Chapter I

The HOME_EU Project on Housing First as a Path to End Homelessness in Europe

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Abstract:

Homelessness is a persistent, prevailing and life threatening and deprivation situation that is the expression of major structural, institutional and circumstantial maladjustments. In this contribution we provide some background information about the contributions upon which the HOME_EU Project is anchored, how we perceived and structured the Horizon 2020 challenge, and reflect upon the potential impacts for the present and future strategies to reverse homelessness in Europe.

Key Words

Homelessness – Housing First - Social Impact

The HOME_EU Project Background

The HOME_EU Project emerged from a longstanding experience of research and intervention with University-Community partnerships in areas associated with community mental health, deinstitutionalization and social integration of people with severe mental illness. Since 2009, we coordinated a National Research Project "Capabilities Approach and Integration of People with Mental Illness" [PTDC PSI-PCL/113301/2009 Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia], that resulted in contributions for an in-depth understanding of the potential of crucial roles for practice of constructs such as Empowerment, Recovery (Jorge-Monteiro; Ornelas, 2016 a and b), and the applicability of the Capabilities framework within Community Mental Health (Sacchetto... Ornelas, 2016; Sachetto, Ornelas, Calheiros and Shinn, 2018).

During the same year of 2009, the Housing First model for long-term homelessness, severe mental illness and substance use, was introduced in Portugal through a state-community-university partnership, with a Protocol signed amongst the stakeholders and international consultants Sam Tsemberis and Marybeth Shinn.

Protocol signature at ISPA – Instituto Universitário with Teresa Duarte (President of the Board of the AEIPS, the implementing NGO), Edmundo Martinho (Director of the Social Welfare Institute), Marybeth Shinn (Vanderbilt University), Sam Tsemberis (Pathways to Housing) and José Ornelas (ISPA – University Institute Lisboa, Portugal).

This pilot-project with 65 houses, supported by the Ministry of Social Welfare, and integrated in the 2010 European year against Poverty and Social Exclusion[1].

> *Link for Video "Getting out of Poverty - Manuel – Portugal, available at:*
>
> *https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/2010againstpoverty/mediagallery/video_en.htm*

The program was progressively integrated in intervention programmatic initiatives, including the national homelessness strategies (2009-2013[2]), and later the (2017-2023[3]). The development of Housing First programs[4] was crucial for the understanding and documentation of the challenges associated with the implementation of an individual, scattered, and permanent Housing First Program for people with long-term homelessness experiences, and severe health, mental health and/or addiction related situations (Ornelas, Martins, Zilhão, Duarte, 2014; Ornelas, Jorge-Monteiro, Duarte, 2014; Ornelas, Esposito, Sacchetto, 2014; Martins, Ornelas, Silva, 2016).

During the previous years of entailing the HOME_EU Project there were intensive network building

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[1] Link for Video "Getting out of Poverty - Manuel – Portugal, available at:https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/2010againstpoverty/mediagallery/video_en.htm

[2] National Strategy for the Integration of Homeless People: Prevention, Intervention and Follow-up http://www.seg-social.pt/documents/10152/13334/enipsa_2009_2015

[3] National Strategy for the Integration of the Person in an Homelessness Situation http://www.enipssa.pt/enipssa

[4] In 2009 with the Associação para o Estudo e Integração Psicossocial (www.aeips.pt); In 2011 with the Municipality of Cascais and the NGO "Gaivotas da Torre" https://www.redesocialcascais.net/respostassociais/clube-gaivotas-da-torre-apoio-alimentar/; in 2013 with the Associação CRESCER – Associação de Integração Comunitária (www.crescer.org/)

efforts in different locations including the European Countries United States and Canada, with whom we have long-standing research and practice exchange within scientific organizations (e.g. Society for Community Research and Action; European Community Association; European Federation of Psychology Associations, and other extended world-wide networks), and also extended network of Housing First program implementation partners that organized Conferences in Lisboa (2013), Limerick (2015), Padova (2018) and the next is planned for Toronto (2021), that are crucial for efforts for sustainability, mutual support, and socio-political influence. Prior academic, research and intervention practice was also crucial to delineate a project that reflected both the knowledge of the field of intervention in direct contexts on providing housing and supports for people with long term experiences of homelessness.

HOME_EU Reversing Homelessness in Europe: The Challenge

The project was integrated in a call on reversing inequalities with the reference H2020-SC6- REV-INEQUAL – 2016, that challenged proponents to advance an empirically informed European Theory of Justice and fairness.

