

# HOOD – Homeless's Open Dialogue

## Intellectual Output 1

Phase 2 | Analysis of existing practices and research

### Authorship

Pedro Perista & Paula Carrilho

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## Introduction

With the aim of gathering information on relevant publications/research and other existing experiences and practices at the national level, HOOD operative partners identified a set of relevant studies, reports and practices. As general indications and taking into account HOOD's core concerns, selected outputs should: i) focus on early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery in the field of homelessness; ii) focus on the respective country, solely or within the scope of a wider range of countries; and iii) not be older than 2015.

An indicative number of three to five publications/research/other experiences was suggested. However, depending on the national setting, partners were free to include a higher number of references, references older than 2015, references not focusing on the country and/or references that not focusing specifically on early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery in the field of homelessness.

This report bases on the answers provided by the four operative partners: Projekt Udenfor-Denmark, Klimaka-Greece, Ufficio Pio-Italy and Sant Joan de Déu-Spain.

# National settings as regards early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery and the field of homelessness

## The national setting in Denmark

In Denmark, the term 'early intervention' is mentioned and used primarily in relation to the work with vulnerable children and youths. This is the case both in relation to the literature on the topic and in the actual social offers and initiatives. This may be of increased relevance as, throughout the 2010s, the largest increase in homelessness in Denmark has been seen amongst young people (+70%).

The national debate and literature on homelessness in general (both in policy, research and in social offers) primarily focus on Housing First - a method that has been tried to be implemented several times in various municipalities in Denmark. The municipality of Odense, in particular, has been successful with the implementation of Housing First. However, a recent report from the National Board of Social Services shows that only 8 percent of people in homelessness on a national level are offered a Housing First intervention.

The report "How we stop homelessness" from 2020 by the thinktank Kraka collects and analyzes different research results. The report shows that an intervention where people are offered stable housing in combination with social support before a shorter homelessness period turns into long-term homelessness can halve the extent of homelessness in Denmark by 2030.

In conclusion, there are local examples of early intervention but these are primarily focused on youths that are homeless or at risk. Housing first dominates the debate and literature, but Denmark has not yet succeeded in implementing a central managed national housing first strategy throughout the country.

## The national setting in Greece

An important initiative for the development of homelessness policies was the adoption of legal definition of homelessness in Greece in 2012, although the state has not put in place any supportive measures for homeless people and also has not developed any early prevention policy.

Klimaka is active in the field since 2000. It operates a day center for homeless people aiming not only to their profiling, but also to their recovery. Using streetwork as an effective intervention tool for health promotion, Klimaka transports its services where the homeless people are currently living in big numbers (i.e. Port of Piraeus & Thiseio area in Athens). Equivalent services for homeless people in the field are provided by other non-governmental organizations, some of which operate homeless dormitories. The Municipality of Athens has been systematically involved with homeless people too. It operates a day center, a dormitory and a hostel for more temporary living. However, the problem of homelessness remains acute, as the waiting lists for living in such structures are extremely long. Another problem that we are facing is that it is almost impossible to map individuals and families experiencing inadequate housing or are in high risk of eviction.

## The national setting in Italy

In the Italian debate, the topic of early intervention seems to be almost unexplored. In the programmatic national document “Linee di Indirizzo per il contrasto alla grave emarginazione adulta in Italia” published in 2015, the importance of the intervention’s timeliness is mentioned once, and some comments on the importance of finding housing and other solutions rapidly are present throughout the report, but without an analysis focused on this factor (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2015).

Also in recent academic publications on homelessness, time is not a relevant topic explored. The academic and policy-related debate in Italy seems focused on Housing First, on overcoming the shelter’s model, and on the integration with income-support measures (as the recent Citizenship’s Income). Nevertheless, there are local experiences that focuses on the timely of intervention: in Turin, Ufficio Pio’s project specifically adopt the early intervention approach, while the Municipality is now developing intervention with a “rapid rehousing” approach.

