for homeless people, labour market opportunities, financial support for training, socio-economic companies, state benefits, social institutions
- consultation on housing & flats, the labour market & searching for jobs, choice of profession & applications, motivation & realistic approaches, relationships
- support with long-term unemployment, problems getting work, social exclusion, insecure employment, avoiding problems

Suppliers / co-operation partners: Sambas is being supported by the Vienna Employment Centre (since 1996 co-financed by the European social fund) as well as by the city of Vienna. In view of active labour market policy, there is close co-operation with the local regional offices of the employment service in Vienna. Good co-operation has been established with organisations working with homeless people in Vienna.

Target groups: Adults who are now having problems in gaining stable employment and housing relations, or have been in the past or people who are in potential risk of becoming homeless:

- people without a roof over their head
- people in an insecure or changing housing situation
- people living in social institutions (e.g. shelters)
- people whose financial means make it impossible or more difficult to get or keep their “own” flat

Contents and goals of consultation

- getting started instead of waiting
- living affordably
- orientation at work
- confident conversation
- change is possible, even for you!

Counselling on housing

- assistance in situations with complex social problems
- information on the homeless services in Vienna
- support with job (re)integration
- support for psycho-social stabilisation
- support after getting a job or training and after having found stable accommodation

Sambas is working at the cutting-edge of the problem of unemployment/homelessness and functions as a turntable between several authorities, social institutions as well as the employment centre. In individual conversations with the clients (casework) concrete goals and approaches for realistic achievements are worked on. The relationship between the consultant and the client is based on the principles: “partnership - appreciation - ability to

change". How to live on your own salary and taking responsibility for your life – these values represent the main goals during consultations and supportive discussions with clients.

Sambas Bischoffgasse 26/3, 1120 Vienna, Wolfgang Ryska DSA, sambas@volkshilfe-wien.at

COOPERATION BETWEEN NGO VOLKSHILFE WIEN (PEOPLE'S AID VIENNA) AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF VIENNA

Renate U. Kitzmann

Background and Context

FAWOS started with a team of four social workers and a secretary (one social worker from the Department of Social Affairs and one from the Department of Youth Welfare). In addition to the relevant authorities of the city of Vienna, FAWOS is supported by the Viennese Integration Fund. In Vienna there are 750,000 dwellings of two types. The private market, including buildings owned by private enterprises or people, provides 530,000 apartments. The 220,000 remaining dwellings are owned and run by the municipality of Vienna. Almost half of the current housing stock dates back to the period before 1918. With approximately 220,000 apartments, the municipality of Vienna is currently one of the world's leading landlords. Old council housing in particular is cheap, affordable and is rented out for unlimited periods of time. The private housing market offers both owner-occupied apartments and rental apartments with limited or unlimited contracts. The amount of rent depends on location, furniture and finishing, terms of tenancy and the age of the apartment.

Situation before 1996

The City provided large hostels for the homeless mainly in the wintertime. Some of these buildings were constructed before 1900 and most of them were still only up to 19th Century housing standards. During the 1980's the number of homeless in Vienna sharply increased. The main factors in this phenomenon were a drastic rise in rents in the private housing market and increasing uncertainties in the labour market. Additionally, more and more women and their children as well as people with regular jobs became homeless, paralleled by an increase in problems such as alcohol and drug abuse. The town council tried to cope with the growth in the number of homeless people by providing additional temporary shelters. Before FAWOS started its work in 1996, two thirds of all scheduled evictions were actually carried out. Each year some 4,000 families lost their apartments and had to look for a new home or seek refuge in a shelter. In Vienna alone, 20,000 cases concerning living space are brought before the court each year. Almost half of these cases result in a verdict allowing the landlord to apply for eviction and to have the tenant removed from the premises. In 1996, to achieve the goal of reducing the ever-increasing number of homeless people (at the time estimated at 5000), the City Council for Housing and Social Affairs commissioned "Volkshilfe Wien" (People's Aid Vienna) and the Administration for social affairs to study the causes of eviction.

Legal procedure

Austrian law governing tenancy is comprised of 2 articles, which put the courts under the obligation to inform the Municipality of Vienna about the commencement of proceedings concerning living space and about the dates of eviction. FAWOS receives this information and is thus able to contact the people threatened by eviction. Outreach is essential to the success of the enterprise and several methods are used to contact people at risk. These include: letters to tenants facing a summons, through social organisations working at the district level and through public awareness campaigns. From the first contact with families or people at risk, FAWOS clearly conveys the message that it is there to help people to help themselves.

The following is a selection of the services offered by the team of FAWOS:

- Social workers provide counselling on how to meet their basic housing needs independently;
- Information on the law governing tenancy and on how to avoid losing their home.
- Information on tenant rights and the availability of benefits and assistance;
- Drafting of an individual financial plan. This is particularly important, as often expenditure far exceeds income, and priorities of what to spend money on need to be revised. Counselling and social support may help to increase people's income.
- Assistance in negotiations with landlords. Landlords tend to want to receive their money on time and are reluctant to incur any trouble with their tenants. Evictions are usually costly and take up valuable time.

FAWOS is able to give financial support for covering rent arrears only in exceptional cases and in accordance with the principles of FAWOS of offering "help to self-help". The goal is to restore as quickly as possible a person's ability to take decisions concerning their personal life and to provide financial help once we are convinced that the home will not be threatened by eviction again. The goal is to help the tenants in such a way that they never find themselves in a similar situation again.

The following points should be borne in mind in achieving effective and efficient prevention:

- Laws are complicated; they are amended over the years and in many cases are incomprehensible for those concerned. FAWOS staff is trained by lawyers to provide proper legal counselling to its clients.
- Many of our clients found out about FAWOS through public relations and sought advice and help before eviction proceedings were filed. Public relations are thus a fundamental part of our work.
- Clients need to contact us in time if we are going to be successful. Once a person has been evicted there is nothing we can do but refer them to existing services for the homeless.
- Priorities must be set properly. Holding on to a home is more important than owning a car, paying off a credit card, or paying insurance. Losing a home often means losing one's job, incurring debts, and becoming mentally depressed.
- FAWOS prepares annual reports based on systematic evaluation of its work. This enables us to inform policy makers of the effectiveness of the work and, in turn, to keep abreast of changes in policy or amendments to laws or procedures that require adaptations of our working methods and concepts.

Summary

Vienna has had to deal with an increasing number of homeless people.

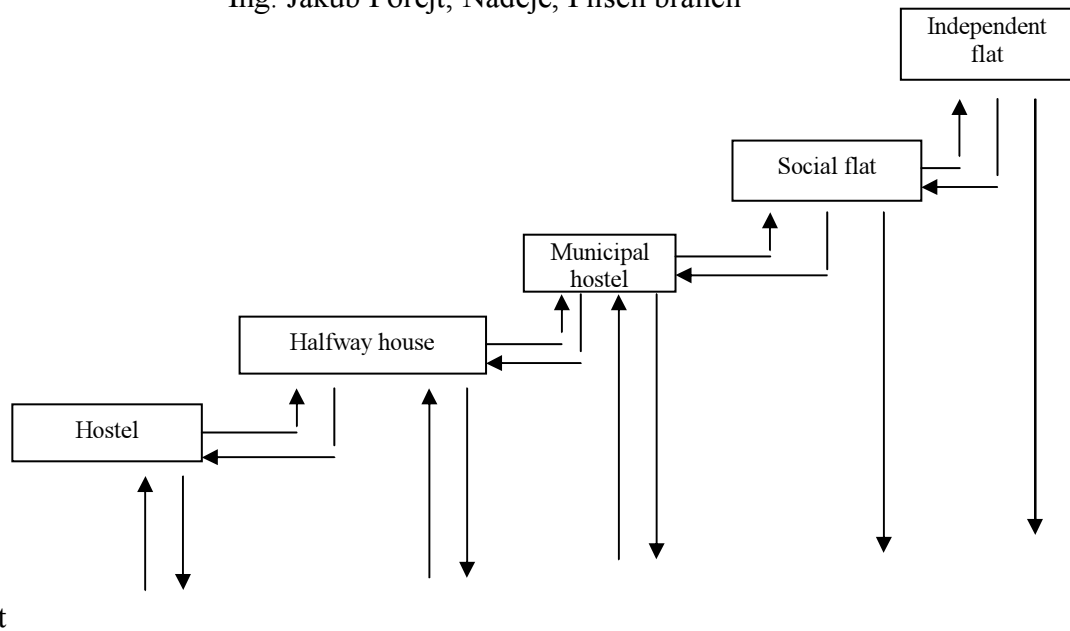
Our project has proven that

1. Nobody wants to become homeless
2. It can happen to anyone
3. With information and financial help a city can prevent homelessness and save money.

Prevention is much cheaper for the community than re-integration.

PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS

Ing. Jakub Forejt, Naděje, Pilsen branch



Introduction

Naděje works at all levels of preventing homelessness. Since prevention in hostels and halfway houses has already been mentioned, I will concentrate on forms of prevention at earlier and later stages. As the diagram shows, this will be about clients living in independent housing, social flats and municipal hostels or people who are already living on the streets. Most of the people we meet have lost the purpose of their lives. What is there to live for? They have given up, are bored, even apathetic, don't know their own worth, feel forgotten and useless. As a Christian organisation, Naděje brings those people on the edge of society the message of the risen Jesus Christ. From personal experience we know that it is in Him that a person can find a new purpose in life, new personal worth, new energy. That is why the spiritual programme permeates through all our programmes. Based on this principle, we approach each client as an individual. We try to encourage them and with God's help to bring out the potential hidden deep inside. We motivate them to make a new start with new possibilities. This is what we consider the core of real prevention – to make the clients active and teach them to take responsibility for their own lives.

Clients with their own flats

Naděje works with people who are still living in council flats but are in danger of being evicted. The most common indicator of an unhealthy development is being increasingly behind on rent. Since merely a three-month delay on rent payments is sufficient reason to evict a tenant, this can be a very dynamic process. The councils that own the flats are well informed about the rent payments. If the council is willing to co-operate, we can access some of that information. Together with the social department we can identify a group of clients who are then contacted by our social worker. We try to form a relationship with the client,

establish the reasons for not paying rent and find solutions. It happens quite often that not paying rent is a secondary effect of a problem rooted elsewhere.

Clients in social flats

In many cases the council will chose a building to house problematic tenants from regular council flats. A concentration of such people in one place causes a chain reaction of negative social phenomena. Besides the total devastation of the building, an increase in crime is the main result. Naděje works in such buildings in three towns. The municipal office retains the authority to assign social flats, collect the rent payments and administer the rental contracts, we take care of providing supervision in the building and of cleaning communal areas. To keep order in the house our workers co-operate with the local police. Our work with the clients is again based on developing a relationship. Our workers therefore aim to create a friendly personal relationship, help them to find direction for their lives and lead them to accept responsibility for themselves. For this purpose we provide various leisure activities for children and adults, counselling, help in dealing with authorities etc. The majority of our clients are Romany families and families with children. As a general rule, if a client is working on solving their situation, accepts responsibility for it and is paying off his/her debts, they can be given a council flat. Otherwise their rental contract is not extended and they can end up on the street as homeless, or – if they are lucky – as clients of other institutions.

Clients in municipal hostels

Some towns (municipal councils) establish hostels for problematic tenants. They do not sign a rental contract here, but a so-called “accommodation contract”, they must pay for accommodation beforehand, otherwise they have to face sanctions. Each family gets just one room, the sanitary facilities and kitchens are communal. There is usually just a solid fuel (wood or coal) heating system. For some, the power supply has been disconnected. Naděje also works with clients in municipal hostels in three towns, the work is again based on developing a relationship and the aims are the same as in social flats. The majority of our clients here are Romany families, alcoholics and lonely elderly people with no family ties. Our social worker often mediates contact with local authorities where there can be communication, ethnic or personal barriers. If a client is actively working on his/her situation they can be given a social flat, otherwise they can end up on the street as homeless.

Clients on the street (street work)

We take active steps in contacting drug addicts, homeless people, people with HIV, young male prostitutes, mentally retarded people, underage pregnant girls etc. We often work with young people. We get in contact with people in squats, drug addicts’ homes, unoccupied buildings, railway stations, discos etc. We find that the general awareness of our services is increasing. We are successful in making primary contact with newcomers among the homeless, we provide help even before they settle on the streets. We make contact with their place of origin (last known address), try to establish the true situation, organise transport back and provide contact with local counselling organisations.

Our street work benefits from the very good position of our Prague centre, located in close proximity to the Central railway station, and from our ten-year tradition. Our workers give clients the address for a follow-up contact, some clients come into our centre immediately after arriving in Prague. We keep in contact with clients even during their stay in hospital or during a prison sentence. The main difficulty is in recognising where their behaviour turns into a real problem. The borderline is very vague, rather subjective. Some people view homelessness, punk and other alternative lifestyles as a seasonal hobby. Others are perpetually homeless – their situation is fully dependent on the job market, especially in

construction work. People collecting scrap metals (for recycling) form a special group. They take care of themselves unless some unfortunate incident affects their life. They only seek help in our centre when they are ill.

Supported employment

One form of helping clients is supported employment where part of their wages is covered by the state employment office. The client must be registered by the office as unemployed. Naděje is then responsible for the rest of the finances. Our hostel clients take advantage of supported employment and it forms a logical pinnacle to our system of services. A client can join the program after successfully maintaining a number of short-term jobs. The purpose is to motivate them to be active, instil working discipline, regularity, perseverance and a feeling of duty. The result is a feeling of self-worth. The clients mainly assist in construction work and do maintenance jobs according to their skills. They work on the construction of our new centre in Prague or make things for use within our centres. Once they have learned positive working habits, their supported employment is terminated. We then help them in acquiring a regular job and finding a commercial hostel. Retired people, people close to retirement age and those qualified in seldom-required professions create a difficult group. Since these clients find few openings in the job market, their chances are very low.

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS FROM THE VIEW OF THE PRISON SPIRITUAL SERVICE

Bohdan Pivoňka, head chaplain, Prison Service of the Czech Republic

Understanding the specific problems of people in prison is the basic requirement in considering the possible ways of preventing homelessness. The main issues we need to consider:

Institutionalisation: A prison sentence is not meant to serve as society's revenge but to teach the punished individual that certain behaviour is not acceptable and it is in his best interest not to do such things again. However, just a few months into a prison sentence (PS) certain changes occur in a person's character, one has to conform to the environment in order to survive. Despite the efforts of psychologists, social workers, counsellors and educators the person often changes, but in a different direction: he learns to use the services of the prison specialists to receive special privileges. The acquired lifestyle is then so strongly imbedded that it is difficult to change when it comes to their long-awaited release. The social adaptability of a released prisoner is often so damaged that they are inclined to break the law again, even if it is just to return "home" – back to prison.

A long-term stay in an aggressive and directed environment can cause *aversion towards order and direction* even in relation to one's own lifestyle. The prison system is still based on directives and bans rather than the more complicated and difficult method of personal initiative and free choice. It is no surprise then that a released prisoner will avoid any kind of hostel, especially those with strict rules. That's why, by our human approach, we need to teach them a "human" lifestyle, the art of communication with others and making their own choices.

Loss of all ties with the microstructure and macrostructure of society: their partners, children, family, friends or colleagues at work. Most of those living in a social vacuum during their PS had already been without family ties before coming to prison and in many cases the absence of natural ties became one of the decisive factors in their criminal behaviour. We know from experience that people with a social background can endure more, even in the case of longer sentences. However, life within closed walls and without freedom affects natural family relationships and it is the duty of specialists and chaplains to strengthen these ties without interfering with the purpose of the prison sentence, which would be counterproductive.