The consortium was composed of **7 Universities** (ISPA - University Institute, Portugal; UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK, Ireland; UNIVERSITA DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA, Italy; UNIWERSYTET OPOLSKI, Poland; STICHTING KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT, The Netherlands; UNIVERSITE D'AIX MARSEILLE, France KAROLINSKA INSTITUTET, Sweden; **one Municipality** CAMARA MUNICIPAL DE LISBOA, **one Federation** EUROPEENNE D'ASSOCIATIONS NATIONALES TRAVAILLANT AVEC LES SANS-ABRI, Belgium, and **3 NGO's** ASSOCIACAO PARA O ESTUDO E INTEGRACAO PSICOSOCIAL, Portugal; CRESCER, Portugal, and RAI S, Spain.

Final Congress, Madrid June 2019

This consortium was characterised by different forms of diversity namely different organizational structures, differentiated backgrounds and fields of expertise including the concrete intervention with Housing First and Stair Case Model Services and outreach teams; the consortium also integrates policy stakeholders associated with direct implementation of policies and financing programs; researchers were also integrated coming from different scientific fields, including psychology, clinical and medical sciences, and health economy, epidemiology, social work, and political science. Each of the partners played a different roles focused on responding to the challenge here organized in three main vectors: a) the systematization of personal accounts of inequality; b) Housing as a Human Rights approach to Homelessness, and c) Facilitate the social dialogue about integration.

a) Systematization of personal accounts of inequality

Within the HOME_EU consortium we acknowledge the power and relevance of experiential knowledge (e.g. Borkman, 1976; Baillergeau & Duyvendak, 2016), therefore our studies proposed were delineated to gather systematized information to document circumstances, opinions, experiences and narratives (first person accounts) about how Homelessness is an expression of extreme inequality.

The studies involved people with current and past experiences of HOMELESSNESS (periods ≥ 1 year), and we were aware of prior accounts of people who were in homelessness situations for periods from 10 to 20 years. So, the voice of those with personal experience is essential for the in-depth understanding on how to reverse it.

The quantitative data were gathered in two-time points through an extensive protocol (Greenwood, et al., 2020) designed to expand our understanding the ways in which the Housing First and the Stair Case model services may be differentiated both on the rationale and the outcomes. The protocol was organized in three main axes: 1. Setting & Support Services (Work Alliance; Service Satisfaction; Choice; Housing Quality); 2. Rehabilitation related Recovery (Housing Status; Psychiatric Symptoms; Alcohol and Drug Use, and Physical Health), and 3. Personal Growth related Recovery (Mastery; Capabilities, Recovery; Community Integration, and Distal social supports) (See also Chapter II of this publication).

In Greenwood...Ornelas (2019), we focused on the relevance of recovery with an approach aimed at the access to resources, but also a capability and personal growth approach for those who experience homelessness. From this rational we also needed to expand our understanding of the meaning of recovery including notions of sense of community and citizenship, also present in other studies (e.g. Pelletier et al, 2015 or Ponce and Rowe, 2018). Therefore we probed to determine whether participants in Housing First Programs reported fewer psychiatric symptoms, and experienced more community integration, justifying the need to advocate for an independent, scattered and permanent model as emphasized by Tsemberis, 2010 (cit.in Idem, 2019). The overall results indicate that there are significant group differences in which the Housing First group report significantly more choice, housing quality, and satisfaction with services. The Housing First group spent more time in independent accommodation (their Own homes), reported fewer psychiatric symptoms, and greater community integration.

The qualitative section of the Service User's Study was delineated to expand the potential of the Capabilities approach associated with the lived experiences of Housing First and other Service Programs.

Considering that the participants of the Housing First Programs experienced long-term Homelessness, may support the comparison their experiences both on their present situation in Housing First and their previous experiences in Stair Case Model Services. The description of other Homelessness services are also documented by participants who are still living on the streets, are using shelters or other transitory accommodation. In this section of the service user's study, it is emphasized the meaning of having a home as a means towards enhance personal capacities, improving the social relations, increasing personal affordances and reducing constraints associated with the homelessness situation. For personal experience we also probed to document with people who are currently homeless how their situation threatens their longevity, health, mental health and global well-being (see also Chapter II of this Publication).

b) Housing as Human Rights Promotion

We understand the human rights approach, and the Millennium Development Goals[5] provide a guiding framework to advance housing as a basic human right (for more information see "Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness"[6], and assumed by the EU as stated in the Articles 18 (Long-term care) and 19 (Housing and assistance for the homeless) of the EU Pillar of Social Rights (2017)[7].