## The national setting in Spain

In Spain, there is plenty of literature on social exclusion and on the factors that trigger situations of homelessness or poverty, with or without a home/housing vulnerabilities. However, research on early intervention in the field of homelessness is scarce, and so is research applied to practice. Some progress has been made in this area in recent years, especially with the breaking up of new practices such as ‘Housing first’ or motivational interviewing. This progress consists mainly of methodological improvement by incorporating new practices that favour recovery processes as an open dialogue. It seems imperative to make progress in the field of applied research to implement new methodologies and to move towards practices focused on prevention.

## The national setting in Portugal

Homelessness in Portugal is defined in clear connection with the European typology of homelessness and housing exclusion (ETHOS). The definition includes those who are roofless and living in a public space or insecure form of shelter, or accommodated in an emergency shelter, as well as those who are houseless and living in temporary accommodation for the homeless.

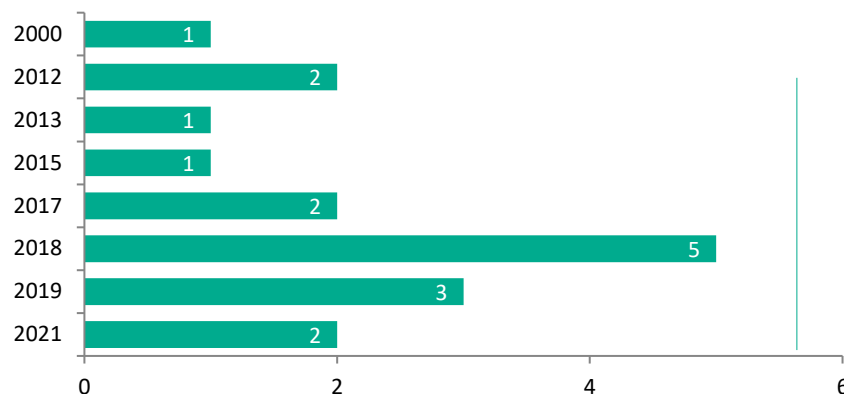
Even if there are positive signs as regards early prevention and housing-led programmes, including Housing First, specific prevention services in Portugal for helping households in immediate risk of homelessness are still scarce. After falling into homelessness, people may rely mostly on low-intensity support services, provided especially by NGOs and municipalities and ‘staircase’ models are predominant.

Also positive was the approval, in 2017, of the Portuguese strategy for the integration of homeless persons 2017-2023 (ENIPSSA), which includes the financing of solutions aimed at preventing homelessness arising from severe housing need, and support for ‘Housing First’ and other housing-led programmes. The ENIPSSA also includes a specific axis dedicated to the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy itself. This is deemed to represent a positive step towards potential innovation in the provision of homelessness services in Portugal.

## The set of publications identified

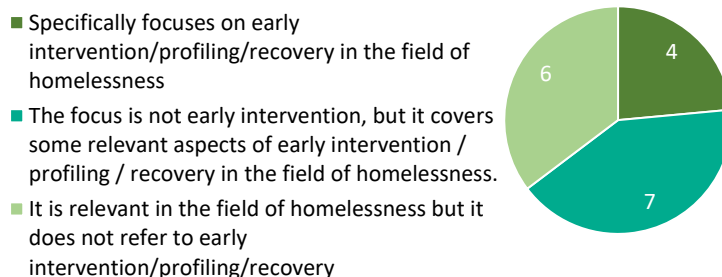
HOOD operative partners identified a total of 17 publications, ranging between years 2000 and 2021. Twelve out of the 17 publications were released between 2017 and 2021.

Figure 1. Number of publications identified, by year of publication



Four publications were identified as specifically focusing on early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery in the field of homelessness. Seven others cover relevant aspects of early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery in the field of homelessness and in six cases the publication is deemed relevant in the field of homelessness while not referring to early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery.