Insufficient self-realisation during PS: There are not enough jobs, the "treatment programmes" (individual plan for each prisoner) are often just formal or are not accepted by the prisoners, there is a lack of impulses for any positive effort towards changing one's scale of values. Many "humanising" elements are well intentioned but difficult to apply, some members of prison staff cannot be persuaded to see them as anything other than more bureaucratic instructions from above. However, I can also verify that I know many specialists within the Prison Service who do not forget about prison issues as soon as they leave the prison walls, who are concerned about things that are not done properly, who feel for their clients and are willing to take personal initiative on their behalf.

Lack of functional pre-release departments in the prison system. The pre-release departments mainly concentrate just on several "housekeeping activities" (washing, ironing, possibly cooking of simple meals) for just a small number of prisoners – there are no funds for doing more. We know that it is there that the clients should learn to "live in society" so that they would not need to live at the railway station or return "home to prison". There is one model project, quite unique in this country – a medium-security prison for women with shorter sentences within the Nunnery of St. Charles of Boromej in Řepy (Prague). The women

do various jobs in the local elderly home, cleaning jobs in various Prison Service buildings including the building of the PS headquarters etc.

Weak “bridging activity” of charitable and church organisations between the final phase of PS and first phase of “free life”. This is where the state by itself is helpless. It is not so much about money – that is given to the released prisoners by their social curators just as the law directs; it is more about human help and interest and that can hardly be directed by law. But that is exactly where churches and other groups come in – they are expected to care. Naděje has such a programme and no doubt other charitable institutions do as well. They do this much-needed work at the right time. But the situation asks for even more well thought-out activities. Should they arise, we at the Prison Service will be no longer needed in the future.

Based on a lecture by Bohdan Pivoňka, compiled by Ilja Hradecký

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS FROM THE STANDPOINT OF PRISON SPIRITUAL CARE

Renáta Balcarová, president of Prison Spiritual Care (civic association)

As a president of the non-governmental organisation 'Prison Spiritual Care' I chose two aspects for my contribution: the primary and tertiary level of crime prevention as possible means for eradicating homelessness.

Primary prevention

This project – preventing homelessness – can also include so-called 'primary crime prevention'. Recently, the government made an agreement with churches concerning a programme aimed at this type of prevention (the Minister of justice approached the top leaders of churches active in the Czech Republic, asking them to help in programmes leading to primary crime prevention). Churches were asked to concentrate on those groups that are most in danger – children, young people and young families with children – and offer them such leisure-time activities that would work as primary crime prevention. Unfortunately, more and more crimes are committed by children and young people these days and that is also the reason that our legislators are considering lowering the age of legal responsibility. These problems obviously have their roots in the inactivity of young people who replace real values with dubious ones that lead them astray, sometimes right to the edge of society. It is therefore necessary to give these age groups meaningful attention, help them to find real values in life, things they did not receive while growing up in their own families – basic morals and ethics. Churches will address these matters through Prison Spiritual Care, in co-operation with the Ministry for Education, Sport and Young People, with the moral support of the Ministry of Justice.

If this participation of churches becomes successful we can see it as an investment in the future of our entire society. This targeted effort would lead to eliminating criminal behaviour in these high-risk groups, which causes - especially with long or repeated prison sentences – the loss of family ties, possibly resulting in homelessness.

Tertiary prevention

Tertiary crime prevention can also be included in this programme. In terms of eradicating homelessness this would mean systematic care for people released from prisons, as most of them – especially after long sentences – lose their family support system. This then leads them to committing new crimes, or – in other cases – makes them homeless.

The only preventative measure – from Prison Spiritual Care's point of view – would be a sufficient social network established by the government, both on the primary and tertiary level of prevention, paralleled by a functioning system of social centres run by NGOs. (Just 16 days ago, the Minister of Justice agreed with the Ecumenical Council of Churches that it is necessary for the state to co-operate with churches on tertiary crime prevention.)

We can only handle the depressing situation in the Czech Republic if governmental and non-governmental sectors work together, if the government understands the necessity of co-operation on both sides and if the work of NGOs become as inseparable a part of social care as in most EU countries.

THE SYSTEMATIC IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERNATIVE PUNISHMENT AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE MEASURES APPLIED IN CRIMINAL CASES

Antonín Plachý, director, Armády spásy “Samaritán” hostel

We all know by now that there are many negative aspects to keeping people in prison: it is expensive, it isolates that person from society, separates them from their family and gives them almost no opportunity to repay their debts. In some cases the presiding authorities in criminal cases can decide on an alternative measure, where the offender is kept out of prison and receives adequate tasks or limitations (alongside or instead of punishment) with the aim of teaching them to live an orderly life. (E.g. they can undergo a suitable social training and rehabilitation programme or addiction treatment, sign up for a suitable psychological counselling programme; according to their situation they can compensate for the damage they caused, they can attend a school and complete a term or a whole education programme, they can keep away from certain places or people, refrain from gambling and betting etc.)

The essence of the project is the effort to analyse the problems of the clients, suggest systems of rehabilitation programmes, and set up a co-ordination system for co-operation between various governmental offices, organisations and institutions which can contribute to the effective implementation of alternative punishments. The implementation of our common project (the Probation and Mediation Service (PMS) in Opava together with The Salvation Army) will contribute to creating conditions for finding the best ways of helping clients and their immediate social environment to re-integrate into society. This system also makes a significant contribution to the prevention of relapse and pathological social phenomena.

The aim of our project is to improve the functioning of the system for implementing alternative punishment and other alternative measures applied in criminal cases. This would contribute to the prevention of crime and pathological social phenomena. Professionally trained staff members in regular contact with our clients can discover their “weak spots” and address those in an individual approach.

Project implementation: Cases suitable for alternative solutions are already pinpointed during the investigation process. After establishing the client’s situation and motivation, a worker from the PMS together with the project’s co-ordinator will choose a suitable probation and rehabilitation programme. Then they set up a meeting between the client and a representative of the institution that would run the programme. Here they assess the possibility of the client’s participation in the programme and the ensuing rehabilitation plan. At this stage they make a written report about the current situation of the client, his motivation to work on a solution to his problems and about co-operation with the client so far. This report is presented to the court or the state prosecutor for consideration in their decision-making. If the court decides that the offender should undergo the proposed programme, this then becomes binding for the client. Upon signing an agreement about their participation in the programme the client is transferred to the assigned institution. On top of that we also co-operate with psychologists and other professionals who are involved in the rehabilitation programme.

We have very good experience with mutual co-operation. Governmental and non-governmental organisations do not always work so closely together. What we consider very positive is the fact that we can supplement each other, entering spaces the other side cannot access. That’s the only way to fulfil our task – to help the convicts to realise their error and find their way back; and to make society see that justice is done and that the punishment can be an adequate one.

WORK WITH THE HOMELESS

FIGHT AND PREVENTION ACTIVITIES AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

Mike Stannett, The Salvation Army, Czech Republic

The Salvation Army was invited to recommence its work in the Czech Republic in 1991 particularly with an emphasis on working with the homeless. A culmination of many factors have led to the present homeless situation in the Czech Republic: The transition from a centralised to a market-led economy, antiquated heavy industry, endemic alcoholism, poor education and inadequate housing, lack of adequate preparation for young people leaving child care, break down of the family unit and the lack of attention to individual needs.

Therefore bringing all these factors together creates an environment with a high risk of social deprivation and social exclusion for those that find themselves in this poverty trap.

The role of the Salvation Army is not only to provide 'first aid' emergency accommodation and food but also to help develop a system of social intervention, rehabilitation and social inclusion. We are also a partner, firstly with the person in need of our services, secondly with other agencies, organisations and authorities and also with the general public.

„Don't make the door step too high“

Question is, why do people come to us? Is it to be rehabilitated? Is it to change their lives? They come to us for food and shelter. We make the most of the opportunity to offer them a 'step by step' solution for finding a more normal or more stable way of life. We have to find a careful balance between providing services at a level the client feels comfortable with, but within an atmosphere that creates hope and a real chance for the individual to make something better for himself. Our role is to offer people opportunities and choices. If we get the balance wrong we discourage or frighten off the people, with no hope of being able to break the cycle of poverty, to be forever socially excluded.

More than a shelter:

From having no choice to having several opportunities. The clients, by their own choices, decisions and efforts, taking a step at a time can attain social inclusion. The hostel is more than just a hostel, it has several functions such as: drop in centre, assessment centre, advice/information centre, training centre, first aid centre, place of worship, home. We keep the programmes in the hostel simple. This way everybody knows what to expect from each other. The step by step approach reflects the level of accommodation or services a client can receive for a given amount of co-operation.

Step by step = Empowerment of the Client:

The beauty of this system is that we can develop and maintain a relationship with the individual at a level they are prepared to co-operate with and at the same time meet the minimum requirements that our social workers expect at the different levels. This also empowers the client to decide for himself what he wants to do and at what pace he wants to do it. This reduces tension on both sides, as we have set minimum requirements for each level of accommodation. The client knows where he stands and the social worker knows what level of co-operation can be expected. This means the client receives the attention that he himself is prepared for. If he fails to keep the agreement, we can still keep a relationship with him at an appropriate level, so avoiding isolation and rejection. If he wishes to take advantage of the other services we offer, it is clear to him what is expected of him and what he can expect from us.

1. Day centre: we open every day. Client receives a hot meal, first aid treatment, daytime shelter, shower, clothing. Advice and information. Can also apply for a bed in the Night shelter. Co-operation required: good behaviour.
2. Night shelter: 3 nights for free, bed, shower, supper and breakfast, use of day centre. If he wishes to stay longer he may apply for the extended shelter. Co-operation required: good behaviour. Interview with a social worker. Can receive this service once every two weeks; in the mean time has use of the day centre.
3. Extended night shelter: up to 4-8 weeks depending on circumstances. Generally for free but longer stays require payment. Same facilities as night shelter. May sleep in during the day if they work a night shift or are ill. Co-operation required: good behaviour, Interview with a social worker must have evidence of co-operation with the unemployment office, social services/security or a job. Help with household duties. Where applicable, regular payment for services received.
4. Hostel: 24-hour services. Full facilities of the hostel. More comfortable accommodation. Settled environment. Clients have reached a stabilised life style. At this stage many are resettled into more suitable accommodation and may not need to move onto the next level of accommodation. Co-operation required: Interview with social worker, evidence of regular payments for services received. Good behaviour, help with household duties if not in full time employment, involvement in compulsory parts of Hostel programme.
5. Social/training flat: Single furnished room, contract for one year. Access to all facilities of the Hostel. More privacy, more responsibility.
There are some rooms in the hostel for this type of accommodation but this can also be located outside of the hostel but still under the control of the Armada Spásy. Clients at this level have reached a normalised life style. Co-operation required: Interview with social worker and Director. Full time work, regular stable life style. Payments, some minor home duties, resettlement plan.
6. Own tenancy: Their own flat. Co-operation required: Successful completion of one year in training/social flat. Full time job, normal and stabilised life style.

Issues and programmes relating to these steps :

1. Social/health: everybody is expected to be part of the social programme. Though to what degree depends on what level of accommodation has been agreed. This programme is run by a team of social workers and in liaison with other agencies and the office of social security, unemployment office, drug rehabilitation centre, Local employers etc. The health programme is a co-operation between the social workers and the health nurse with the support of a visiting doctor. Again liaison between our own nurse and doctor with other doctors, hospitals, psychiatrist etc. is essential.
2. Work/training: the work programme within the hostel has both compulsory and voluntary aspects to it. It is compulsory for all accommodated to be responsible for some house duties. It is part of the responsibilities of living in a community. This may vary from just keeping your bed and sleeping space clean and tidy (this is particularly for those who have full time jobs). For those without work they have more responsibilities, for which they get some pocket money. Another aspect of the work programme is that those who want to can take part in work therapy, where they are able to work in the workshop with a skilled/qualified leader. He gives them basic training in a variety of skills: painting, maintenance, furniture making etc. the benefits to the individual are that it builds self-esteem and self-confidence. It helps them to learn a work discipline, which helps them to become more employable. They also receive a higher level of pocket money.
3. Recreation: the recreational programme is a mixture of facilities, such as a games room for table tennis, Weight lifting etc. it also includes regular sports activities such as football

and volleyball competitions between projects. There are also many table games for the less active, TV and video. These activities all apart from the obvious health benefits, also help create a more relaxed environment, it helps some show that they have certain skills or abilities and builds self-esteem. This is optional.

4. Cultural/spiritual: the project is completely open to anyone no matter what creed they have. Many people come to us already have a Christian/church background and find the spiritual programme gives them not only comfort but also hope and a foundation to build upon. All spiritual programmes are voluntary. There is no advantage for those who attend and no disadvantage for those that don't. Others are curious of our 'Christian ethos' and join in. Others have no interest at all. This programme adds a sense of community to the project, brings much needed hope to individuals who often feel hopeless and powerless in their lives. For some this encounter with a 'practical Christianity' is the springboard for a new life. Also as part of the cultural programme, visiting groups both secular and Christian bring a varied cultural programme of music and drama. A couple of times a year a trip to the theatre is arranged.

Issues Outside of our Control:

There are many issues outside of our control; even so we can have an influence on what needs to be done to change legislation, prejudices etc. What is clear is that there needs to be a more cohesive strategy between different ministries and local authority departments and NGOs, so that the clients' needs are addressed as a whole, not in a fragmented or disjointed way.

- Legislation
- Adequate health care
- Levels of Social security/ social benefits etc.
- Employment situation
- Education/family environment
- Follow on housing
- Other supporting services
- Public awareness

Strategy:

To do something is better than to do nothing. To provide intervention, prevention and rehabilitation by:

- The development of services, programmes and strategies to fight against homelessness and social exclusion.
- To form a comprehensive and cohesive system to encourage social inclusion; providing Resources /Information/Services/Job/Flats to those who need them.
- This is also a 'Step by step' process.

This cannot be achieved in isolation, either by the NGO or State sectors but only by co-operation and partnership. Different partnerships provide different types of support. Some help with planning and funding, others help with resources, skills and training, others help with the provision of services and advice.

SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS IN THE CASE OF MOTHERS WITH CHILDREN

Jana Volná, home for mothers with children, Karviná

Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear guests,

Since 1994 I have been in charge of the Home for mothers with children in Karviná. This facility can accommodate up to 13 mothers with children. In our home we only accept mothers with a permanent address in Karviná. Another condition is that the mother has at least one child under the age of 18. The reasons for coming to us are varied, yet very similar to each other. When asked about the reasons, the mothers will usually say, 'I have no place to live', 'I can't agree with my partner', 'I don't get on with my stepfather', 'my mother does not want me at home', or 'our family was evicted by court'. In the end we find out that these problems are merely symptoms of a deep-rooted long-term family problem. The depth of the problem lies in seriously damaged relationships and consequently damaged personalities of the family members including the mother; the long-term duration signifies that the same type of problems have existed in the family for several previous generations.

Understanding homelessness as the loss of a home; characterising a home according to Dr. Helus

Before I embark on the real problems that usually bring mothers with children into hostels, let us talk about the environment the mother leaves behind. Generally we can say that a mother with her children leaves a home. In his book "Understanding children" Dr. Helus describes a home as *a special community, completely unique and unrepeatable. It is founded on an affectionate, mutual relationship of people who love each other, understand each other, rely on each other, have a range of common views and interests, help each other and share things with each other. A home has a very deep influence on forming those who live in it, and those living in it all share in creating the home. The participation in creating a home is one of the child's first inputs into a human community. Right from the first days of its life, the child not only draws on the feeling of having a home, but by being there, it also deepens the feeling of a home in their parents.* If we start looking at the details of this definition we can unravel the real reasons for mothers coming to us, one by one. To describe a home as a special, unique and unrepeatable environment is correct in any family. However, experience shows that not all families consist of affectionate relationships. If affection was missing in the mother's original family, it will also be missing in the current family. Love and understanding, trust and common interests are things that most of our mothers never experienced and it is difficult for them to demonstrate these things to their children. Ninety percent of mothers who ever stayed in our home stated that they were born as unwanted children. Their mothers gave priority to their siblings or to their partners. A home is also founded on strong relationships. If such relationships have not been formed it is difficult to further build and develop the home as a basic security in life. That makes it virtually impossible for the children to participate in creating the home as described by Dr. Helus in his definition above. The children don't acquire the social competence to create a certain environment. If a family does not fulfil the function of a home, it leads to failure in terms of a parental role. The inability of an individual to create a home leads to the loss of something that could have at least made a semblance of a home. A physical expression of a home is a flat (house). Therefore, in most cases, the inability of making a home creates conditions for becoming homeless even in the material sense.