Systematic country-based and cross-country information on how the current public policies impact real people in concrete homelessness situations. Perceive the role of services in reversing their Homelessness circumstances. Demonstrate how Homelessness is a barrier to basic human rights attainment in the perspective, Service Providers and Key-Stakeholders. For this purpose, we probed to document the preferences of the EU Citizens and how are they were distributed in a continuum of tolerance vs. contest Homelessness in the Human Rights Perspective.

Petit...Auquier (2019), reported that 76% of the Citizens living in the eight partner countries consider that the governments should invest more to end homelessness, and 49% (with wide country variations) are willing to pay for the housing first as an innovative model.

Based on the contribution by Gaboardi...Shinn (2019), documenting the service providers perspective, we were able to understand that both Housing First and Traditional Stair Case Model service providers share the same goals and principles, but discussed and experienced differently within each of the Teams. The Housing First model providers enhance the collaborative capacity with other services and community resources to respond to concrete service user's situations, and tend to discuss more and challenge the existent resources, and require more specialize training to support their intervention (See also Chapter IV of this publication).

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[5] For more information see https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

[6] The Resolution https://undocs.org/E/CN.5/2020/3

[7] European Pillar of Social Rights https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en

From the social policy studies (See Vargas-Moniz, et al. in this publication) we also were able to understand that Housing First is already transversally incorporated in the national and strategic policy documents in the eight counties. A substantive percentage of socio-political stakeholders (62.6%) consider homelessness a moderate or a major social problem in their Municipalities, and acknowledge (42.4%) that there is no policy aimed at reversing homelessness in their region or country. When we focus exclusively on the Housing First Model 16.2% is already aimed at in the local policies, and 15.7% that is already implemented in their municipality, it is important to mention that although data were collected in 31 European cities including a set of major capitals, the implementation is still expanding. Through these exploratory data we are now better prepared to implement data-driven strategies for the differentiation of concrete policy analysis, the perception and concrete implementation of homelessness policies. We may develop guidelines for mainstreaming solutions and result oriented proposals for transformative social policies.

c) Facilitate a Dialogue about Social Integration

The generation of a fruitful dialogue amongst different ecological levels of analysis incorporated sectors who play a crucial role, both on understanding the problem, but also the focus on collaborative solutions approaches (Wolf, 2010). So, for the HOME_EU studies we have included individuals with personal homelessness experience, professionals working in Housing First support teams and Stair Case model services including temporary shelters, day-care centres or outreach teams, socio-political stakeholders with direct responsibilities reflect the acknowledgement that transformative community science requires the understandings and perspectives from different implicated stakeholders with different scientific backgrounds (e.g. psychology, philosophy, public health, health, social work or political science). Through this myriad of stakeholders we were able to have an in-depth understanding of the social dynamics around a complex phenomenon such as homelessness, including the public perceptions.

Adopting insights from community science such as advancing systematic understanding of the links between individuals and communities, the ability to respond to pressing community problems, integrating science and socially relevant interventions, as well as changing public policies (e.g. Wandersman, 2003; Tebes, 2017).

From this premise we organized an empirical multilevel reflection of inequalities to support social innovation and the development of services and practice aimed at reversing inequalities related to Homelessness.

This selection of Ecological levels of analysis EU Citizens, User's, Providers, Policy Actors, and Policy related documents, provide us a broad and updated perspective on the stakeholders with a relevant role on this particular phenomenon, and inform an evidence-based perspective aimed to reduce unfairness and concrete inequalities.

One of the basic concepts anchoring this project is the capabilities approach as a guiding theory to pursue social justice operationalizing the theory into an empirical strategy. The consortium acknowledges the Housing First as a mean to reverse unfairness, and that is an intervention inspired by the ecological perspective requiring the direct connection with contextual intervention to understand how stakeholder's

perceptions and experiences influence both causes and solutions of a severe social problem such as Long-Term Homelessness.

This framework is relevant for understanding and measuring economic welfare and human development; initially proposed by Amartya Sen with a critical reflection on how to conceptualize and measure equality, poverty and justice (Sen, 1980; 1985). Sen argues that traditional approaches, such as utilitarianism do not include consideration of crucial dimensions when assessing of human well-being and quality of life. Sen´s new proposal was to shift the focus from incomes and commodities to opportunities and agency; from resources or means to capabilities or ends. Sen's idea of justice is a social choice theory (Sen, 2010), based on the analysis of liberties and rights also inspired by Rawls (1971). This approach has underpinned measurement of welfare and social outcomes of efforts towards global poverty reduction at the transnational level. For instance, Sen´s approach was used in the UN's Human Development Report (UNDP, 2010).