Figure 2. Number of publications according to their focus



## Publications specifically focusing on early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery in the field of homelessness

Four publications were identified as specifically focusing on early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery in the field of homelessness. Two of them regard the outputs of projects developed in the Danish context by Projekt Udenfor and released in 2018. These are “Young and OUTSIDE – experiences after three years of working with young homeless people” (Ramsdahl et al., 2018) and “I like the smell of soap after washing my hands: an exploratory study of women’s experiences of homelessness (Maini-Thorsen, 2018).

The first publication (Ramsdahl, et al., 2018) describes the work developed within the scope of project 'Young and OUTSIDE' and its findings. The main methods and activities used regarded outreach work and the working relation with young homeless people in the streets of Copenhagen. It included the profiling of the target-group, based on 77 young homeless people that participated in the project's activities and helping them to achieve a life of greater meaning to them based on their own wishes. Another goal was to convert the knowledge and profiling of the target group into information and recommendations.

Three important key findings could be identified. First, that the social system in place to help socially excluded young people is often an excluding factor in itself; second, that requirements, punishments, and sanctions are often understood as a reminder of personal inability, leading to further self-stigma and further exclusion; and third, that the work towards helping homeless young people should consider these young's resources, interests, personal values, etc.

As for the second publication (Maini-Thorsen, 2018), focused on homeless women, one of its key findings regarded the lack of qualitative research on homeless women in Denmark and the need to make women's homelessness more visible as well as to challenge gendered stereotyping of homeless women. Homeless women make up a diverse group but there are particular vulnerabilities and risks associated with being a woman on the street just as there are gendered resources. Thus, the strategies and approaches within homeless services need a gender lens to ensure accessible, safe and dignified settings for homeless women as well as recognising women's individual support needs and resources.

The other two publications identified as specifically focusing on early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery in the field of homelessness regard international studies.

The first (Homelessness Australia, 2012) is divided in two main parts. The first part follows the methodology of an evidence-based policy paper and the second part focuses on cases studies proposing ways for intervention. It examines theories of early intervention and prevention in social policy and community service practice. It identifies programmes in the homelessness sector that are said to deliver early intervention or preventative responses. It also stresses that examining pathways into homelessness is important not only for identifying opportunities to prevent homelessness but also for identifying people at risk and ensuring that they have access to the right support before reaching crisis point.

Early intervention practices identified include: i) poverty and income support; ii) tenancy support programmes; iii) the safeguard of access to universal and targeted health and education services; iv) planning, resources and infrastructure in disadvantaged areas; v) policing, sentencing and legislation around gender violence and vi) providing wider access to familial support programmes especially in early childhood or to single parents.

The second publication (Evans, et al., 2019) makes a literature review focusing on studies from randomized controlled trial evaluations and quasi-experimental designs, discussing outstanding questions that can be addressed with these same methods. It catalogues the policy responses, the existing literature on the effectiveness of these strategies, and the major gaps that need to be addressed in future research. The paper argues that homelessness may be both a cause of and

one of the more extreme outcomes of poverty. It considers that governments at all levels have a variety of tools to fight homelessness and that these strategies have changed dramatically over the past 25 years.

According to the authors, recent quasi-experimental analyses have exploited variation in the availability of prevention services over time or across areas to measure the effect of prevention services on shelter entries and homelessness duration. They also argue that prevention efforts face a challenge in identifying which individuals may become homeless in the absence of intervention and that prevention can involve landlord/household mediation, short-term financial assistance, case management, or legal assistance. They stress that legal representation in eviction court has recently gained increased attention as a homelessness prevention tool. Furthermore, they emphasise that 'Critical Time Intervention' programmes provide case management and transitional services to individuals discharged from inpatient facilities and that such services may reduce future spells of homelessness.

## **Publications covering relevant aspects of early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery in the field of homelessness**

A second group of publications identified by HOOD operative partners regards publications that do not focus specifically on early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery in the field of homelessness but that rather cover some relevant aspects of it. This group includes seven publications, five of which papers.