The Logical solution for homelessness

The logical solution for homelessness and its prevention in the case of mothers with children seems to be in helping them cope with their parental role, preventing negative influences on the family, especially its primary component – the interaction between mother and child. This interaction needs to have been already addressed in the mother's own childhood. Prof. Matějček has a real point in saying that the upbringing of a child starts twenty years before it's born. Mothers who have been anticipated and accepted as children make a good job of creating a good home for their baby even at the time of conception.

Basic starting points for prevention, its forms and institutions

The starting point for any form of help lies in the fact that altruism is characteristic to humans, the government establishes and supports institutions that can provide help and their staff must fulfil certain requirements in the area of education and personal commitment.

Every social phenomenon comes in various strengths, from subtle hints to domineering intensity. Even the degree of breakdown of a home varies in different families at risk. It depends on the personalities that make up the home/family, but also on the form and degree of outside help. That's why even the help must come at various levels. Where do we start with preventing mothers with children from becoming homeless if the original family of the future mother is failing to fulfil its purpose and creates a low-quality home? I believe that both society and individuals have certain means at their disposal to mend dysfunctional families.

Schools, counselling and other institutions

Schools have an enormous and irreplaceable role in this process. Here a child can meet a professional who can bring out and develop their ability to maintain and develop a home.

Institutional counselling is done by various professionals in the social support sphere. Institutions that provide counselling are irreplaceable in the prevention scheme. They range from 24-hour help-lines to educational counselling and civic counselling offices. Many of these counselling institutions set up their own prevention programmes in the form of group discussions etc. Among other supporting institutions there are the social departments (of town councils) which give out various social benefits. They can lower the tension in the family by providing a regular income. The position of employees of the department dealing with social benefits is rarely viewed in the context of social prevention. This is an incorrect view. A quick and targeted sum in the form of social benefits can also prove an effective form of social intervention. The result depends on how appropriate it was to grant a particular benefit.

Moving into a hostel

The last resort in preventing homelessness is for the mother to move into a hostel. Why do I call this a matter of prevention? It is not just for the fact that the immediate physical need for accommodation is fulfilled, but mainly because she can acquire some social skills. That makes it possible for her – once she gets the possibility of independent accommodation – to create and maintain a home. We call this a last resort because the mothers come to the hostel after a long search for other solutions and staying in a hostel always entails a certain degree of self-denial and a social label. Other than a place to stay, the time spent in the hostel gives mothers with children a great opportunity – with the help of the programmes offered in the hostels, they can **re-evaluate the attitudes and values acquired in their original families including their view of themselves. This is essential for the future building of a home.**

THE INITIATIVE

Tomasz Sadowski, BARKA

The “Barka” Foundation started its activities with grassroots initiatives 13 years ago, to address the needs of people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds offering: a home or place to stay, support in the form of food for poor families, meals and clothes. Presently, administering 20 houses (including community houses, hostels, socio-educational centers and an emerging social co-operative), “Barka” gives a “home” or shelter to more than 650 persons and helps approximately 5000 persons per year.

This initiative fights material and spiritual poverty of hundreds of persons. Homeless people, persons rehabilitated from addictions and former prisoners receive a home and work in exchange for their engagement in activities. Based on principles of mutual help and volunteering work, the system enabled creation of a structure of social support which includes: vocational workshops, additional education (computer and foreign languages courses), first medical and dental aid, kindergartens, AA therapies, legal, psychological and familial counselling, material help in form of food for poor families, clothing, furniture and appliances. Work places are being created in social co-operatives, services, eco-farming, environmental protection, recreation, renovation, building, etc. giving a meaning to life and allowing to face a normal reality again.

“Barka” is particularly innovative as it is based on fostering self/mutual help and private initiative. Decisions are taken by group consensus. Barka’s activities have expanded into additional areas as it has identified needs in the local communities in which it operates. It employs about 60 full time staff for specialised functions as teaching and vocational training. It also relies on more than 100 part-time volunteers.

Five years ago Barka started to work with foreign volunteers through Peace Corps-USA (this mission finished its service in Poland in 2001) and ICE-Germany (Initiative Christen für Europa) on character of “voluntary social year” and “substitute for military service”. The volunteering service refers to foreign language teaching and sport activities with children from surrounding schools, eventual correspondence and translations for Barka. Short time volunteers are coming systematically to teach and give advice on organic farming and composting technology. Farmers from AWI-USA (Animal Welfare Institute) intensively co-operated with Barka’s people during one year. The Foundation also hosts volunteers from Young Life-USA (60 persons in 2001 and 120 persons in 2002). Additionally, during summer Barka hosts young people from diverse countries (124 persons in 2002).

The most relevant foreign projects are being brought and adapted to Polish conditions: the socio-educational programme was patterned on the Danish Kofoed’s School; the idea of social co-operatives was brought from Italy and the social housing building programme is based on experiences from France. Participation in conferences and meetings at European level gives us the necessary vision of priorities in global anti-poverty actions and possibilities to build partnerships with other Central and Eastern European countries. Our active participation in works of the Commission (a group of 15 persons) together with the Ministry of Labour and Social Politics resulted in new laws on social benefit and volunteering, as well as on social employment, aimed at giving better conditions to carry out programmes of social and economic integration.

The first financial resources were personal reserves of the persons directly engaged in the initiative, both the social innovators and the needy persons. In next stage, resources were worked out by the first communities. Presently, the Foundation is carrying out its mission through support rendered by private persons, institutions, national and foreign organisations, as well as regional self-governments and other organisations. A meaningful part of present

financial resources comes from collections of in-kind donations (more than 50%), and work of the needy persons and volunteers. The success of this initiative is due to a new approach to social problems (acquaintance with interdisciplinary fields and teams, e.g., social matters + education + trade, ecology, recycling, renovations, services, housing building, culture, etc.) and co-operation with local authorities, the business area and neighbourhood environment.

Communities Creation Programme

These communities are being created on principles of multigenerational families (integrating lonely persons, women and men, and families), and aim at subsistence production, protection of the natural environment through ecological actions and promotion of development through mutual support and co-operation with neighbours and local environments. The development of the Foundation is based on elaboration of individual projects that vary in scope from region to region as they reflect specific needs which have been identified by the local community. The Foundation is implementing the biodiversity convention through: biodiversity protection, nursery of perishing varieties of ancient fruit trees, conservative breeding of rabbits and green legged little chicken. Cultural heritage conservation: renovation of a historically significant manor to establish training and conference centre. Environmental protection: use of alternative sources of energy, breeding of animals of diverse races (goats, sheep, rabbits), cultivation of grains, vegetables, herbs; commerce of food aimed at recovery of the lost income, etc.

Barka's initiatives lead to elaborate a model that can be generally run in order to make subsistence a possibility for the socially excluded persons. Several existing communities represent a proof of the possibility of activating areas previously condemned to privation. The implementation of projects is being done with strict co-operation and consultation with the territorial self-governments, academic institutions in the scope of expertise consultations, the business sector, as well as full engagement of local communities. The hope is that these actions be promoted in a wider scale.

Socio-Educational Programme

The strategy for developing the programme of the Barka-Kofoed School has its origin with the „Barka” Foundation itself. Where „Barka” is a place to stay and live in a similar way to an extended family, its founders wanted to create a place where every person has the possibility to grow and develop, by providing the conditions of partnering and co-operation. Close co-operation and support from people who managed to break with their past and addictions in a system of “helping others to help themselves” is a chance for changing the fate of homeless and unemployed people.

The Kofoed School from Denmark helped us to organise social support structure and establish the socio-educational system for the weakest groups. The Kofoed School operates as a “popular university” and envisages lifelong learning in a system of voluntary “mutual help” and “on-the-job training”. The aims are to promote social integration of previously excluded persons and to increase the skills of unemployed people to enable them to undertake alternative works, thus giving them a chance to change their lives. The ultimate aim is to create model solutions of help to homeless and unemployed people, which is not based only on occasional in-kind help.

Workshops oriented to give alternative skills and additional knowledge were created such as: carpentry workshop, smith's, plumbing and welding workshop, electric workshop, general building service workshop, bookbinding, food bank, cafeteria / gastronomic workshop, sewing workshop, AA therapy, kindergarten, outpatient clinic, recycling, transport section, gardening programme, computer literacy, foreign languages (French, English and German), etc.

With the increase of people who were interested in such combined therapy, “the Social Emergency” of the Barka-Kofoed School was created. Here persons are registered and interviewed as to their social status, abilities, difficulties and directed to a further stage of the programme. The “Social Emergency” serves also as an intervention center for people who faced legal problems related to their eviction. Simultaneously, the School became a strong lobbying voice for the legal rights of homeless and unemployed people, as well as those with very low income.

Work Creation and Social co-operatives

The Foundation acts with direct activities by building the necessary infrastructure to enable creation of work places: besides running small shops, in October 2001, with the objective of increasing the possibilities of work places for long term unemployed and homeless people, and offering to the alumni of the Barka School a reasonable degree of economic independence, the Foundation established a Social Co-operative on 2500 m² of premises at Darzyborska street. The Social Co-operative runs recycling activities and second-hand shops and is equipping some vocational workshops

A weakness of this system is the prevalence of production activities with extremely low technological and skill content. Although this reduces the time taken by disadvantaged workers to reach adequate levels of productivity, it hampers their professional growth. Even so, the recognition of the overall economic value of the training activities conducted by such work-integration co-operatives would make them eligible for training grants, including, in the future, those provided by the European Community. This would both strengthen social co-operative movement and improve their commitment to training activities.

Future perspectives are to achieve work integration mainly through environmental maintenance activities, in particular of public green spaces, often under contracts with public bodies, and subcontracted craft and assembly work, as well as personal services. The co-operatives’ business therefore will comprise the sales of products and services to both public bodies and private customers. Strengthening of co-operation at administrative and business level is therefore required to build common projects.

Actively participating in works of the Commission together the Ministry of Labour and Social Politics on proposal of change of legislation to obtain recognition of social co-operatives at National level, thus giving legal basis for their functioning. As Western experiences show, the introduction to Polish legislation of new types of social enterprises organised by citizens, with support of governmental administration at local and national levels, assuring at least temporary work places, can reduce the present massive unemployment, as well as represent a driving force for local and regional economy growth in our country.

Social employment, linking the spirit of entrepreneurship with social objective, plays an essential role in strengthening local economy and revitalizing suburban and backward areas. Although new initiatives in the field of employment policies, especially with regards to the long term unemployed persons, at least in their majority, according to Western experiences, do not offer permanent work, are extremely valuable in achieving professional experience and assuring to leave the status of an unemployed person by a worker’s one.

Housing Building Programme

Presently, in Poland, only commercial construction is available, determined for people with high-income level. The trials in the scope of accessible building implemented up to now, such as TBS (Towarzystwo Budownictwa Społecznego) or the Habitat for Humanity Group, resulted in offers for people with average income. There are no programmes addressed to evicted families and low-income people. For the first time in Poland, a project of accessible social

housing building is being undertaken by a non-governmental organization (in Poland, NGOs still concentrate in giving occasional support, i.e., shelter, meals and clothing).

The main purpose of this programme is to develop a concept for co-operation of non-governmental organisations and other institutions with local authorities, including engagement of needy persons and volunteering, so that other projects of social and/or accessible housing building may be carried out, to offer perspectives of a home for persons with very low-wages, which form the greatest majority of our society, contributing at the same time, to local economic development. Besides its high necessity, the housing sector can make an important contribution to jobs creation and various types of economic activation.

“Darzybór” Housing Settlement (suburban area of Poznan)

The Municipal Administration determined 20 hectares of grounds for intense social action, which includes: 1 shelter (for families with children) and social co-operative administered by Barka Foundation, 1 shelter administered by Markot Association and Municipal School of Social Workers. The “Darzybór” Housing Settlement is located on 50 000 m² of land and will offer homes to about 400-500 persons (100 families). Its construction is planned to be accomplished in a five-year period.

The building plan of the settlement was especially elaborated for the weakest groups and has a model, pilot character. The settlement was planned to offer places to live, work, learn, undertake small entrepreneurship and work in co-operation with the aim to nurture integration in housing, work, social, educational, sporting and recreational activities. Social premises are included in the plan, as well as places to enable establishment of shops, services, crafts, kindergarten and other facets of daily life.

The project consists of one-level family homes in the first – current - stage of the construction process with common walls for two or three homes and two-storey houses in the third phase of the construction process. Individual gardens (for one family home) are included in the plan, as well as common backyards for about 28 persons each backyard. This group of persons will have a leader (29th person) responsible for the maintenance of the site and construction elements and management of the facility on a day-to-day basis, helping to co-ordinate the provision of support services to residents when required. There will be a surface parking on the site with attractive landscape elements. The park in the central area and alongside the houses will provide an excellent recreational and sporting environment for the residents and for the community at large. The project is being implemented with active participation of “socially excluded” persons in all its stages, both at the level of planning and building works. From one side this participation has an educative and rehabilitation character and, from the other side, reduces the building costs.

SAS – School of Social Animators (Szkoła Animacji Socjalnej)

The idea of the School was taken from similar undertakings, as for example the "University for All", a school established in Warsaw in 1909, with branches in almost every industrial centre, serving as a means to broaden the knowledge mainly of workers with only elementary education, or the "Popular University" first established in 1844 in Roodding, for youth from rural environments. This institution was functioning also in Poland, under the patronage of the Association of Polish Cities (SZMW). Their main value was the general accessibility and lack of barriers in recruiting students.

The SAS (School of Social Animators) prepares its participants for realization of tasks connected to fight against poverty. The “Barka” Foundation is preparing its structure to changes in its administrative system. New structures will be created comprising provincial structures, municipal and national associations. The objective of these changes is to increase the participation of representatives of local communities in creating similar centres to those

functioning now and promote their independence. Students of the School are being prepared for the realization of these tasks.

After finishing the preparatory stage of SAS I, but which is necessary for adequate functioning of a person within the area of basic ideas and expressions linked both with the language and the processes of socio-economic changes, mainly with regards to soon EU enlargement, we are planning a second stage, which is the SAS II, to concentrate on co-operation of its participants with local self-governments' representatives and the business area.

This stage of SAS meetings will deal with all themes taking into consideration already existing European programmes and in the light of soon European enlargement.

- negotiations
- strategic planning
- regional socio-economic development
- building of work places within principles of social employment (example: social co-operatives)

TOWARZYSTWO POMOCY IM. SW. BRATA ALBERTA

(St. Albert Association – Mr. Bohdan Aniszczyk)

The St. Albert Association has been active since 1981. Presently the Association runs:

- 34 shelters for men
- 8 night shelters for men
- 2 hostels for men
- 7 shelters for women and mothers with children
- 1 night shelter for women
- 8 houses of support for the elderly (including a hospice)
- 12 kitchens
- 1 refuge for children
- house for families, bathrooms, children's rooms, clubs, pharmacy

St. Albert's houses give a "roof over the head", meals, clothing, conditions to maintain personal hygiene – "passive support"

In places where funds are available, the Association additionally employs psychologists, teachers/trainers, social workers, and doctors of medicine. In many places volunteers fulfil these functions.

