



Polish Homelessness Policy – National Framework

Introduction to „Ways out of Homelessness”
Partner’s meeting in Warsaw, February 2016

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Legal Framework (1)

- Social Welfare Act
 - Each gmina is obliged to *provide shelter, food and necessary clothing to any person in need on its territory*
 - Definition of homelessness: administrative in regard to registration for permanent stay, local connection very important
 - Income criteria for social welfare 634/514 PLN and benefits up to the level of the criterium
 - Individual Programme for Getting out of Homelessness – welfare contract
- Act on the Protection of the Rights of Tenants and Local Housing Stock
 - Communal housing apartments/communal social housing apartments for people with low /very low income
 - Housing Allowance
 - Criteria set on local level by gminas, gminas responsible for managing the stock
- The Act on Public Benefit and Volunteering (important as majority of homelessness services is provided by ngos)
 - Two forms of financial cooperation of public administration and non-governmental organizations implementing public tasks: providing support (partial funding) or entrusting (contracting out, full funding)
- Special governmental funding for homelessness ngos:
 - National program for Ending homelessness with allocation of 5000000 PLN (1,123,848 EURO) announced in February, funding available for June-December, about 40 ngos get grants
 - Regional grant programs for ngos with homelessness among priorities

National Legal Framework (2)

- Problems – challenges ☺
 - Gap in the legislation – no clear obligation to provide transitional/supported housing
 - Additional rather *ad hoc* – although sometimes long term - funding from EU grant programmes including ESF, EEA and private foundations.
 - Policy regulated mostly by Acts – hardly any effective programmes/strategies in any field.
 - No national strategy although there were attempts in 2008 and 2013/2014.
 - Well drafted housing priorities (#5) in National Strategy for Social Integration of 2014
- Developments
 - As a result of five year long 2008-2013 so called systemic project a Model of Local Standards for Exiting Homelessness has been drafted as a basis for systemic change. Now the Ministry of Family Labor and Social Policy is expected to issue regulation imposing standards on NGS. Some changes were already made in The Act on Social Welfare eg. Introduction of warming up rooms in exchange of nightshelters
 - Polish National Federation for Ending Homelessness has been established by NGOs that took part in systemic project.
 - More focus on homelessness/housing deprivation as an issue of human rights - Expert Group for Preventing Homelessness at the Commissioner for Human Rights Adam Bodnar
 - **Advocacy against eviction to the temporary apartment (=to the street)**
 - More vigorous debate on housing and its connection to homelessness – Social Rental Agencies project of HfH Poland and University of Warsaw, HF Advocacy by IUS
 - Trials to implement HF (Pomerania got grant for social innovations research stream but operating agency questioned the budget and in result the contract has not been signed)

Services for the homeless

- Prevailing:
 - Warmingups, food distribution, **nightshelters (noclegownia), shelters, long term homes, community homes – about 731**, advice and information,
- Existing:
 - supported/training apartments (bye-laws include sobriety, monitoring by social worker, income criteria) 1300 people 2013, street working, social economy,
- Lacking (or not integrated with homelessness policy):
 - Advocacy, mental health and post traumatic services, services for people dependent on drugs, prevention – immediate intervention in crisis situations experienced by well functioning people
- General flavour:
 - Employment led, apartment as a reward for graduating from the shelter available to a few – **ladder**, heterogenous services for specific conditions of local institutional setting
- Hidden camera in nightshelter in Warsaw: scroll down to „Noclegownia”
http://www.projektbezdomy.pl/p/video_25.html

Stakeholders

- Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Department of Welfare and Social Integration
- (Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development – housing)
- Local governments (2480 gminas): social policy and housing departments
- Local Public Welfare Centres (2480)
- Organizations and institutions supporting the homeless
 - bazy.ngp.pl - 1327 (includes ngos, congregations etc. and any institution that mentioned homeless people among their clients)
 - MPiPS register of services for the homeless – 731 homes, shelters and nightshelters
- Ngos running services for the homeless:
 - National networks: **MONAR**, **CARITAS**, **TPBA** (about 180 services of 630)
 - Regional networks: **Barka**, EMAUS, Chleb Życia Community, PKPS, Stowarzyszenie Penitencjarne Patronat (up to 100 services of 630)
 - Local (or with some charters): **CMSA**, Stowarzyszenie Pomocy Wzajemnej Być Razem Cieszyn, Open Door Association, Antidotum Association, Stowarzyszenie Lekarzy Nadziei and other (about 300 services of 630)
- New informal initiatives eg to distribute tea, clothes etc among homeless people in public space – more mainstream
- Commissioner for Human Rights – before being elected he said that homelessness would be his major priority and he keeps the promise eg. by mentioning homelessness in almost every public speech/appearance; writing complaints for Constitutional Tribunal, asking Ministers to take action (appoint a homelessness coordinator to the government (already rejected) and other)