The first (Meo, 2000) was published in the scientific book 'Sociology of Disruptive Events', basing on ethnographic research with homeless people in the Italian city of Turin. The author conducted biographic interviews with homeless people and in-depth interviews with volunteers and social workers as well as participant observation in low-threshold services and homeless life's contexts (gardens, station, etc.).

The research adopted the sociological concept of "career" to analyse the experience of homeless people in the street. Time emerged as a core factor that shapes the survival's ability and identity elements. Ethnographical data describes as people who spend a longer time living in street and in low-threshold services progressively lose resources and abilities, moving into a more and more vulnerable condition. In order to develop coping strategies to survive as homeless, indeed the person loses other abilities, reduces his/her social network and reduces the horizon of future, becoming trapped in the present dimension.

The paper argues that by adopting the "poverty career" notion to consider homeless people's condition, the effect of time on people wellness is highlighted hence calling for a more timely intervention. It emphasises that it is necessary to analyse homelessness with a sequential model that takes into consideration time as a core element of the individual paths of homelessness. Beyond a certain amount of time spent in streets homeless people tend to standardise their behaviours.

Furthermore, it stresses that the amount of time spent in streets and in low-threshold services constitutes an element that differentiates the modality of survival and identity's construction. Beyond a certain amount of time spent in streets and low-threshold services, one's resources and abilities deeply decrease, and individual specificities connected to the personal life-history before homelessness disappear. Additionally, the amount of time spent in the street can also compromise the experience of "housing", once people get access again to a house.

The second (Theodorikakou et al., 2013) was published in the European Journal of Homelessness and combines literature review with data collected through structured questionnaires. The questions to the homeless were closed-ended and asked by trained professionals aiming to describe their social characteristics as well as their main daily survival problems.

The policy review focused on the impact of the financial crisis and austerity measures on housing exclusion and homelessness in Greece. Despite homeless persons having been recognised in legislation as a specific vulnerable social group, the Greek state had not put in place any supportive measures for homeless persons and also had not developed a prevention policy to safeguard its citizens who struggle with the impact of the 2008 economic and financial crisis. Thus, by that time, a "new generation" of homeless has appeared in Greece. The profile of this "new generation" of homeless was different from that of the "traditional" homeless in the country. The paper argues that the general impact of the crisis in Greece, especially on the most vulnerable groups, could not yet be measured but that it was clear that new initiatives were required in order to promote the development of social solidarity in Greece.

According to the authors, the results of the survey demonstrated that the population of 'neo-homeless' people was constituted by individuals who had previously a satisfactory standard of living and a higher educational level than "traditional" homeless. Their previous most common occupation was related to the technical, construction, or tourism sector or they were self-employed in economic fields that seemed to have been adversely affected by the crisis. They expressed housing (85.6%), health care (83.1%), a job (76%) and personal care (75%) as their priority needs.

The third reference (Gaetz and DeJ., 2017) was published as a position paper by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press, and based on research on homelessness and policies and services aimed at tackling homelessness. The report is part of a broader shift in course in the Canadian strategy to tackle homelessness, aimed at financing more preventative actions and "accommodation and support" actions and less emergency services. This shift draws from a human right framework that argues that all people have the right to housing that is safe, appropriate, affordable, and sustainable, and that no one should have to demonstrate to be worthy of ready for housing.

As part of this wide prevention paradigm, the authors analyse the importance of early intervention strategies and of targeting individuals and families who are at imminent risk of, or who have just become, homeless. They argue that early intervention involves policies, practices, and strategies designed to address the immediate risk of homelessness through the provision of information, assessment, and access to necessary support. Early intervention can also be a strategy adopted to facilitate the progressive shift of paradigm from an emergency-centred to a prevention-centred approach.



Moreover, the report focuses on the effectiveness of early intervention in the work with young homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. These latter, indeed, are considered as being especially at risk of suffering from further traumatising and exploitation if they spend any time at all in homelessness.