In cities where diverse centres are functioning, they offer different types of support.

Where conditions and an idea exist, the Association organises work for its inhabitants.

The scope of support given depends on resources obtained, needs perceived and local possibilities.

Resources come from public authorities (local and national government), voluntary donations, payments from the clients, and the centre or home's own economic activities.

Permanent (long-term) inhabitants represent the minority in shelters. Officially their stay is temporary, until the clients become independent.

Association centres exist and work in large cities, small towns and rural villages.

Some centres are completely full (sometimes even overcrowded), but centres with available places also exist, some of them with up to 50% of their places available.

The Association has a central administration.

The total number of staff amounts to about 300 employees.

About 5000 persons benefit every day from diverse forms of social support.

CASA IOANA ASSOCIATION, RUMUNIA

Ian Tilling

Estimates indicate that the number of adults living on the streets of Bucharest is between 4,000 and 5,000 people, with considerably higher numbers living in inadequate or sub-standard housing. It is very difficult to assess the number accurately because in national statistical surveys, the homeless literally do not count. Women make up approximately 25% of the homeless population. It was to help this excluded group of people to return to society that the Casa Ioana Association's ACASĂ project was launched in early 1998, initially as a night shelter for elderly homeless people. ACASĂ is the Romanian acronym for the project and means 'home'.

The ACASĂ project origins lie in an informal working group of social workers employed by the Casa Ioana Association, the international NGO Medécins sans Frontières and Bucharest City Council's Social Assistance Department. The social workers are motivated by their common interest in resolving the difficulties of identifying and maintaining employment and adequate housing for their clients. A collaborative and co-operative interagency network has been created to pool resources and share experience. Access to transitional sheltered accommodation is seen as an essential ingredient in the effective delivery of these social services.

At any one time, the ACASĂ programmes offer the capital's only sheltered accommodation and has provided places for 40 homeless people since March 1998, and 20 women in difficult circumstances and their children since April 2000. Clients additionally benefit from socio-medical support during their stay, which is normally between six and twelve weeks, according to the level of assistance required. A participatory approach involving members of the target group was used in designing the programmes, which are aimed at assisting clients in finding employment and housing.

The aims of the project are to:

- Co-ordinate and co-operate in the provision of transitional sheltered accommodation, access to employment and the identification of appropriate housing; and
- Raise public and political awareness of housing issues.
- The objectives of the project are to maintain transitional sheltered accommodation, together with socio-medical services for the clientele and ultimately reintegration as productive members of society.

At any one time, the ACASĂ project provides a wide range of services. These include:

- Sheltered accommodation for 40 homeless men;
- Sheltered accommodation for 20 women in difficulty (i.e. through domestic violence, marital breakdown and homelessness, etc.) and their children;
- Meals through the social canteen network;
- Advice, information and individual/group counselling services;
- Assistance with labour reintegration;
- Assistance with accessing adequate social and private sector housing;
- Services and training for social integration;
- Preventive and primary health care, including access to hospital care where necessary;
- Assistance with accessing establishments caring for older people and children; and
- Legal advice.

The Casa Ioana Association provides and manages the sheltered accommodation facility and is now responsible for social assistance for ACASĂ programme clientele, having taken over this role from Medécins sans Frontières. Medécins sans Frontières is responsible for providing ACASĂ programme clientele with the required medical, counselling and group therapy services. Bucharest City Council is responsible for providing meals for eligible clients through its social canteen network. The ACASĂ project is co-funded by the Ministry for Labour and Social Solidarity and through "in-kind" co-funding arrangements with Bucharest City Council and Medécins sans Frontières. Other project funding comes from grant-providing organisations in Romania and the Romanian private sector.

Homeless people and people at risk of homelessness are the principal groups. Referrals are normally made through partner organisations, local and national government agencies, other NGOs and the general public. The project is open to men, women and their children. The transitional sheltered accommodation facility provides comfortable beds, toilets and shower facilities, together with access to personal laundry equipment. A hot evening meal is also provided to eligible clients.

Integration is made possible through the provision of transitional sheltered accommodation and social and labour market reinsertion programmes involving social workers employed by the Casa Ioana Association. Integration programmes vary according to clientele group and individual needs.

To monitor project performance closely and to disseminate experiences from the project to all interested parties, the Casa Ioana Association provides for regular reporting. The following reports are submitted to partner organisations and donors:

- Short quarterly reports, providing 2-3 page summary of activities; and
- Ad hoc reports detailing progress, problems encountered or anticipated, together with proposals for resolution and suggestions for ways to enhance services.
- A final Report within one month at the end of each year. This report assesses the degree and impact of the project and any structural problems that may have inhibited its delivery, together with recommendations for further inputs to facilitate the further achievement of the project objectives in the future.

The ACASĂ programmes' success criteria is the full integration of a client through employment and permanent affordable housing, through rejoining their own family, or in the case of our older clients, a place in an institution caring for the elderly. Despite this very high goal, almost half of our clients have succeeded in coming in from the cold. This figure is even more amazing when one takes into account that on average, our male clients have been homeless for five and a half years before joining the programme and our female clients nearly four and a half years! Our youngest client was aged just seven months and our eldest was 93 years old!

Again, since the start of the ACASĂ project, the average life expectancy amongst homeless people living in the city has risen slightly each year from 46.4 to 53.1 years of age. The number of homeless people dying has shown a gradual reduction each year from 334 to 275 in 2001. Obviously there are many factors that have a consequence on these mortality figures, yet we are convinced that the project also saves lives.

Importantly, the project has attracted many diverse high profile visitors including the Prince of Wales, ex-King Michael of Romania, Andrew Vorkink – vice-president of the World Bank and Abbot Pierre from France. The subsequent media attention has been positive in drawing attention to the phenomenon of homelessness and creating the opportunity for public debate on the issues surrounding homelessness.

Based on a lecture by Ian Tilling, compiled by Ilja Hradecký and Pavla Ekkertová

SPOTLIGHT ON POVERTY ERADICATION

Rebeka Martensen

From spotted pigs to rare trees: how an UN-backed organisation in Poland is fighting poverty and saving the environment

Gold-speckled swine and ancient fruit orchards may not be the first things that spring to mind when thinking of the global fight against poverty, but in a small village in western Poland, breeding pigs and planting trees are just two ways a United Nations-supported organisation has empowered one of the country's most underprivileged populations. In Chudopczyce, near Poznan, money from a small grants programme run by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) is helping a non-governmental organisation train homeless people in the skills they need to survive in a market economy, all the while protecting the environment.

Rescuing the 'Spotted Zlotniki'

The first step in setting up the community in Chudopczyce was finding a way to survive. Like the first home in Wladyslawowo, the new group had no income and was barely able to make out a living by piecing together small-scale farming activities. Mr. Czajkowski is the Warsaw-based National Coordinator of the UNDP grants programme. After learning about the Barka philosophy, Mr. Czajkowski helped facilitate a grant of \$45,000 for the community to invest in a disappearing species of pigs, the "Spotted Zlotniki" -- a highly fertile breed that requires no chemical supplements and produces high quality meat.

No more heating bills

Another immediate challenge faced by the group was the cost - both financial and environmental - of heating the apartments. The boiler, a vestige of the 1980s, required 200 tonnes of coal every year and emitted thick clouds of smoke laden with sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide and soot. With another grant from UNDP, this time for \$40,000, the Barka community was able to rebuild the boiler using a system of biomass heating that not only saves money, but reduces air pollution.

Protecting Poland's "ancient fruit trees"

With shelter, food and heat, the new "family" in Chudopczyce still lacked a critical necessity -- an occupation. Raising vegetables and tending to farm animals didn't provide enough work for everyone. And many of the younger members of the house were idle and restless. Through its contact with the Poznan Agriculture Academy and UNDP, Barka received a grant for a third project -- an innovative effort that not only involves the entire community, but protects Poland's disappearing ancient fruit trees. In March 1998, the group grafted 4,000 seedlings with 20 disappearing kinds of apple trees, repeating the action a year later, and also planted over 1,000 cherry trees. By spring 2000, almost 3,000 of the trees had been replanted from nurseries to orchards.

Small grants, big results

Although the three UNDP projects in Chudopczyce are small and highly localized, their benefits are significant not only to the local population, but also to the world community: the pig breeding resurrects an endangered species; the new heating system emits cleaner air; and the orchards protect a disappearing type of tree.

Based on a lecture by Rebeka Martensen, compiled by Jakub Tomaščík

FOLLOW-UP SERVICES

ROLE OF HALFWAY ACCOMMODATION PROJECTS IN SOCIAL REINTEGRATION

Petr Janoušek, director of The Salvation Army hostel in Brno and Chairman of the Association of Hostel in Czech Republic

The name - halfway house - is showing the meaning of such projects by itself. Those houses are on the middle way between hostel or shelter kind of living and independent style of living.

In Czech republic there are several kinds of half way houses. The difference is in their clients. Most of HWH are for men and women who went through institutional care. When they reach 18 years old, they can not stay anymore in children houses or orphanages and have to leave. They do not know how to live independently and in many cases they end up on the streets. Another group of clients are men and women released from prisons. A great number of such a people spent long time isolated from the outside world and our country is changing very quickly. It brings the problem, that those people don't know where to go for social support, how to communicate with different offices and so on.

I would like to concentrate on a group of homeless men and women, which is another group that needs HWH. During last several years a problem rose up which got the name of "syndrome of institutional dependence". It means, that clients who used to live in different hostels and night shelters lost their ability to take care of themselves without help from institution. For example in our hostel the client pays once a month some money and obtains accommodation, food, basic hygienic supplies and social support. When such a client finds his or her own accommodation, then it is a big problem for them to manage their income and all the payments which they have to do - rent a flat, buy a food, hygienic supplies, money for travelling into a work etc. In such a case the client is coming back into the hostel within few months. According to our statistics from those who left the hostel because they wanted to live independently 90% are back in 2,5 months. One of the ways out of this is half way house.

The goal of this is teach our clients to live on their own. How to do it? We provide for them safe accommodation for a limited time. This kind of accommodation is like a single room flat with its own kitchen corner, shower and toilet. The room itself is at the hostel but it is separated area where the client is not limited by any rules like in the hostel. So we provide accommodation as much similar to normal living as possible. On the other side he has to cook for himself, take care of hygiene and cleaning, washing and pay monthly a rent for the flat. This way it is his responsibility and social worker is helping only in the case, when something doesn't work. It means usually in the first two or three months might come some problems and client is learning how to prevent it. The problems are usually with payments, but often with preparing food as well for example.

It sounds easy but there are some major problems. First of all it is the question - who is ready for such a program. It is not for everybody. Some clients are just not capable to learn those abilities. I mean clients, which are mentally sick for example.

There is a system of learning and increasing their abilities and with some clients is not possible to get higher then just on the level of the hostel. The system is continued balancing between duties (responsibilities) and abilities. When I am able to do more then what is required, then I grow in my laziness and the above mentioned syndrome is growing. On the other side if I have to do more then I am able, then I probably fail and the disappointment will lead to a sense of very low self-esteem. But when the balance is still then my abilities grow and I can get more duties, learn and grow in my social skills. So for example into our half way

house we receive a client with permanent work contract (proved for several months at least) and with no behavioural problems.

Another question is - what to do, if the client will not find out his own accommodation within the limit of time which is set up for such a project - in our hostel it is 1 year. In Czech republic the situation with flats is very bad. New flats are very expensive, loans are only for people with very good income and the rent of a flat with reasonable price is also very difficult. One of the ways out of this problem is co-operation with local authorities. In Brno we have a system, that one of the obligations to get a room in half way house is a request for flat in the city and department of social affairs will support it with their recommendation. This recommendation is a very big help and the chances to get a flat from the city within 1 year is much higher. In the case that this does not work, we start to help them to find a flat two months before the year is over. There is a risk in this part, that we will go over the period of one year but right now there is no other choice in our country.

I would like to mention one solution, which is working very well in Holland. The Salvation Army is standing as a mediator between the client and the Housing Association. This way the Association has a guaranty that the payments will be made in time and the Salvation Army is doing the same kind of work with client as I described above. This way it is not for limited time, because if the client proves his or her abilities to live independently, then the Salvation Army moves out of this contract and the client is staying in that flat and pays directly to the Housing Association. The Salvation Army can rent another flat for another client and start again. The law in Czech Republic does not provide a space for this kind of activities so we have to take the risk, that the city will provide it, or client will find something or the NGO will help with it. This is the hardest part of our work and you can do whatever to increase the percentage of success - there is always possibility that it will take longer.

PROJECT FOR YOUNG HOMELESS PEOPLE

Michaela Svobodová, DOM (House of Open Possibilities), Praha 8

I would like to concentrate mainly on the psychological and personal side of our clients. I represent an organisation that offers help to a group of young people who grew up in various institutions or in dysfunctional families. They have very little experience of life. There are no successes such as a working career or family background that we could refer to in our co-operation. If we want to bring about a positive change in the quality of the client's life we must bear in mind that people only change and work on the process of changing if they have a reason to do so and if they know how to do it. We aim to show young people in a very difficult situation that they have some options, and to teach them to make use of them. We set two objectives for ourselves and when clients come to us for help we offer to co-operate in achieving them.

The first objective is to work towards making the client independent in the future. One of our priorities is to work together on making them capable of maintaining a regular job. Getting a job or attending a school is mandatory, nobody can stay in our home without one or the other. To make this rule applicable we have set up our own business called DOM-JOB Co., making wicker goods and mending furniture. The clients can immediately see the results of their work, especially when they see the products of their work sold. Manual activity has a positive calming effect. Clients get paid for the items sold and they are involved in all aspects of the business, including its management. They get used to the strain of work, learn the basic rights and responsibilities of a job and learn to communicate with the manager and their colleagues. When it's obvious that the client is coping with the demands of the job in this programme, we help them to find work in the regular job market.

People often ask what happens to our clients at the end of the one-year period that they usually spend with us. We analyse the options, recommend hostels and places for rent or support their application for a social flat. We also run two flats where some of our clients can temporarily move and live completely independent. Finding their way in society is part of becoming independent – those who grew up in institutions have had no contact with the outside world and are like aliens in normal society. They need to learn about government offices and social benefits, know their rights and responsibilities and many other things.

Our second objective is to build up self-respect. We know that the inner self-respect of our clients is very low, almost non-existent: homelessness in itself means extreme isolation. These people who have lost their lifestyle and prestige miss out on the possibility to set up relationships with those who have a home, money, contacts, and success. Many of them return to their own social group – meaning the homeless, drug addicts, prostitutes – because they don't have to be ashamed there and they have friends there, the people who make them feel good. It is also significant for one's self-respect not to be afraid of other people and to be able to communicate and develop relationships. Both of these aspects are interconnected. When a client becomes independent, their self-respect increases. If we can improve their self-respect, they are then no longer afraid to interact with officials and society as a whole. It is important that they understand at least the basic rules of how things work in society and what their place is within it, that they can make a living, pay their rent and steer clear of crime.

The accommodation we offer is at the level of a halfway house. The conditions simulate accommodation in a boarding house or in little bed-sits – the clients have their own keys. These flats are in the main DOM building in Prague 8, two independent flats are in normal buildings in other locations in Prague. We develop a network of relationships, form a group of people who learn to live in a certain community and find new friends there but also a stable counterpart in the person of their 'guide' who works alongside them. The programme simulates normal life, but we put extra protection and support around the stumbling blocks

where the clients can't cope on their own. Our mission is to teach them the skills they need to survive in society, without which they can end up on the streets and often in prison. It may seem like it isn't much, but in reality it is enough to stop them from becoming homeless. The rest comes naturally – they find partners and friends, move on or get a flat, and have children of their own.