The HOME_EU Project current and prospective Impacts

Considering that the EU Governments are being pressured mostly by civic society organizations to support housing options to respond to homelessness, the role of evidence practices and the emergency of an informed theory of justice, requires effective forms of communication that reversing homelessness does not include options such as new forms of institutionalization such as reopening the doors of major psychiatric institutions, prisons, or asylums for the people in extreme poverty. Reversing homelessness is not about expanding new forms of congregating people in segregated urban areas, or develop congregated housing options like apartment buildings or group-homes in the community that concentrate problematic situations generating new forms of inequality and unfairness.

The HOME_EU compromise was to empirically inform a European based theory of justice generating a debate and a renovated focus on concrete action focused on individualized, scattered and permanent housing solutions for the people who experience long-term homelessness, for which the housing is the departing point for a recovery and integration path. The Housing First model represents a paradigm shift for the integrated nature of social intervention, a strategy to renew the social fabric of cities, and a renovated opportunity to rethink the community life, contributing for the reversion of severe inequalities.

From 2016 to 2020 and in alignment with the aims of the HOME_EU Project some advancements have been achieved.

The Housing First model in the partner countries and others largely emerged with the impulse of civic society organizations or movements has up-scaled from pilot or experience projects to integrate the national strategies on Homelessness, being explicitly adopted as a privileged social policy in France, Ireland, and Spain. It is mentioned in national documents and operating and with Local Government and Municipal support in The Netherlands, Portugal (2009 National, currently Municipal) and Sweden, and Italy, and Poland started in 2019 a pilot project in 3 major cities. Other locations in EU countries are also adopting and/or upscaling Housing First Programs (e.g. Romania, Check Republic, Norway, etc.).

Nevertheless, the HOME_EU project advances a crucial model feature that potentiates capabilities, recovery

and community integration that is an individualized, scattered and permanent housing as opposed to group or congregate formats of housing for people who experience long-term homelessness.

Therefore the debate and the results dissemination are still relevant in order to ensure effectiveness and results in preventing recurrent paths of homelessness and advance the relevance of community science to support the reversion of severe and persistence of social phenomena.

There are many recent and relevant documents and reports tackling the current status of Homelessness in Europe; the FEANTSA's fourth report on the Index of Housing Exclusion (2019), focused on the role of housing in the life of the EU populations and with some close-up examples with a country focused perspective; the OECD (2020) policy brief on data and policies to respond to homelessness are relevant, particularly for the descriptive nature and explanatory potential on what might be the potential or the perceived causes of homelessness. This report advances a threefold series of causes including structural, institutional and individual to explain homelessness; each of the mentioned elements are relevant but the interdependency of the three realms is in fact far more challenging from the point of view of the effectiveness of reversing the concrete situations of the people who find themselves is the Rawlsian "contingency of social circumstances".

One of the contributions of the HOME_EU was the study conducted with the participant of European Citizens in France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, with a sample size was 5600, with 700 per country adult citizens, selected from opt-in panels from March to December 2017. Homelessness prevalence was 4.96% for lifetime (95% CI 4.39% to 5.59%), 1.92% in the past 5 years (95% CI 1.57% to 2.33%) and 0.71% for the past year (95% CI 0.51% to 0.98%) and varied significantly between countries (see Taylor...Auquier, 2019 and Chapther III of this Publication).

The prevalence of homelessness among the surveyed nations is significantly higher than might be expected from point- in- time and homeless service use statistics. There was substantial variation in estimated prevalence across the eight nations. Coupled with the well- established health impacts of homelessness, medical professionals need to be aware of the increased health risks of those with experience of homelessness. These findings support policies aiming to improve health services for people exposed to homelessness.

The perceive causes of Homelessness by the European Citizens configures another contribution of the HOME_EU Project When asked to list the three leading causes of homelessness, respondents in every country mentioned job loss (60.3% of overall sample); addiction was also mentioned in all countries, except in France where indebtedness was mentioned more frequently, closely followed by divorce or the loss of family, rent arrears, with addiction appearing fifth. In all countries, the majority of respondents thought that homeless people had shorter lifespans than members of the general population, were the victims of violence, and were discriminated against when seeking employment. A sizeable proportion of respondents (48.3%) agreed with the statement that homeless people remain homeless by choice.