The paper's key findings include: i) a clear definition of homelessness' prevention (primary, secondary, tertiary) and clear identification of early intervention in this framework; ii) compelling evidence emerging from around the globe regarding the effectiveness of prevention measures; and iii) the promotion of a perspective to frame homelessness prevention in a way that moves away from seeing the homelessness sector as the sole responsible for addressing homelessness.

The fourth paper (Rodríguez-Pellejero et al., 2017) aims to examine the presence of clinical personality patterns and clinical syndromes in people in homelessness and to identify common personality profiles. Results showed that clinical personality patterns and clinical syndromes with higher prevalence, according to the model of Million, were: depressive, narcissistic and paranoid, as well as anxiety, drug dependence and thought disorder, respectively. In addition, cluster analysis classified the subjects into two groups «narcissistic-adaptive» and «depressive-paranoid». These results suggested that the treatment and health resources should be adapted according to the psychiatric deterioration, considering the homeless as a heterogeneous group with different psychosocial needs.

The fifth paper (Garcia et al., 2019) represents an adaptation of the Finnish Open Dialogue framework to the Spanish context (notably to the public health services of Alcalá de Henares) undertaken by the Early Attention Unit. This is a specialised unit focused on the attention of people who are facing for the first time experiences that have been described as psychotic. The paper outlines the Open Dialogue approach, the process of adaptation, the difficulties and positive aspects of the experience, and the results observed during the development of the unit. Given the little time elapsed in the Early Attention Unit since the adaptation of the Open Dialogue framework, the authors focus on the assessments received rather than taking stock of impacts.

The group of publications not focusing specifically on early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery in the field of homelessness but rather covering some relevant aspects of it also includes two project reports.

One regards the depiction of 'Homelessness in Greece in 2012' (Katsadoros, et al., 2012). A sample of 214 people was interviewed through structured closed questionnaires, which also contained open-ended and self-assessment questions. The publication provides a description of the homeless persons' social and health profile as well as their political/social beliefs. It also displays rates of breaching the law, subjecting to abuse, feeling loneliness, vulnerability or unsafety. The description also concerns to their marital status, to their previous occupational sector, to their ability to have every-day access in alimentation, vesture and sanitary facilities, and to their relationships with other people. The health profile of the sample includes mental health, including suicide attempts, drug or alcohol abuse, and gambling addiction. Regarding political/social beliefs there are listed percentages of party choices and perceptions about the responsibilities for the phenomenon of homelessness.

The second report covers projects 'Build OUTSIDE' and 'The Living Community', developed in Denmark (Lütken and Kirkegaard, 2021). Project 'Build OUTSIDE' explored how to involve people

living in homelessness first in developing/creating blueprints and ideas for tiny houses and then being involved in actually building their own houses and working on each other's houses. Project 'The Living Community' explored how the participants (now residents) could be supported in creating a home for themselves as well as in maintaining the community that had been created during the building process. The project ended with five of the six participants being made official owners of their self-build tiny-house and getting an individual lease with the municipality, so that they were secured for the future. The sixth participant was helped to find accommodation in a place where there was more social support in order to help him deal with his multi-layered needs including drug-abuse.

In the core of both projects were user involvement, working individually with a focus on positive relations, creating community-feeling among the participants, self-determination and the recognition of the participants perspective.

The authors argue the importance of self-determination when creating a home and stress how much a difference it makes to a person to have a home and not just a roof over one's head. The high degree of user involvement in both projects is deemed to have given each participant the opportunity to develop abilities and establish resources to actually inhabit a home and create a community with others. It is well known that people who have been living homeless can experience difficulties with getting back to living inside. The report describes how the focus on user involvement and self-determination creates the foundation for staying in an accommodation and having a life a lot less vulnerable. When the professionals step down, communities unfold.