Based on a lecture by Michaela Svobodová, compiled by Ilja Hradecký

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO HOMELESSNESS
(Move-on apartments of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service in Budapest aiming to
help working homeless people reintegrate into society)
Boróka Fehér, Maltese Charity Service, Hungary

I have to start with the statement that I think homelessness in Hungary is mostly a housing problem. In Hungary, a country with 10 million inhabitants, there are an estimated 30 000 – 40 000 homeless people, although no one knows the exact number. Most of these people are single men. There is a very limited number of social housing available – in the year 2001 there were 5 apartments in the 11th district of Budapest, where I work (which has 200 000 inhabitants), and there were more than 300 applicants! Most of the time single people have no chance to get these social apartments – they are given to families with children, or the disabled. Rents on the open market are expensive, in fact so expensive that they do not provide a long-term solution for housing problems, at least not for those with an average income. Most of our clients have lived in rented apartments or rooms for a shorter or longer period of their lives, but eventually they could not keep up with the payments.

According to a study from 2001, 48% of the homeless have jobs – a surprisingly high proportion, esp. if we are aware that another 44% are in such a bad state of health that they are unable to work. It seems that there are only 8% of the homeless population who could but do not work. Those who have jobs are the ones most likely to break out of homelessness and social exclusion – they are in touch with the „normal“ world, they look like „normal“ people, with real homes. However, even if their salary is enough to rent a small apartment or just one room (sometimes only a bed) on their own or with another person, they cannot stay there for long. Many of them have unofficial jobs (they pay better than legal jobs, they make it possible to have the money to rent a room, etc.), which do not pay when they get sick and do not contribute for their future pension. It also makes them vulnerable: if they do not receive their pay in time or their full salary, they do not have any legal grounds to complain. Often when these people get sick, they lose their job as well. We need stricter laws to protect workers. As far as their housing is concerned, however, if they do not make money and therefore get behind with the rent, they are quickly evicted.

Another problem is that landlords are not very willing to make contracts with the people whom they rent their apartment or room too. The homeless or simply those who do not have very much money are too vulnerable to bargain, but without a contract they can be sent away within a day, often leave money behind. We need stricter laws regarding renting apartments.

Even though we believe that homelessness is mostly a housing problem, when individuals have been homeless for a longer period of time, they might not have the strength to get out of the world of homeless shelters without help; some people get used to not being independent. In these cases, providing some form of housing is not enough, strong personal support from a social worker is also required. Our move-on apartments offer help in these two areas: on the one hand by providing quality housing (individual apartments in residential areas of Budapest), and on the other by providing strong personal support from a social worker. The duration of their stay is on average 18 months, during which the clients can become stronger, they can get closer to reaching their personal goals, (re)build personal relationships, stabilize their financial situation, etc.

In order to understand the move-on apartments, I have to go back a little further, to our move-on hostel for working homeless men. This hostel houses 28 working people who plan to move out on their own. The initial contract is for 6 months, and it can be prolonged by another 6 months. This is one of the highest quality hostels in the country, yet most of our rooms have six beds, the 28 people share one kitchen, one TV room – it is not always ideal for resting, let alone entertaining friends and building links with the non-homeless.

It is a must that the clients of our hostel have a job, although we do not require it to be a legal one (because of the wide variation in salaries; and although these jobs do not qualify for pensions, the mortality rate of the homeless is so high that they are not likely to live until the age of 65). We also require that they save 15 000 Ft every month (the estimated lowest cost of a rented room, not counting the utilities). In the ideal case they stay for a year and during this time they save 180 000 Ft (about 720 Euro), but we know that this is not a big amount, and when they move out, it tends to get smaller and smaller – our clients do not have enough money to rent a room, pay their bills and keep saving money at the same time, so they use up their savings. Experience has shown that many of our clients return to us after a period of a few months or one or two years because they were unable to keep up with the rent for one reason or another.

This is why we have purchased two move-on apartments. There are eight people in these two apartments – 4 in each. The apartments are in a housing estate in the 3rd district of Budapest - maybe the biggest in the city. It is thus a residential area, with excellent public transportation into the center of the city. The apartments are 55m² large.

The clients enjoy a greater freedom than when they lived at the shelter: they can receive visitors who can even spend the night, there is no 24-hour social worker at their door, etc. They do not really have to pay a rent - they pay the amount that the rent would be into their own savings account (that the social worker checks every month) but they pay the utilities themselves. Their contract is for one year initially, but it can be lengthened by six more months. The people who live there are chosen from the working shelter: they are people who have lived there for at least three months, who have co-operated with the social workers, and who seem reliable (non-alcoholics, saving their money on a regular basis, for example)

Advantages of move-on apartments:

Relationships play an important role in becoming homeless and also in getting out of it. It is often the lack of a family and the lack of any close relationships. While living in a shelter, the homeless can make friends with other clients, but they are only likely to establish non-homeless relationships through their workplace. Even then, it is embarrassing that they cannot invite a friend home for coffee, often do not even admit that they live in a shelter, because of its stigmatising affect. Being homeless, living in a homeless shelter leads to social exclusion on the level of social interactions as well.

It is also experience that some of our clients have to relearn the skills of living in a normal community: they have to remember to check their mailbox, to pay their bills regularly and on time, they have to take the garbage downstairs. They have to learn to get along with the three others and to make compromises without the constant surveillance of the social worker. Even though they formally still belong to our institution, there are not too many practical signs of this. The social worker visits them in their home, usually after having made an appointment. Their savings are checked every month, but they do not have to hand it over to the social worker - they are responsible for putting more money on the account and not spending it.

Our hope is that during this time the clients get used to living independently and they would not be satisfied with returning to a lower-quality shelter. We also hope that they will have even more money saved. It has also been our experience that their relationships with their families improve: they are no longer ashamed of being homeless, as they are technically not living in shelters any more, but in rented apartments, even if the rent is subsidised by our organisation. Living in these apartments provides a more stable base to build new relationships as well, especially in finding a new partner.

Disadvantage:

We are aware, of course, that these apartments, even if there had been more of them, are not enough to solve the problem of housing in Hungary. They provide an opportunity to keep saving money as the rent is low. However, the clients would need 20 years to save enough to buy their own, and in Hungary most people own their house. According to a survey in 2001, 83.5% of even the poorest(!) own their apartment/house, while only 9% who live in local government housing. Because of expensive and unsafe private rentals, owning one's housing seems a more secure and lasting alternative. It is also our experience that we cannot predict who is mature enough to live this independently and who will be too tempted to spend his savings, buying various things. However, we think this is a risk worth taking.

Our experience:

Four people moved to the 1st apartment. After six months, two of the clients were sent away: one of them broke down when he was facing exams (he had taken a course in bookkeeping) - as it turned out he had done this many times earlier. He also quit his job (he was fired after bad behaviour and drinking problems) - he did not fit our requirements anymore and would not cooperate with the social worker. A good thing in this was, however, that the others in the apartment tried to help him: they concealed that he had drinking problems and were willing to pay his share of the common utilities, at least for a while.

The other man who was sent away after 6 months was a young man with no family known to us and a history of being raised in state care. He was also sent away for drinking problems: yet in the time he lived at the apartment, he refound his lost brother with whom he rented an apartment afterwards, and he also left his job to go and work in the factory his brother was working at - thus he rebuilt family ties and got an official job, so we cannot count him as a failure.

There are two men remaining who moved in December 2000 - their contracts expire in July this year. One of them is a young man without a long history of homelessness - he did not get along with his parents so he moved away early in his life, and when he could not pay his rented apartment for some reason, he came to us for help. This happened twice. He has a steady girlfriend with whom he is making plans together - he has a stable job and earns a reasonable amount of money. The last man in this apartment is 50 years old - in the summer he will complete a 2-year course in NGO management - he has a job (with a room to live in) in the country which he can occupy once he has finished his exams. We are optimistic about these two. The second apartment was opened one year ago. Three of the four dwellers have stable jobs and seem to be getting closer to their personal goal. In the case of one we did not renew the contract - he could not put money aside and got into serious financial difficulties after not being able to work due to a work accident - of course, he was not working officially, so he was not entitled to sick pay.

Summary:

There are serious problems with housing in Hungary that social workers and NGOs alone cannot solve. There are also problems with job security and the security of rented apartments. An especially vulnerable group is the group of single men who do not have their own flat or house. In our move-on hostel we create an opportunity for our clients to save money for a year, but it is the move-on apartments that provide a bigger chance for individuals who want to get out of the world of homelessness. Even though we are aware that we are not capable of miracles, we hope that these apartments do not only provide quality housing for 18 months, but also an environment to renew and create new relationships, a safe opportunity to (re)learn the skills of non-shelter, independent life and the chance to turn to a social worker for help. Our experience makes us think that move-on apartments can help in leading individuals out of homelessness.

SOCIAL HOUSING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPEAN UNION

John Evans, FEANTSA

Questions to address:

Who is social housing provided for? The homeless, the poor, the hard to manage, refugees, vulnerable groups or all applicants?

Should allocation policies discriminate at the application stage or should waiting lists be open to all?

The smaller the social housing stock the harder it is to make a choice between applicants. Should the only criteria be that of extreme need?

Should rent subsidies be made through bricks and mortar (at the construction stage) or by personal allowances depending on the tenants circumstances? Over twenty years in the U.K. from 1979 –1999 there has been a total shift towards personal allowances.

Social versus Private Rental by State definition

Belgium	Owned by public bodies and rented out to persons on social assistance
Denmark	Rented out by non-profit making Housing Associations
Germany	Dwellings for which financial aid is received
Greece	No social rented sector
Spain	Subsidised and rent-controlled housing
France	Defined by the status of the owner of the dwellings and State Subsidised
Italy	Defined by the criteria for choosing tenants from social lists
Luxembourg	Regulated by construction and tenure
Netherlands	Subsidised cheap rental dwellings owned by municipalities or Housing Associations.
Austria	Owned by Housing Associations or local communities
Portugal	Owned by Housing Associations or municipalities and with subsidised rents
Finland	State subsidised housing with residents selected on social grounds
Sweden	No social housing by definition but public housing and co-operatives. Housing allowances means tested for all persons and dwellings
U.K.	Municipality owned plus Housing Associations, but these may cross over into the private sector

General Housing Indicators in the E.U.

1980 – 2000: Roughly a 5% population growth across the E.U. but with variations between countries and within countries. A general fall in housing investment but with large variations from country to country. The rental sector has INCREASED in Belgium, Denmark, Germany Finland and Sweden. The rental sector has DECREASED in Spain, France, Netherlands, Ireland, Italy Luxembourg, Austria Portugal and U.K.

2002 – 2020: Population of the E.U. of persons over 65 years of age is projected to increase by between 15% and 20%. Size of the average household will decrease by 20%

Social Sector Households in the U.K. by status of head of household

	1977 – 1978	1998 - 1999
In full time employment	52%	23%
In part time employment	4%	7%

Unemployed	6%	8%
Retired	21%	38%
Other inactive	17%	24%

Housing Green Paper - England 2000:

Housing demand for the years 1996 to 2021 estimated at 150,000 houses p.a. Currently (in 2000) 770,000 houses stand empty. Tenure percentage changes over 20 years :

	1977	1997
Owner Occupied	54%	68%
Social Rented	30%	16%
Private Rented	16%	16%

Tenure by percentage:

	1989	1998
Owner Occupied	50%	61%
Social Rented	42%	27%
Private Rented	8%	12%

Stock Transfer (to housing associations):

Advantages:

- Private investment
- Tenant involvement in management
- Municipalities freed to concentrate on strategic planning and policy issues

Disadvantages:

- No houses for the homeless
- Residual housing stock of poor quality and in poor districts liable to create ghettos left to municipalities

Private Finance Initiatives (P.F.I.) - to improve housing stock.

Advantages: Long term contracts for refurbishment, management, Repairs and maintenance at guaranteed cost.

Disadvantages : Short-term saving is against much higher long-term cost
No capital asset in public sector

Right to Buy:

In the UK, one and a quarter million social housing tenants have bought their homes at an average cost to the taxpayer of £10,000 (15,000 Euro) for each sale. This has resulted in the best housing stock being bought out of public ownership and there has been little new replacement build. Mortgage repayment failures have also been high due to lack of adequate financial guidance for tenants wishing to buy which results in the loss of the house to the public sector and another homeless family looking for the public sector to house them in diminishing stock. Currently Denmark and the Netherlands are the only two EU countries looking at developing a Right to Buy policy.

SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES IN DENMARK KOFOED'S SCHOOL

By Ole Meldgaard

The term socio-educational refers to a basic understanding of education and social activities as two sides of the same coin. Education is identified with a strategy to transform social conditions for excluded people or people at risk of social exclusion. It takes education and learning to make people active in influencing their environment, but only active and involved people will learn. A socio-educational programme tries to combine learning and social activities. Education and learning is placed within a context of social change.

Education is a social phenomenon, and in recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of education and adult learning for the whole population, as well as in combating social exclusion. In affluent societies not all groups have shared proportionally in material growth; some groups are missing out. Exclusion *is* about income level, but it is more than that. One of the main factors of social exclusion has been identified as poor education, lack of skills and abilities and out-dated knowledge. Some groups lack the necessary qualifications to play the game. Therefore, initiatives that promote learning have been focused on. Learning is about opening access to economic activities and resources, and for promoting social, cultural and personal life in general. The renewal of knowledge and skills is increasingly a prerequisite for meeting basic needs, for participation in economic activities and more broadly for full and active citizenship. It means in the widest sense, education and learning are prerequisites for democracy. That is why life-long learning in many countries has been recognised as a priority of social development and as a tool to adapt a person to the rapidly changing world and to involve him actively in social processes. Today in Europe there are more adults in organised learning than there are children in schools.

Given the extent and speed of change today, learning is essential just to keep up. Acute problems can arise for those who do not, and the major problem is to ensure the necessary learning for those who are most at risk of exclusion while also being the least likely to become learners on their own initiative. Therefore it is not enough to advocate learning or lifelong learning to combat social exclusion in general. Strategies and initiatives must be targeted at those groups most at risk or excluded. A major challenge is to identify learning that is relevant to socially excluded groups, and I think these challenges should be taken up by those who work with socially excluded people: in shelters, social institutions, care institutions etc. As part of the caring profession, social institutions should become educational institutions to include socially excluded people into the general trend of education and learning and in so doing improve their social prospects.

However, learning and education represents not only the means to improve access to knowledge, skills and diplomas in order to overcome exclusion. Learning and education are often important vehicles for social inclusion. Individuals meet others through learning and develop confidence, self-esteem, identity and they create new networks. In a world of increasing fragmentation and individualisation, the significance of this direct role of learning must not be underestimated, in particular not for those groups whose learning needs are greatest.

Kofoed's School in Denmark was founded in 1928 by a former folk high school teacher, Hans Christian Kofoed, and Kofoed's School can be seen as a strategy to help excluded

people back into mainstream society or into a more included position by combining social assistance with a learning environment, a strategy that now has become widespread in Denmark. The school was established during a period of high unemployment and social crisis in Denmark, and Kofoed started the school to help people in Copenhagen with severe social problems to overcome their difficulties in life, and to qualify them for active participation in society using direct help and education as the main tools. The aim of Kofoed's School is to assist people with social problems to work on improving their social life, so they are not stuck in their underprivileged situation. The school is based on the conviction that if people are to be helped socially they have to be assisted educationally. The possibility of escaping an underprivileged situation will often depend on education and training. However, the terms education and school are understood in the widest sense, and are not associated exclusively with narrow vocational qualifications but also norms of behaviour that are necessary to get a foothold in the labour market. The process of education and learning often starts with encouragement and some basis steps. The ultimate goal is full rehabilitation and integration into society, but the goals are graded according to individual possibilities. A less ambitious goal is the care of and support for permanently rejected people. Kofoed's School works with social problems within an educational frame of reference. People using the service are called students to emphasise the educational approach to dealing with social problems, not social clients because it indicates a passive dependency on service. The school realises that help might be a mixed blessing if it makes people passive, dependent and even weaker because the professional assistance is provided without expecting active participation by the person seeking assistance. The working method is help to self-help which aims at rebuilding and strengthening the students' self-esteem and self-respect while at the same time easing their social problems and qualifying them for social purposes. The primary focus is not just to solve their immediate problems but through solving the immediate problems to help the student get on with their own personal development.