Respondents from our study reported not seeing people who are homeless in an average week, recognized an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness over the last 3 years, as confirmed by recent figures from European countries. Compared to the 2010 Eurobarometer survey, a much higher proportion reported that many people in their area are homeless (14% vs. 3%). This combination may

reflect policies in force across several countries to reduce the visibility of people who are homeless by moving them on from public spaces, banning panhandling, or the hostile design of urban spaces to deter rough sleeping, whilst demonstrating that such policies have not been effective at deflecting or ameliorating public concern with or awareness of homelessness. This argument therefore corroborates that the complexities of such numbers require a careful reading of prevalence rates (Idem, 2019).

There are several reported impacts for the HOME_EU Partners, including presentations in major National Governmental or Institutional instances (e.g. the Irish Parliament; the Portuguese President or the Spanish Prime Minister).

Presentations in major international sessions with different scales and scopes, from which we emphasize a few Fifty-eighth session of the Commission for Social Development: 10 – 19 February 2020 in an NGO session organized by SPSSI (Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues), represented by Ronni Greenwood, and the Portuguese national accreditation of Maria Vargas-Moniz; the presentation by the PI and Teresa Duarte in the International Seminar "Moradia para População em Situação de Rua"[8] for Governmental instances in Brasilia; the presentation of the PI on the National Norwegian national strategy "Housing for Welfare: National Strategy fir housing and support services (2014-2020)"[9].

The consortium members invested in being present in several international scientific events and symposia, besides the events integrated in the HOME_EU Project, presenting and disseminating results in different scientific areas including psychology, public health, mental health in different countries including France (Nice), Ireland (Dublin), United States (Chicago and S. Francisco), Canada (Ottawa), Chile (Santiago), Portugal (Lisboa, Oporto), Hungary (Budapest), or Russia (Moscow).

In terms of national devolution of the The HOME_EU results, the Italian Partner team lead by Massimo Santinello from the University of Padova organized an Event in the University of Roma "La Sapienza", with the presentation of the HOME_EU results, and promoted several Photovoice exhibitions across Italian Cities; the Portuguese team organized an event in Lisboa at ISPA – Instituto Universitário for national stakeholders

The Spanish partner consolidated their visibility with formal presentations with the Prime Minister, the National Coordinator of the Spanish Research Agendas 2030, and the Final HOME_EU Project Congress, was held in Madrid with an expressive support to Housing First of the Minister of Health. In Portugal there was a Protocol signed with the HOME_EU and the National Portuguese strategy and the direct reporting to the Portuguese President, as well as the participation in the National Research Agenda 2030 for Citizenship and Inclusion, and national consultants for the Horizon Europe, and the organization

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[8] Housing for the Population in a Street Situation.

[9] Housing for Welfare 2014-2020 Norway https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kmd/boby/housing_for_welfare_national_strategy_for_housing_and_support_services_2014_2020.pdf

of a Public presentation of results in the presence of several key national representants, and there is a forthcoming debate and public hearing in the Portuguese parliament; The HOME_EU Project is being used as an example in training sessions for new stakeholder in the Portuguese National Agency for Innovation.

The Polish partner represents for the Consortium one of the most rewarding achievements. The team leader Anna Bokszcsanin from the University of Opole integrates the training and evaluation team impact of the new pilot project in 3 major Polish cities;

There is an overall dynamics of upscaling Housing First in the partner European Countries (e.g. France, Spain, Portugal, Ireland), and others like Belgium or Norway, and emerging initiatives in Check Republic and Romania. Housing First has recently been a selected topic for discussion in national Parliaments, and the European Parliament .

The core issue of the current social policies is the fact that although mentioning housing as a path towards the solution to homeless, resist to adopt scientific evidence and evidence-based practices and systematized and consistent bodies of evidence that were generated in different continents and countries with different cultural backgrounds with coherent results.

Individualized, scattered and permanent housing options with the availability of support teams is a path that demonstrates the solvable nature of a phenomenon such as homelessness; therefore there is the need to convey the notion that long-term homelessness is a social emergency situation, a life threatening condition, and an inclusive society is no more than a mere abstraction if homelessness is not effectively tackled.

The Housing First model is relevant for others fields of social intervention including migrations, domestic violence survivors, and a strategy to support the deinstitutionalization of youth in sheltered or foster care, women and families survivors of domestic violence, psychiatric institutions, or imprisonment release, and the capabilities approach has an wider application for the reflection on paths for personal growth, development empowerment and recovery of other social groups who are at risk for homelessness situations.

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