The report also underlines how the COVID-19 pandemic situation induced a positive learning to social workers and others. As the social workers were more distant, the participants started to socialise more with each other. They started having small social 'get-togethers', talking and expressing concern for each other during this troublesome period and they also started helping each other in ways that they had not before.

The authors describe how working with user involvement is a balancing act, where sometimes a focus on involving the participants in every decision can backfire because there are things in a project that cannot involve everyone, e.g. when meetings involve personal data of one of the participants. They conclude that the focus should be on balancing the responsibility of the social workers with user-involvement and in that process keeping a focus on the fact that the participants often come with a long story of feeling left outside, less worthy and being let down, which makes them even more vulnerable.

Another key finding is that the 'housing first' approach used in both projects proved to be a valuable method even for very vulnerable persons. All participants moving in to their own self-build house have experienced a significant improvement in their situation. They have experienced more stability, closer contact to the surrounding society and the different support systems and they have all started planning for the future. This underlines the need of creating a variety of housing opportunities in society, so that people in homelessness can receive not just an offer of accommodation but the right offer, an offer where the person feels involved and the opportunity to influence his/her situation.

## Publications relevant in the field of homelessness while not referring to early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery

The six remaining publications are identified as relevant in the field of homelessness while not referring to early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery.

The first is a collective book focusing on biographies, territories and policies of homelessness in Italy (Consoli & Meo, 2021). Papers were written by several Italian researchers engaged on the homelessness issue. The aim of the book is to define the current framework of homelessness in Italy, considering specific national features and dynamics. Collecting several contributions that explore different contexts in the country, it provides a heterogeneous content in term of perspectives adopted, territories analysed, and research methodologies implemented. Even if the focus is not early intervention the book is deemed to offer useful insights regarding the power homeless people hold on their own path within services in the traditional model (Staircase approach and traditional relationship with social workers).

Then, the book explores the heterogeneity of the homeless population, the various intersections of poverty and housing emergency, and the complexity of the connection between structural factors and individual conditions. This work calls for renovate attention in rethinking the “public” dimension of homelessness, problematising the conditions that allow the phenomenon to become a target of public intervention, and social representation at the basis of its description as a social issue.

The final aims of the book consist of offering a conceptual map for understanding the current transformation of the homelessness issue and to develop a debate on what to do, measures and policies to be implemented, and their effects.

Different methodologies are adopted in the chapters: the critical policy ethnography, collection of homeless life-story, documental analysis of services for homeless people, in-depth interviews with homeless people and social workers, quantitative analysis.

Main key-findings include: i) the urgency of a quantitative national survey on homelessness (the last one was done in 2015); ii) the understanding that the focus of Italian services is still based on an emergency framework (shelters, canteens, showers, goods distribution), notwithstanding the well-known evidence of the high-cost and low-efficacy of this kind of approach; iii) the understanding of the frail framework of the housing right in the Italian legislation; iv) the presence of ongoing experimentation and new services that are inspired by Housing Led and Housing First perspectives; and v) the risk of depoliticisation of the homelessness issue, reducing it to a technical problem, that hence can be solved with ‘the right choice’.

The second regards an ethnography developed in the Italian city of Turin’s covering local services for homeless people and including action-research involving some point of the local services’ system (Porcellana, 2018). The paper, published in 2018, was developed within the framework of the “anthropology of welfare”, able to consider the representation of homelessness in several European contexts. It describes practices of assistance in Italy overall and particularly in Turin and analyses how neoliberal politics shaped the welfare system, with consequences on services’ recipients. Concretely, the paper presents the experiences of some homeless people that shed light on

how the activation rhetoric reduces their self-determination possibilities. When recipients divert from established pathways in the social services they are punished with sanctions with severe consequences on their existences, in a way that can be defined as a form of “structural violence”.