The background of the students is frequently long-term unemployment, actual or threatened social exclusion and socio-psychological traumas such as social isolation and loneliness. 90 per cent have been unemployed for more than two years, 60 per cent have been unemployed for more than four years, and 30 per cent for more than seven years. The school is open to all unemployed and underprivileged people wanting support to improve their social life. Kofoed's School is attended daily by about 650 students. Annually, the school is in touch with about 3.500 people.

Often the students don't have any idealistic wish to learn and develop when they come to the school. They are not always motivated to learn and often have negative opinions of education. They just want to receive help. That is why it is necessary to „enliven to enlighten“ as it was expressed at the old folk high schools. First you must open up people's minds with encouraging experiences in order to prepare them for learning. The trick is to connect the students' basic motives and fundamental needs for food, clothes and hygiene to personal and social development programs. Educating socially excluded people often starts at a basic level and in a caring environment with socialising activities. The task of the professional helper is to make every moment of help a moment of learning and acquiring new abilities. All activities at the school have an educational purpose. It is social work, but the aim is rehabilitation. Socio-educational programmes must begin where people are. The curriculum of the first grade is people's own problems and needs- their own social problems.

Kofoed's School is a caring and stimulating environment in which socially excluded people and people at risk can grow and develop themselves through support from

professionals. We don't focus on lack of abilities or negative attitudes but try to strengthen positive attitudes. Kofoed's School offers a multi-level training and rehabilitation programme with individual targets. To people in an emergency situation, the school can offer assistance in the form of food, clothing and a bed to sleep in, but very soon the emphasis will be placed on help to self-help to teach the students to solve their problems themselves, so they don't become dependent on social assistance. Basically, the school combines social assistance with social training and education. The mission of Kofoed's School is to provide help to self-help, so that the students are helped to overcome social difficulties by their own efforts.

The school is staffed with 150 staff-members running 30 workshops, social counselling offices, vocational counselling offices, educational counselling offices and 150 educational courses, in for instance data processing and information technology, mathematics, Danish language, foreign languages, music, creative disciplines, sports, cultural activities and the humanities such as literature, religion, philosophy etc. Among the vocational workshops include: a printing workshop, a car repair workshop, a production workshop, a joiner's shop, a metal workshop, there is a workshop for Greenlanders producing things of Greenlandic origin, there is a kitchen serving all the students. Attached to the vocational training is a driving school so the students can get a driver's license.

The question Kofoed met when he started the school was this: Can these people really work? Are they able to overcome their social problems with the help of training and education? The answer is that some are. The experience of Kofoed's School is that about 30 per cent of the students are discharged to a job or to further qualifying education. 28 per cent are discharged to other qualifying activities. Some of them will later return to the school. About 42 per cent leave the school because they need treatment, are sent to psychiatric hospitals, to jail, are rewarded a social pension or they remain unemployed and inactive. Also some of them will return to the school and try again. But in total, 58 per cent of the students can improve their social situation by using the school. And they are not necessarily the most advanced and strongest students. Among them are even drug addicts and alcoholics who have been unemployed for many years.

The question is not if they can overcome their social problems, but how they can do it. What does it take to rehabilitate oneself and how can a social institution influence that process? My answer is: start where people are when they come to the school. Regard them as what they are when they come. Meet them with care and sympathy, encourage them and show them a new possibility. Not an abstract one, but try to get them involved in hands-on activities.

At Kofoed's School we always begin the process asking the student about their own dreams and wishes for their stay at the school. What results do you want? We let the students themselves decide about the activities they want to take part in and let them be involved as much as possible in drawing up their own action plan. When they have decided, the next step is to integrate the new student into the already existing community at the workshop. This is probably the most important step, because here the student has their first experience with an organised social structure. To feel accepted and appreciated is crucial to motivation and progress. The third step is to find the right level of activity, where the student can profit from his own experiences and skills already gained. The fourth step is to find the right level of challenge. The fifth is the right method of teaching. The method at Kofoed's School is to focus on individualised activities and interaction with students and staff. Through social training the student is prepared for vocational training.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the strategy of Kofoed's School has been in line with the objective of Danish social policy, namely to integrate a greater number of people into the labour market through so-called active labour market policy and active social policy and to activate and employ vulnerable groups in different kinds of subsidised jobs in the labour market. All unemployed people must now accept activation and educational re-qualification programmes, and a lot of projects and educational programmes have been set up to educate and train unemployed people. Also the weakest groups are included in activation programmes. The focus is on motivation, job training and rehabilitation, upgrading qualifications, education and job offers. This focus on training and qualification is matched with a strategy of a more inclusive labour market, which means to make the labour market more open to people with different qualifications. Weaker groups are now given more options for gaining a foothold in the labour market under special conditions. The inclusive labour market – launched by a former minister of social affairs – is an initiative that allows people with poor qualifications or reduced capacity to work to get a chance to use their skills and participate in working life through the help of wage subsidy schemes, flexible working arrangements and sheltered employment. Flexible working arrangements and sheltered employment mean jobs at ordinary work places with a wage subsidy for persons with permanently reduced working capacity. The local authorities will ensure that persons with permanently restricted working capacity are given the opportunity to find employment with flexible working arrangements and sheltered employment. When the authorities have offered a job subject to flexible working arrangements, the wages and working hours will be specified in consultation with the labour unions. The employer shall pay wages to the persons employed subject to flexible working arrangements. The local authority will grant the employer a wage subsidy. The amount of subsidy shall be between 1/3 and 2/3 of the wages depending on the extent of the loss of working capacity. To further the inclusive labour market, social clauses have been introduced. A social clause is a tender document requirement to the effect that the winner of the contract must undertake a specified social commitment, for instance to employ staff who have been unemployed for a specific period of time.

As a member of the European Union the Danish government must set up a national action plan to combat poverty and social exclusion. The two main pathways for the upcoming years are activation, training, education and upgrading the skills of the unemployed and a more inclusive labour market for all. The approaches are co-ordinated between the national government, social partners in the labour market and local governments. At the local level there are partnerships consisting of representatives of employee organisations, employers organisations, general practitioners, The Public Employment Service, local authorities and The Council of Disabled People. The committees advise the local authorities on social work aimed at the labour market and ensures a common understanding of what is needed to further the employment of vulnerable groups.

To conclude, in modern societies it is no longer just a matter of maintaining the standard of living of the beneficiaries of social assistance but of acquiring new skills and developing new abilities for a self-supported life. Societies are changing fast and permanently, and social policy has to keep up with the new trends by implementing new means of combating unemployment and social exclusion. Development programmes, training programmes, education and activation, therefore, have become important elements in new social policy working towards integrating social clients into mainstream society again.

EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES WITH SOCIAL EMPLOYMENT DANISH AND ITALIAN INITIATIVES

Ewa Leś

Social Employment in European Union countries

About twenty years ago first initiatives for social employment were noticed in countries of European Union. These initiatives were based on development of new enterprises with social responsibilities. Main functions of social enterprises are reintegration of handicapped and long term unemployed people on the work market and fulfilling temporary roles on the market place, representing a stage to reintegrate on the open work market. The main characteristics of the new entrepreneurship undertaken by social organisations is its especially innovative character in comparison to traditional initiatives of this type carried out by the third sector. Moreover, from the other side, in social enterprises, the traditional social status of the worker is additionally enriched by the fact that, at the same time, these workers are members of administrative bodies of the enterprises in which they are employed, and have decisive and controlling roles to play.

Working definition of social enterprises

Taking into consideration that social enterprises are originated on the organisation of the third sector and represent an emanation of a new social enterprises, it is accepted in the literature that, by this name initiatives fulfilling following economic and social criteria be defined: permanent activity directly aimed at producing resources, high level of autonomy of activities, carrying a significant economic risk, existence of a minimal remunerated personnel. Social criteria are following: support and development of local community, their activity is a result of collective efforts, engaging citizens belonging to a certain community or group, the beneficiaries of their services are also their representatives, avoiding in this way activities directed to maximalisation of income.

Legal fundamentals and new forms of enterprises

New forms of enterprises appeared during the last twenty years in European countries. Their pioneering role is attributed to the Italian parliament who, as the first in Europe, in 1991, introduced to the Italian legislation the status of social co-operative. The Italian social co-operatives (firstly known as co-operatives of social solidarity) have as main objective to provide social services locally and promote the return to the work market.

In Finland, workers' co-operatives establish their activities on base on existing co-operative law. The co-operatives are mainly maintained by unemployed persons, with the condition that they have to have an initial business plan, have the right to request subsidies together with the Ministry of Labour for own initiatives in the amount of about 10 thousand EUR. In 1995 in Belgium, a new idea was introduced to the already existing legislation „the enterprise of social aims“. In Portugal, in 1998, a new category of co-operatives was created: „the co-operatives of social solidarity“. In Greece, in 1999, a new category was established: „social co-operative with partnership of limited responsibility“

Economic, social and psychological extent.

The example of Italy: Presently, in Italy exist about 4.5 thousand of social co-operatives, 70% of them in the field of social services and 30% specialised in socio-vocational integration programs. The average number of employed persons in social co-operatives ranges from 40 to 50 persons, being ½ of this number remunerated workers. A greatest majority of co-operatives

acts locally. The strong sides of Italian social co-operatives are that they are being built from initiatives of local societies, have possibilities to become independent and develop their social capital in their territory, engage volunteers and persons altruistically oriented, and are the pioneers of many social services in Italy.

The example of Finland: in Finland, up to the end of the eighties, the role of non-governmental organisations as employers was not significant. However, the massive unemployment in Finland during the nineties gave origin to a huge increase of local citizenship's initiatives aimed at creation of work places. As result, presently, social organisations, including social enterprises, are employers for about 4% of all employed persons in Finland. In the whole Finland, about 1500 handicapped persons found work in social enterprises. Social enterprises are a privacy of the interested participants, but most frequently non-workers. Another form of social enterprises in Finland are social workshops and local associations for unemployed people

Financing sources

The financing resources of Italian social co-operatives come mainly from public sources, and in their greatest majority are achieved by means of tenders and subsidies. The criteria of selection of an offer are: financial effectiveness, quality of services and ability to mobilise volunteers. To carry out its services, the co-operative signs a contract with local authorities. In Finland, the support of the State consists on subsidising employment for long term unemployed persons through governmental and self-government's administration for a period of 6-month and unpaid training for unemployed persons willing to establish social co-operatives. Moreover, In Finland, to subsidize employment in non-governmental organizations and social enterprises also income of the national monopoly of lotteries is being used, as well as those of hazardous games. These organizations have to transfer obligatorily part of their income to finance employment of young people.

Conclusions

New initiatives in the field of employment policies do not offer permanent work, but are extremely valuable in achieving professional experience and assure to leave the status of an unemployed person by a worker's one. Social employment, linking the spirit of entrepreneurship with the social objective, plays an essential role in strengthening local economy and revitalising peri-urban and backward areas. The example of Greece shows that social enterprises – agro-tourism oriented co-operatives started to be created in most distant and neglected regions.

The development of social enterprises of diverse types creates a chance for work and sustainability, and the development of vocational skills of thousands of unemployed persons. The existence of social employment stimulates also the growth of local social capital, because it favours building of mutual confidence and citizens' participation. It is important to emphasise that European Union, in one of its recommendations regarding the employment strategy, encourages member countries to promote the institution of social economy. It is the task of EU member States to introduce such recommendations to National Plans of Activities to fight unemployment.

So, with regards to the close perspective of Polish membership in the EU, it would be convenient to take into consideration the above mentioned recommendations in planning to benefit from structural funds. Finally, it is important to emphasize that new initiatives on the work market with regards to long term unemployed persons are already a fact in our country and for more than 10 years.

In this context, special highlight deserve also the initiatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Politics during the last months with regards to projects of laws on social benefit and

volunteering, as well as on social employment. In further work on the project of law on social employment, experiences of EU countries with new forms of social enterprises organized by unemployed persons should be taken into consideration to enable undertake socio-vocational re-habilitation of socially excluded persons. In the light of the present draft of project on social employment, only centers of social integration, representing units of territorial self-government can have the possibility to undertake vocational and social re-habilitation of socially excluded persons.

Summarizing, as Western experiences show, the introduction to Polish legislation of new types of social enterprises organized by citizens, with support of governmental administration at local and national level, assuring at least temporary work places, can reduce the present massive unemployment, as well as represent a driving force for local and regional economy growth in our country.

UMBRELLA ORGANIZATIONS

BAG-W – NATIONAL UMBRELLA ORGANISATION OF PROVIDERS OF SERVICES FOR THE HOMELESS IN GERMANY

Thomas Specht-Kittler, president of BAG-W

I. INTRODUCTION

The Federal Working Group on Homeless Assistance (BAGW) is a nation-wide working group made up of social services and institutions for people in exceptional social difficulties as defined by §72 of the Federal Social Assistance Act (BSHG) and the political, professional and public-law institutions that work together with us in this area of assistance.

The BAGW performs co-ordination and integration-related functions in the homeless assistance field, and it represents the interests of homeless and socially isolated people and homeless assistance organisations. It co-ordinates communication and professional exchange on interdisciplinary problems with related assistance systems in social work, and with social service providers in the fields of social, health and housing policy at the federal level.

Its umbrella covers public and independent welfare-related institutions, as well as self-help organisations run by the homeless themselves. The diversity of its members reflects the unity of its main cause: to provide those people threatened by or afflicted with homelessness, poverty and social exclusion with a dignified place in society.

The role of the BAGW consists of tackling the common problems and basic dilemmas of homeless assistance, and working on common solutions with all those involved. Our basic program represents the guidelines for such mutual solution strategies. For this reason, it focuses on three main questions:

- What are the significant wider tasks of homeless assistance?
- What approaches would make sense in the future?
- How can the mutual solutions be put into practice internally and externally in an appropriate form?

In 1985, the Federal Working Group on Homeless Assistance – which at that time was called *Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Nichtsesshaftenhilfe e.V.* – published its first basic program. This program had a clear impact on the practical aspects of assistance. It marked a nation-wide conceptual re-orientation of an assistance system, which with its long-outdated moniker "Nichtsesshaftenhilfe" and its exclusive devotion to shelter-based assistance, had lost touch with the actual living situations of the homeless. It encouraged the transformation from an overwhelmingly shelter-based to an increasingly diversified concept of assistance. Because the program raised the idea of helping people to live in one place to its guiding principle, it broke through the vicious circle of "mobile poverty", so-called "vagrancy", and introduced "re-communalisation", the social re-integration of homeless and socially excluded citizens into society.

Over the last 15 years, homeless assistance and its social setting have changed. The self-definition, tasks and working methods of homeless assistance must therefore be re-thought and further developed, in order to continue representing the main concerns of the Federal Working Group on Homeless Assistance in an appropriate manner.

In laying down guidelines, basic statements must remain relatively general in many areas. There are not, therefore, concrete statements on all area-specific problems and emphases. This should not be interpreted as undervaluing one area of work or the other – it rather serves to keep the focus on the wider questions at hand.

The Federal Working Group has made statements on many specific problems. The appendix contains an overview of the area-specific positions, recommendations and programs of the BAGW relating to the areas on which its work focuses.