Nature of „social work”

- 2013: Comparison of support system for the homeless to war/field hospital where the surgeon has to quickly decide who should be operated and who left to die. Prognosis has to be made on who has a chance to exit homelessness and be therefore supported by more advanced services (like housing) and who is hopeless and should be left to his fate in public space, nightshelters and sobering up units.
- Emotional problems of people who help others (lack of supervision, short and inadequate education, specific recruitment to „profession of helping”, lack of reflection on impact of one’s own limitations on relationship of helping others); social help/social violence
- Low effectiveness of social work interpreted as a fault/choice of supported person not as inadequacy of support.
- In self-help groups where staff recruits from former clients: I was able to stop my problems so should you (eg. drinking as a choice)
- Bye-laws and contracts to meet them as major tools for „motivating” clients. Lack of knowledge on how to work on internal self motivation, self-steering.
- Formal administrative contracts – Individual Program for Exiting Homelessness (next slide) – reinforced by Social Welfare Centres

Individual Program for Exiting Homelessness

Defined in Social Welfare Act and Ministerial Ordinance:

- A homeless person can get an IPEH which supports her in solving her problems in particular family and housing as well as employment.
- IPEH is prepared together by a social worker from local welfare centre and homeless person. It has to be accepted by the director of the Local Welfare Centre.
- If a homeless person resides in shelter or home for the homeless, IPEH can be drafted by social worker from the shelter, but look at point 5.
- In case described in point 3, shelter/home for the homeless is an executor of IPEH.
- If IPEH includes forms of support which are beyond competence of the executor or include temporary right to health care, it has to be accepted by the director of the Local Welfare Centre. In the Program, specific institutions responsible for implementation of each task should be named.
- IPEH should take into account situation of the homeless person and provide special support to people who actively participate in getting out of homelessness.
- IPEH can include all means and support forms which are available at Local Welfare Centre and are adequate to needs of the homeless person.
- Local Welfare Centre is obliged to pay health insurance (as part of social security system) for each person who does IPGH.

Evaluation - gap

- Lack of need to measure **effectiveness** of single services/programmes as well as overall policy
- Criteria used: „administrative” correctness
- Prevalance of performance measures
- Quantity by point in time stock
- Lack of indicators of effectiveness/benefits of basic services
- Lack of cost and benefit analysis of exisiting services

Homelessness in numbers

- CMSA Position on (very poor) measuring homelessness in PL: <http://www.misja.com.pl/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/CMSA-Position-Measuring-PL.pdf>
- Official scale of homelessness:
 - Housing and Population Census 2011 - 25773 (9789 in public space)
 - Ministerial Headcount 2013 - 30603 (8445 in public space)
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 - Wola pilot study: annual flow for 1/3 of services in Warsaw – 2000; average point in time stock about 308, 330 using all kinds of support.
 - Ministerial Headcount 2015 – about 36000 (about 10000 in public space, 1628 children mostly in centres for mother but quite a few in public space and unconventional buildings)

Most probably uncounted in national counts:

- Living with family and friends, temporary/seasonal work rooms
- People on the margins of homelessness:
 - Loss of housing safety due to conflict in a family/financial problems in the family
 - Evictions
 - Debts due to loans and consumption credits
- Immigrants:
 - not visible at all less than 1,5% declares non-Polish citizenship in every available research
- Young people:
 - leaving care; migrating from small towns to study in big cities with lack of employment perspectives;

Poland 2015

		PLN	Euro
Average national salary:			
	Brutto	3900	876
	Netto	2700	625
Minimum Wage:			
	Brutto	1750	390
	Netto	1286	290
Minimum pension		880	200
Income criteria for welfare benefits for single person household		634	142
Permanent benefit from social welfare for people with no pension and with disability status		604	136
Income to apply for housing in Warsaw:			
	Social apartment - no more then:	1098	250
	Communal apartment: no less then max for social and no more then:	1858	420
Average rent on private housing market (for about 30 m2)???			250
My 23 m2 studio apartment in good district and well communicated (bills included)		1400	315
Minimum subsistence level (meeting basic needs) IPISS 2014		544	122
Social minimum (meeting basic and social needs) IPISS 2014		1071	240