In light of the speed of societal change and the resulting increasing uncertainties, neither the basic program nor policy statements on various issues can give ready-made answers for many of the problems brought up here. For this reason, the basic program serves to advance some aspects of conceptual development and contributes to the participating institutions', the sponsors' and the involved professionals' continuing search for orientation. It also aims to encourage critical dialogue with our co-operating partners in politics and public administration, in churches, welfare associations, self-help initiatives, volunteer public service organisations, housing associations, unions, institutions of higher education and providers of social services.

The appendices include a glossary to explain field-specific terminology that departs from normal usage.

II. SELF-DEFINITION AND PRINCIPLES OF HOMELESS ASSISTANCE

The organisations, working groups and member institutions working together under the umbrella of the Federal Working Group on Homeless Assistance orient themselves towards human rights, civil rights anchored in the constitution, and the principle of public social welfare. This self-definition establishes the dimensions in which we consider the goals, tasks and working methods of homeless assistance. It is these principles which we use to look critically at our practices up to now, and it is based on these principles that we want to determine our future approach to providing effective and far-reaching assistance. These principles are based upon historical experience in the homeless assistance field, and are included in many mission statements of our member organisations and concepts of our member institutions.

Respect for the dignity of the socially excluded and homeless

We advocate making the respect of human rights and human dignity the point of departure and basis for all efforts to overcome social exclusion, poverty and homelessness, as well as for the development and concrete implementation of all services offered in the context of homeless assistance. We insist that the dignity of homeless people be respected in public and stand up against the cynical, degrading violence of which they repeatedly become victims.

Freedom and emancipation for those seeking help

We affirm the freedom and emancipation of those seeking help. This is expressed through respect for their right to desire and their right to choose, the voluntary nature of accepting the assistance offered, equal partnership in the assistance process and the right to self-determination of those seeking help. The freedom of the individual is an indispensable counterweight to the inequality that is inherent in any relationship between a provider and a recipient of assistance. Homeless assistance advises and supports with the goal of preserving and strengthening personal initiative: it must help people to help themselves!

Advocacy for the realisation of rights and equality before the law

We guarantee that the legal claims of socially excluded and homeless men and women are realised. Because of their diverse social difficulties, they need help claiming the social services to which they are entitled. This means clear advocacy of the interests of the socially disadvantaged and homeless, even if this leads to conflicts with public authorities in individual cases. We make sure that they receive the help they are entitled to regardless of

gender, ethnic origin, religion, nationality and worldview, and oppose all forms of direct or indirect discrimination.

Political advocacy, societal and social-policy mandate

In the interest of those seeking assistance, we push for the active provision of welfare support anchored in our constitution on all levels of our society. The constitutional social state guarantees the individual a legal entitlement to social assistance, while at the same time requiring of those involved in government and administration a social policy that prevents and combats poverty, homelessness and social exclusion. We oppose all attacks on the principle of public social welfare and, in politics and in the public arena, make sure that suggestions for the overcoming and avoidance of social exclusion and homelessness make their way into our legislation and ordinances at the federal and provincial levels. As the process of European unification continues, the principles of public social welfare must be anchored in a legally binding way at the level of the European Union – in the interest of those seeking assistance.

Democracy, self-organisation and independent civic initiatives

In democratic society, social assistance activities are not restricted to professionals. We welcome and support the set-up of self-organisation and interest advocacy by the homeless and socially excluded. We are for co-operative collaboration between professionals and representatives of those affected at all levels. Voluntary civic initiatives must not be abused by the state as a replacement for qualified assistance provision. But at the same time, homeless assistance is reliant upon voluntary civic initiatives and works co-operatively with all voluntary groups that respect human and civil rights.

Nation-wide assistance provision and quality assurance

We strive for sufficient, financially guaranteed and gender-specific social service provision for the socially excluded and homeless to be part of the infrastructure of community social work and social policy nation-wide. We support transparent quality control and quality assurance procedures for social services. Cost-effectiveness is a component of quality. We reject, however, the practice of evaluating social services based solely on cost factors. Qualified training and staff development, publicity work and academic research on poverty, homelessness and social exclusion are necessary prerequisites for assuring the quality and the further development of the assistance offered.

Subsidiarity and partnership between state and independent social welfare activities

We advocate that, according to the subsidiarity principle of our public social welfare system, the state works in partnership with independent organisations working in the public interest. Also that such organisations play a major role in the fulfilment of social welfare tasks or, if applicable, do so through the delegation of public tasks to appropriately qualified services and institutions involved in homeless assistance. The self-reliant role of these independent organisations is a prerequisite for their advocacy. For this reason, we affirm intensive and partner-like co-operation with public authorities, which have to secure support for homeless assistance in a way that is oriented toward the common good. The goals and assistance offers of homeless assistance must be developed together with all the public authorities and levels of decision-making involved.

All-encompassing help through co-operation and networking in assistance confederations

The increasing specialisation of social work and the diversity of homeless assistance providers in a region or a city often leads to those who need the help getting lost in the thicket of various social services and specialisations. For this reason, we advocate all-encompassing

assistance which is best provided by the development of assistance confederations within homeless assistance and with all important co-operating partners outside homeless assistance. Holisticity cannot be achieved by taking responsibility for everything, rather only through obligatory co-operation based on contractual agreements on contacts and standards. A prerequisite for this is homeless assistance planning for all regions.

Equality of opportunity with respect to gender

We work for the equality of socially excluded and homeless women through the creation of assistance programmes and measures that are adapted to the needs of women. Furthermore, we advocate the laying down of a broad-based societal strategy of equal opportunity with regard to gender on all levels and in all aspects of homeless assistance. Additionally, the differences between the sexes must be respected and taken into consideration in order to ensure that socially excluded and homeless women are not kept from assistance programmes and measures because of their gender.

Focus on the community

Assistance has to be organised and provided in the community. Poverty, homelessness and social exclusion must be combated where they originate. For this reason, help has to begin – preventatively – as early as possible. We are against denying or hindering access to help to people from outside the community: we do not want to see poverty migration, but rather that homeless people moving into a region receive help in staying there. Assistance has to go where the people who need it are, and not the other way around. This demands a need-oriented regionalisation and decentralisation of assistance offered under a supra-regional umbrella.

Focus on people

Homeless people are not supplicants – they are claiming an entitlement. People-orientation in homeless assistance, therefore, means helping those seeking assistance to integrate into the standard services on offer. People-orientation also means, however, respecting the different needs of homeless and socially excluded people, which in individual cases may indeed differ from those of the majority of the population. If suitable programmes provided by other specialists are not desired by those seeking help, or are not accessible to them in spite of intensive efforts, homeless assistance will provide its own programmes in place of other institutions. This will be done in a qualified manner, while showing respect for their human dignity.

Life situations, problems and those involved

Homeless assistance has to do justice to people whose life situations can't be characterised by a single problem alone. The individualisation of lifestyles, the emergence of new cultural and social settings and the interaction and coexistence of different cultures have given rise to diverse life situations and very individual circumstances. The establishment of the problems and groups of people which homeless assistance should provide or develop suitable assistance measures, must therefore do justice to the diversity of individual situations, without becoming so broad as to lose all meaning. This requires a description of the typical life situations and individual circumstances of those affected that covers all assistance goals and groups to be assisted. The following describes the problems to be dealt with, which occur in very different combinations and weightings in individual cases, and which influence and permeate each other, so being connected with one another in many diverse ways:

Lack of resources

The affected persons are usually unemployed (long-term) and without – or without sufficient – income of their own. Many have no or insufficient schooling and occupational training, or have become victims of occupational de-qualification. Because of this, their ability to act to overcome their lack of resources is limited or largely lost.

Social exclusion – exclusion from the support systems of public welfare and social work

As a consequence of poverty, but also due to other life circumstances, social services and social protection systems are fully or partially inaccessible to the affected men and women. Their exclusion from participation in the life of society can range from partial exclusion from a few areas of life to total social isolation.

Individual life crises due to unrecognised or untreated ailments

One often observes life crises caused by unrecognised or untreated physical illnesses, care needs, disabilities, addictions and mental illness, which are either concomitant symptoms, consequences or part of the cause of social exclusion and poverty. The lack of access to basic medical care, to assistance appropriate to their immediate circumstances, and to treatment for addictions causes many of the affected to experience constant social exclusion and periodic life crises.

Exclusion from secure and trusting personal relationships

Especially for men, divorce, separation, or the loss of a partner due to death can lead simultaneously to the loss of personal relationships and of support networks that had been maintained by their wives. The social isolation caused by poverty and social exclusion can also lead to isolation in the neighbourhood or among friends and acquaintances. Women – and often their children – are frequently abused mentally, physically and sexually. When it becomes necessary to escape from the violent partner, this often leads to homelessness or to being forced to dwell in unacceptable living conditions.

Homelessness, the threat of homelessness and living under unacceptable conditions

Practically all those affected live in an individual form of "housing need". The different types of homelessness range from persons without any shelter at all on the street to people in public emergency shelters or public dormitories to people in hotels or in insecure alternative lodgings with friends and acquaintances. This last form of "hidden homelessness" is particularly common among women, and often leads to particularly demeaning dependencies. Many people in housing need do (still) have an apartment, but are close to losing it or having to leave due to poverty, individual life crises or social exclusion. Others, on the other hand, also live in an apartment, maybe even with the support of a homeless assistance-related service, but their living conditions are actually unacceptable due to the quality of the apartment or the conditions surrounding the apartment.

Persons concerned

In the past, homeless assistance programmes were often aimed at single, male, uprooted ("migrant"), German adults. The share of regional or supra-regional migrant homeless in relation to the total number of homeless has been decreasing for years. The assistance offered is therefore increasingly geared to locally-rooted homeless, for example:

- Women with no housing or insufficient housing
- Men with no housing or insufficient housing
- Couples with no housing or insufficient housing

- Women with children with no housing or insufficient housing
- Men and women without sufficient housing, who still live in a family context but are already so socially isolated as a family or are so close to separation or divorce, that the family has already disintegrated into "single" adults
- Legal and illegal aliens without housing
- Youths between 14 and 18 years of age, who live without housing or who live mainly on the street.

BAWO – AUSTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR THE HOMELESS

Stefan Ohmacht, BAWO

BAWO, Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe, was founded in 1991 as a national umbrella organisation for all organisations working with the homeless. This umbrella organisation allocates 60 % of its services to homelessness. Homelessness is a predominant factor in the overall work program of BAWO. BAWO aims at the realisation of Art. 25 of the UN-Charter of Human Rights defining housing as a fundamental right. This aim is to be achieved by: i) political lobbying for housing for all, ii) setting basic standards of housing and social care for the homeless, iii) networking public and NPO-/NGO-organizations, iv) training for members' staff.

As a nation-wide NGO the organisation provides the training of staff, the networking and exchange of information between service providers and, in general, the further development of services for the homeless. BAWO believes that there is great need for holistic schemes for social work of all types and other forms of support for the homeless at different stages. The Vienna Plan for the Gradual Reintegration of the Homeless (*Wiener Stufenplan gegen Obdachlosigkeit*) was a major achievement, as Austria's capital city decided on a system of different types of intervention (drop-in centres, shelters and hostels, supported housing, permanent homes for the elderly homeless, social housing targeted at the most vulnerable) to support the reintegration of the homeless. At a federal level the organisation lobbies towards the prevention of homelessness and, where homelessness has occurred, towards the provision of professional social services for the homeless on the basis of a national legislation which still does not exist in Austria.

Politically BAWO demands that housing costs have to be compatible with the incomes of individuals and families. BAWO regrets that there is a gap between social policies like the NAP against poverty and social exclusion and housing policies, which are (in Austria) overly focused on the traditional family. BAWO wants housing policies to embrace all those in need, but first and foremost the most vulnerable and most excluded: the homeless.

Members are large national, medium-sized regional and small local service providers, who run day centres, emergency shelters and medium-term hostels, supported housing, eviction prevention and social enterprises for reintegrating the homeless or long term-unemployed back into the labour market. The organisation's president is Renate U. Kitzman and its General Secretary is Stefan Berndt Ohmacht. BAWO is a non-profit organisation according to Austrian law. In the office there are three employees: one social worker (Stefan), one full-time assistant, who is responsible for statistics, and one part-time assistant responsible for the EQUAL project "Empowerment". There are 13 members on the Board, representing member organisations from all regions of Austria, who contribute on a voluntary basis. Members in 6 out of 9 regions run regional networks with meetings, joint public events and political lobbying. One of these regional networks has founded an organisation itself.

BAWO currently has approximately 40 member organisations and 80 individual members. Its members comprise the majority of service providers for the homeless in all 9 provinces of the federal republic of Austria. Its membership ranges from large nation-wide providers like the probation service (*Neustart*), large regional organisations (e.g. *Caritas Vienna*) with app. 2.300 staff and services for the homeless in just one branch, medium sized

regional organisations providing a range of services to the homeless¹ to small local organisations with the character of „projects“. Its members provide different kinds of services for the homeless – from day care and back-to-work programs to emergency shelters and hostels, from supported housing to permanent housing and care for the homeless elderly. Member organisations contribute 130€ p.a. as membership fee, personal members 30€ p.a., they receive BAWO news and get discounts at all of BAWO's training seminars.

Since 1992 BAWO has been organising Annual Seminars for all its members, which is the major event for all social workers dealing with homelessness. About 80-100 colleagues participate each year. Its magazine 'BAWO news' provides information and a discussion forum for all practitioners working with the homeless in Austria, regardless of whether they work for a member organisation or are individual members themselves. BAWO undertook the first nation-wide research on homelessness and services provided for the homeless in Austria in 1999. Since then, it has provided continuous documentation of the social situation and of services for the homeless in the vicinity of Vienna and, where possible, in other regions of Austria. The City Council of Graz, Austria's 2nd largest city and the regional government of Styria have commissioned BAWO to analyse homelessness in Graz and to draft a plan of new measures to combat this social problem effectively.

Activities planned for the coming years are a study on youth homelessness and a campaign against youth homelessness. In the coming years the following is also planned:

In the framework of the EU-Initiative EQUAL, BAWO has joined two partnerships to develop ways of improving working conditions in the „third“ sector of the economy, namely social services. In one project, BAWO and its partners will develop tools to support workers in small and medium-sized NPO's/NGO's in Austria, and BAWO itself will develop an Internet tool to facilitate the search for affordable and „tailor-made“ seminars and other professional training resources. In a second project, BAWO's partners are developing a social enterprise for „house-sitting“ since there is a lack of qualified supply in Austria. These jobs will be offered primarily to people in danger of eviction. About 50 full-time or part-time jobs are currently available, but we know that about 500 jobs could be created. This program will run until 2004 and will hopefully prove to be sustainable and self-supporting.

BAWO offers a nation-wide seminar program to train social workers and other workers in organisations for both members and non-members (with reduced fees for members). As seminars are very expensive in Austria and the financial situation of many NGO's is very tight, BAWO is offering its program at affordable rates for organisations and their employees.

Next event: The annual training seminar, which will take place from 7th to 9th of May, 2003 in Spital am Pyhrn / Upper Austria. Plus: A variety of training seminars on different issues in different regions of Austria will be offered to members and non-members in 2003.

Publications

- BAWOnews - the quarterly newsletter of all professionals with an average of 12 pages, for the price of 1.09 €.
 - Social Situation of the Homeless in Vienna, Statistical Analysis, annual reports commissioned by the Vienna City Council, Social Department, Vienna, 1998-2002.
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- BAWO 'Grundlagenstudie's study on homelessness in Austria – the first nation-wide research delivering both quantitative and qualitative results, Vienna 1999
- Booklet of services and service providers nation-wide, 1998

European Partnerships and International Exchange

Exchange of experience /best practices with other members of FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. *Building European Partnerships in the Fight Against Homelessness* (PHARE-project, under leadership of the Czech Salvation Army with partners in PL, D, H, E, RO). BAWO would like to co-operate on a European level more intensely, for example on defining common standards of social work with the homeless, best-practice exchange, and the standards for comparing housing policies regarding social inclusion and the 'missing link' between social and housing policies.