Info on additional projects (Julia)

„Housing First – Evidence based Advocacy” Project by the Ius Medicinae Foundation

- April 2014 – March 2016, cofunded from EEA money in Citizens for Democracy Program.
- The goal: gathering evidence based arguments that HF programs are:
 - needed because traditional support system is ineffective for certain group of people (chronically homeless with mental disorders)
 - Research on chronic homelessness and mental disorders (dual diagnosis) among clients of homeless services in Warsaw – in two years 333 people met the criteria of being homeless longer than 3 years and having dual diagnosis.
 - Analysis of Ministerial Homeless Count 2013 raw data – extracting and analysing data on chronic homelessness, dependencies and bad health.
 - Research on institutional pathways of 17 people who meet the HF profile as defined by Tsemberis in his Guidebook - case studies showing the mosaic of different institutions which were present in respondents' lives, length of contacts with institutions, kinds of institutions.
 - Cost effective for certain group of people (chronically homeless with mental disorders) as in their case traditional attitude costs more:
 - Cost of institutional pathways of 17 people – so far research fails due to inability of many institutions to assess the costs, only few costs were identified
 - Costs of lawsuits of respondents assessed by Clifford Chance (pro bono).
 - Doable/implementable within Polish framework for community psychiatry and housing for excluded groups.
 - Two feasibility studies on community psychiatry by K. Lech and access to housing by A. Rożycka - POSITIVE
- Activities: research (above), web page www.czynajpierwmieszkanie.pl, facebook, electronic publications including translation of HF Guidebook by Tsemberis and case study on Iceland, local seminars of homelessness stakeholders, final conference (19th of February), final publication printed, ongoing advocacy in media and during events.
- Additional CMSA flashmobs „Homelessness is not a choice”:
 - First <http://www.misja.com.pl/film-z-flash-mob-bez-dom-nosc-to-nie-wybor/>
 - Second <http://www.misja.com.pl/film-z-flash-mob-bez-dom-nosc-to-nie-wybor-2/>
- Evaluation of project events and attitude to HF idea conducted by external experts volunteers.
- Partners: Camilian Mission for Social Assistance, Salvation Army Iceland
- Research results will be presented during the conference and later on via internet.
- Short EN summary of the project: <http://www.czynajpierwmieszkanie.pl/en/project-2/>

Mazovian Stakeholders of Homelessness

- (Mentioned/part of „Ways out of Homelessness”)
- Informal network: knowing each other, keeping in touch, working for change
- Local Seminars of Stakeholders:
 - Warsaw 2012, Szczypiorno, Płock 2013, Radom 2014, Ostrołęka 2014, Pruszków 2015, Warszawa 2015
 - About 40 participants in each seminar, some participating in many
 - Last five organized within „Housing First – Evidence based Advocacy” project
- Post Seminar electronic publications PL with articles od presenters, local data on homelessness and HF smuggled
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mazowieccy-Interesariusze-Bezdomno%C5%9Bci/191944790974651?fref=ts>

Advocacy Program for CMSA 2012-2014: Research Networking Transparency

Started in 2012, projects : Mazowian Stakeholders of Homelessness 2012, 2013; Housing first – evidence based advocacy 2014 – 2016 – moved from CMSA to Ius Medicinae in 2015;

The idea is to influence public policy on homelessness based on:

- Knowledge well tested through **research** – people living in publica space, ETHOS and MPHASIS based data base on people using our services, evaluation or programmes
- **Networking** – Mazovian Stakeholders Network, european conferences, platforms e.g. FEANTSA, EAPN, bilateral cooperation,
- **Transparency** – we do not like hidden lobbying based on tight links/relationships with decisionmakers which are kept secret. We want tight relationships which are totally known to the public.

POSITIONS/STATEMENTS ON:

- Measuring Homelessness in Poland; <http://www.misja.com.pl/ethos-and-mphasis-based-data-collection-system-in-cmsa>
- Effectiveness of shelters for the homeless: <http://www.misja.com.pl/2013-qualitative-report-of-the-saint-lazarus-boarding-house/>