FEANTSA – FÉDÉRATION EUROPÉENNE D'ASSOCIATIONS NATIONALES TRAVAILLANT AVEC LES SANS-ABRI

Organisation Presentation

FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless, was established in 1989 as a European non-governmental organisation (in French, FEANTSA stands for la Fédération Européenne d'Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-Abri).

The more than 90 member organisations of FEANTSA come from 23 European countries, including all 15 Member States of the European Union. Members are non-governmental organisations that provide a wide range of services to homeless people including accommodation and social support. Most of the members of FEANTSA are national or regional umbrella organisations of service providers. They often work in close co-operation with public authorities, social housing providers and other relevant actors.

FEANTSA is the only major European network that focuses exclusively on homelessness at European level. FEANTSA receives financial support from the European Commission for the implementation of its activities. FEANTSA works closely with the EU institutions, and has consultative status at the Council of Europe and at the United Nations.

Structure

FEANTSA is democratically structured to involve member organisations in as many aspects of our work as possible. The guiding bodies of FEANTSA are the General Assembly (which involves all member organisations), an Administrative Council (consisting of one representative for each EU Member State) and an Executive Committee (comprised of up to 7 members drawn from the Administrative Council). FEANTSA also has a small office based in Brussels, which is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the network.

Influencing Policy

FEANTSA is engaged in constant dialogue with the European institutions and national and regional governments and promotes the development and implementation of effective measures to fight homelessness. FEANTSA is involved in making European, national, and regional decision-makers aware of the urgent need to develop pro-active policies aimed at effectively preventing homelessness. FEANTSA is raising public awareness about the complexity of homelessness and the multidimensional nature of the problems faced by homeless people.

Transnational Exchanges

FEANTSA promotes and facilitates the exchange of information, experience and best practice between FEANTSA's member organisations. This exchange gives members access to effective and innovative approaches to the problem of homelessness.

For this purpose FEANTSA organises regular European seminars and conferences which bring together service providers, researchers and decision-makers. In addition, FEANTSA has four working groups, where members discuss relevant issues and themes surrounding housing, employment, health and social protection and data collection (statistics and indicators).

FEANTSA prepares regular policy documents on relevant issues based on the results of transnational exchange. Both these reports and the resulting policy statements are available on the website and through the FEANTSA office in Brussels.

Research

FEANTSA is dedicated to facilitating research to promote better understanding of the complexity and the changing nature of homelessness. Research findings are circulated to other academics, as well as to the service providers for homeless people and policy makers. This research provides insights into the theoretical nature of homelessness as well as trends and provides a strong scientific base for service providers and policy makers to construct policy and programmes.

FEANTSA established the European Observatory on Homelessness in 1991. This network is composed of 15 national research correspondents from the 15 EU countries who have built up extensive experience in the field of homelessness and housing exclusion.

Up to 2002, the Observatory produced a series of national reports on specific research themes related to homelessness. These reports formed the basis of a European publication that examines and analyses transnational trends. These national and transnational reports are available for sale through the FEANTSA office in Brussels.

Networking

The aim is to strengthen co-operation with other international organisations. Based on established trans-sectoral co-operation at national level, FEANTSA develops similar partnerships at European level. These partnerships enhance FEANTSA's ability to influence policy making.

FEANTSA works closely with CECODHAS (European Liaison Committee for Social Housing) and EUROCITIES (a European network of large cities). FEANTSA is a founding member of the European Housing Forum (a forum of European organisations active in the field of housing), the Platform of European Social NGOs, and EAPN (European Anti-Poverty Network). For more information please contact freek.spinnewijn@feantsa.org

Communication

The aim of communication is to inform FEANTSA members as well as a wider audience involved in fighting homelessness. Our website provides all visitors, be they member organisations, policy-makers, researchers, service providers, and members of the general public with important information, analysis and links on homelessness and housing exclusion issues. The website is a central resource centre for information and expertise on homelessness in Europe.

FEANTSA also publishes an on-line electronic magazine (Homeless in Europe) three times each year. The magazine has a thematic approach and each issue focuses on a different aspect of homelessness in Europe. Each month, an e-mail update (FEANTSA Flash) provides readers with information and analysis on European issues, as well as contributions from our member organisations and news items from across Europe. To subscribe to the FEANTSA Flash, please contact samara.jones@feantsa.org

PRACTICAL ADDITION

ADVICE FOR PREPARATION OF GRANT APPLICATION

Christine Lambert, FEANTSA

General Advice

- Carefully read all the instructions
- Adjust your project to specifications of the application
- Contact the local representative of European Commission for further information

Budget Preparation

- Prepare a budget of individual activities
- Even though the project is still vague, the budget must be detailed
- Start with budget preparation of an ideal project, then make corrections
- When taking in consideration salaries of the staff then remember to take in consideration total costs including social and health bonuses
- When stating translation costs, be careful, one page of bulletin has more words than one page of report
- Concerning costs for interpretation, foresee how many languages could be offered
- Concerning travel costs, contact the travel agencies or check the prices on internet
- Concerning hotel costs, ask for prices of several hotels in certain locality
- Concerning travel and diets, assume that all invited participants will attend
- Compare the time schedule of project with the payment conditions of the grant – most grants are paid in several payments
- Make sure that all included costs are eligible costs
- Ask co-financial partners for declaration of commitment to the project

Co-financing of the Project

- EU never covers 100% of total costs
- The maximum % of EU contribution is stated in instructions
- Firstly find out what could be the maximum contribution of your own organisation towards the project
- Discuss with the partners what is the maximum contribution they can offer
- Seek other donors – foundations etc.
- Take in consideration other possibilities such as sponsors or dinners, receptions prepared by other partners
- Would the participants be willing to pay a fee or contribute towards the accommodation costs?

Budget Control and Financial Reports

- After the project is accepted, again look carefully at the budget
- If necessary, during planning of project implementation, re-do the budget
- If there are major changes in types of costs, contact the local EU office and make sure that these changes are acceptable
- Try to split the budget into monthly costs and incomes
- Assume the possible problems with finances

Budget Control and Financial Reports

- Start with a budget control system
- One person should have the total control of the budget
- Other people can be responsible for specific areas of the budget
- Make accurate records of all the expenditures

- Use specific forms for budget controls

Budget Control and Financial Reports

- If over budget in one area, then immediately find another area, from which the money could be transferred and used for compensation
- Or seek supplementary resources, which would cover those extra costs
- Never ignore this problem!

Budget Control and Financial Reports

- Try to lead accounts of the project separately from the general activities of organisation
- Open separate bank account
- Put together a graph of individual accounts of the project – analytical accounting
- Record real expenditure on budget control forms
- Ask your accounting department for monthly reports
- All invoices should be checked before paying
- Keep all documents for further control
- Keep all invoices in project documentation
- In a good time prepare all reports for the EU

INFORMATION ABOUT PROJECT PARTNERS

Association of Hostels (S.A.D.), Czech Republic

Contact person: Petr Janoušek

email: Petr_Janousek@czh.salvationarmy.org

web: www.azylovedomy.cz

Postal address: S.A.D., Tusarova 60, 170 00 Praha 7, Czech Republic

S.A.D. is a professional national umbrella organisation, which associates more than 100 hostels in the Czech Republic. S.A.D. wishes to increase the quality of services provided within the hostel accommodation, prepares educational programs for the staff, represents the rights of the excluded and represents the rights of NGOs, working in this area, in contact with government and local municipal authorities.

Armáda spásy, Czech Republic (The Salvation Army)

Contact person: Jakub Tomašík, M.A.

email: Jakub_Tomastik@czh.salvationarmy.org

web: www.armadaspasy.cz

Postal address: Armáda spásy, Petržilkova 2565/23, 158 00 Praha 5, Czech Republic

The Salvation Army is international Christian church, which provides wide spectrum of services to socially excluded people. Its aim is to integrate these people back to the society. In the Czech republic The Salvation Army is running 12 hostels for men, women, mothers with children and seniors, 12 community centres, 1 centre for youth. The Salvation Army is also working within 20 prisons in the Czech republic.

Naděje, Czech Republic

Contact person: Ilja Hradecký

email: hradecky@nadeje.cz

web: www.nadeje.cz

Postal address: Naděje, Varšavská 37, 120 00 Praha 2, Czech republic

Naděje (The Hope) is a Czech organisation offering social, health, educational and other services to excluded people or to those who might be faced with exclusion. Within their work they concentrate on specific groups of people – homeless, elderly, children and adults with mental and combined handicaps, lonely children, distress youth. Daily the centres are visited by approximately 2000 people. The principle of the association is to offer complete and holistic approach within the wide spectrum of services.

European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless, FEANTSA, Brussels

Contact person: Jorge Rodriguez

email: office@feantsa.org

web: www.feantsa.org

Postal address: FEANTSA, Chaussée de Louvain 194, 1210 Brussels, Belgium

FEANTSA is European federation of national organisations working with the homeless people. More than 70 members are coming from more than 20 EU countries and another 15 candidate countries. FEANTSA members are non-governmental organisations, which are

offering wide spectrum of services to homeless people, including accommodation and other social support. Most of its members are national or regional umbrella organisations uniting service providers.

BAG-W German Association of Service Providers to Homeless, Germany

Contact person: Thomas Specht-Kittler

email: info@bagw.de

web: www.bagw.de

Postal address: BAG Wohnungslosenhilfe e.V., Postfach 130148, 33544 Bielefeld, Germany

BAG-W is national umbrella organisation associating more than 70 % of all German associations working with homeless people. BAG-W executes co-ordination, represents the rights of homeless and socially isolated people. Co-ordinates communication and exchange of experience with other organisations working in this area

BAWO – Austrian Association of Service Providers to Homeless, Austria

Contact person: Stefan Ohmacht

E-mail: office@bawo.at

Web: www.bawo.at

Postal address: BAWO, Radetzkystrasse 27/2/14, A-1030 Wien, Austria

BAWO is national umbrella organisation uniting all organisations working with the homeless. BAWO aims at the realisation of Art. 25 of the UN-Charter of Human Rights defining housing as a fundamental right. This aim is to be achieved by political lobbying, networking and training for members' staff.

Pokoj a Dobro, Slovakia (Pax Et Bonum)

Contact person: PhDr. Viera Vávrová

email: vavrova.viera@hc.vs.sk

web: -

Postal address: Kpt. Nálepku 6/B, 920 01 Hlohovec, Slovakia

Pokoj a Dobro (Peace and Goodness) is Slovakian civic association, which was founded in 1993 by Francis order and Municipality Hlohovec. The aim of association is to help people in social crisis. Pokoj a Dobro is running two hostel projects, hostel for men with capacity of 22beds and home for girls leaving children home and abused women with capacity of 17 beds.

BARKA Foundation, Poland

Contact person: Barbara Sadowska

email: barka@barka.org.pl

web: www.barka.org.pl

Postal address: Fundacja Pomocy Wzajemnej, ul. sw. Marcin 30/14, 61-806 Poznań, Poland

BARKA foundation is non profit organisation. Its aim is to offer support with social development of excluded people and setting conditions for these people so through new possibilities change their lives. BARKA offers different possibilities – educational courses, practical work, community farms etc. The aim of BARKA is to create a system of help within the process of including these people back to society.

Az Udvhadsereg, Hungary (The Salvation Army)

Contact person: Elisabeth Frei

email: Elisabeth_Frei@swi.salvationarmy.org

web: www.heilsarmee.ch

Postal address: Az Udvhadsereg, Bajnok utca 25 H, 1063 Budapest VI, Hungary

The Salvation Army is international Christian church, which provides wide spectrum of services to socially excluded people. Its aim is to integrate these people back to the society. The Salvation Army in Hungary is running hostel for homeless men and women, community centres, which are providing daily services to socially isolated groups of people.

Maltese Charity Service, Hungary

Contact person: Boróka Fehér

email: mmszbp@hu.inter.net

web: www.mmszbp.hu

Postal address: Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat, 1033 Miklós u. 32, Budapest, Hungary

Maltese Charity Services (MMCHS) is the largest NGO working with the homeless in Budapest. At the beginning of 1990 the MMCHS started with many services for homeless: hostel accommodation for homeless men, hostels for families with children, elderly people, day centres, mobile health clinic, rooms for ill people, TB test units etc. The aim groups of MMCHS are the homeless people, but also elderly people, children and youth.

Casa Ioana Association, Rumunia

Contact person: Ian Tilling

email: office@casaioana.org

web: www.casaioana.org

Postal address: The Casa Ioana Association, Strada Dr. Marcovici Alex. No. 2, Floor 5, Rooms 360-362, Sector 1, Bucuresti, Rumunia

The aim of Casa Ioana Association is education, rehabilitation and social services to people with special needs – especially the handicapped, socially excluded and those with less possibilities including children and young adults. Since 1998 Casa Ioana Association is involved in inclusion of homeless men, women and their children back to the society.

Kofoed's School (Koføeds Skole), Denmark

Contact person: Ole Melgaard

email: ole@kofoedsskole.dk

web: www.kofoedsskole.dk

Postal address: Koføeds Skole, Nyrnberggade 1, 2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark

Kofoed's school is independent, non-profit humanitarian organisation, which provides assistance to self-help to people with socio-economical problems. Each day of the week approx. 700 students, who are usually unemployed or otherwise excluded from society, attend the school. The school offers different courses, workshops, rehabilitation, activation, work experience, consultations and assistance in crisis situations.

Administració, Promoció i Gestió (ADIGSA), Spain

Contact person: David Companion i Costa

email: dcompanyon@correu.gencat.es

web: -

postal address: ADIGSA, Disputació 92, 8015 Barcelona, Spain

XARXA, Spain

Contact person: Faudhil Moussi

email: xarxafor@infonegocio.com

web: -

Postal address: XARXA, Joan de Austria 8, Liria, 46160 Valencia, Spain

ANNEX

PHOTO DESCRIPTION

Activity 1: Fight against Homelessness and its Prevention, March 2002, Prague

1. Project preparation team – representatives of S.A.D., Naděje and Armády spásy
2. Field visit – Naděje, Prague
3. Field visit – Armáda spásy, Prague
4. Meeting of Lord Mayor of Prague with representatives of Partner Organisations at the Old Town Hall – Jan Kasl, Jakub Tomašík, John Evans
5. Press Conference – representatives of MPSV, FEANTSA, S.A.D., Naděje a Armády spásy
6. Workshop

Activity 2: From Night Shelter to Accommodation, September 2002, Poznan, Poland

7. BARKA – Kofoed's School – children of student in the kindergarten
8. BARKA – Wladyslawowo – First Home of BARKA
9. BARKA – Wladyslawowo, meeting of partner organisation representatives with the staff and the clients
10. BARKA – Chudopczyce, farm
11. Workshop – Municipality Hall in Poznan
12. Workshop – Municipality Hall in Poznan, photo of representatives

Activity 3: Training Seminar for Providers of Social Services, November 2002, Prague

13. Training Seminar
14. Training Seminar – Ilja Hradecký (Naděje), Michel Mercadié (vice-president FEANTSA and representative of FNARS, France), Jakub Tomašík (Armáda spásy)
15. Training Seminar – John Evans
16. Training Seminar – Ruud van Enk (Delegation of the EU v Czech Republic)

Activity 4: Study visit to Vienna – national umbrella organisations, January 2003, Vienna

17. Workshop
18. Ivan Fiala (NROS – co-ordinator of Phare Access programmes)
19. Representatives of partner organisation from Rumania and Hungary
20. CARLA – visit of warehouse with second hand products
21. Thomas Specht-Kittler (president FEANTSA)