Main key-findings include the following: i) services for tackling homelessness have been deeply shaped by neoliberal ethos; ii) homeless people access “freedom” through a process of subjugation to the strict rules of the social services system; iii) the rhetoric of activation permeates the services, but personal choices and acts of homeless assisted are not perceived as an expression of activation; iv) personal choices made by assisted homeless persons often result in an exclusion, expulsion or some form of indirect punishment for him/her.

The third is an article comparing homelessness policies in representative countries of the liberal and Southern European welfare regimes: Ireland, Portugal, and Greece (Kourachanis, 2019). These are countries where austerity policies were implemented by the Troika during the crisis. After a brief review of the literature on welfare regimes and homelessness, the characteristics of homelessness policies in the liberal and Southern European model are studied.

The author uses the scholarly bibliography, research reports, and primary data. Homelessness policies are compared in the three countries. This is achieved by developing three axes of analysis: i) the historical development of homelessness policies, ii) the impact of austerity policies on the deterioration of homelessness, and iii) the characteristics of the homelessness policies being developed during the crisis.

Focusing on Greece, the author highlights that the Greek state has not developed a coherent grid of social housing policies over time. On the contrary, it has traditionally only been active in emergency situations. The general philosophy shows a preference for social policies that concentrate only on extreme poverty, which entails a non-inclusive but highly managerial approach. The residual intervention philosophy is shaped by the absence of state social policy, but furthermore by the sporadic activation of a heterogeneous network of local actors. Housing and Reintegration is a first attempt at an integrated intervention on homelessness in Greece. Overall, the three countries consolidate a residual model of social intervention that fails to adequately address increasing homelessness.

The fourth is a doctoral research (Afonso, 2018) aiming at: i) understanding the prejudices of homeless women regarding technology; ii) distinguishing the degree of knowledge of homeless women about the internet and social networks; iii) investigating the daily use that women make of the internet and social networks; iv) establishing differences or similarities, in their relationship with networks, between women without problems of exclusion and homeless women; v) recognising the degree of acceptance that social networks have among homeless women.

The author discovered that the prejudices and the basic insecurities that the homeless women have, due to their socialization of gender, conditions their way of positioning themselves in front of the digital world. Knowing how to use the Internet and social networks can contribute to their social and work integration. The author also concluded that women at risk of exclusion are most often forgotten and invisible of social reality. Hence is the importance of gaining a foothold in digital social reality, confronting it as active creators of content.

The fifth is another doctoral thesis (Evangelista, 2015) that defends that the presence of homeless people in public space is a dramatic expression of the systematic and permanent violation of Human Rights and represents a collective failure of the social system, unable to provide and satisfy the residential needs of the homeless through legally established standards of dignity. Furthermore, he stresses that the path that leads to the street is not automatic and is understood as a process and emphasises that the thesis considers that beyond the unfortunate individual decision-making of people, there are risk factors and triggers of a structural, institutional, relational and personal nature that determine a continuum of situations of exclusion from the right to decent and adequate housing. Thus, the study conceptualizes homelessness as a consequence of the failure of the residential provision system and the social system.

The sixth also regards an academic paper (Gómez, 2018) that focuses on the analysis of social interventions that promote the integration of homeless people, by the necessity to identify and expand the knowledge of the practices that promote positive results. The interventions that took place in different parts of the world like the U.S., Spain and the U.K. between the years 2010 and 2018, have been revised. The object of the document is to identify, analyse and reflect upon the specific interventions for the homeless people following methodical guidelines of search and result selection strategies according to PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analysis).

## Final considerations: the scope of early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery

The desk research undertaken allows for the grasping of important elements that frame the scope of early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery. These may be summed-up in three different layers.

A first layer is more overarching. The heterogeneity of the homeless population should be acknowledged as well as the complexity of the connection between structural and individual factors. Poverty and housing exclusion intersect in different ways and homelessness may be both a cause and an extreme outcome of poverty.

Thus, there is the need to promote perspectives putting the prevention of homelessness into a comprehensive framework. The homelessness sector or, in any case, the social sector should not, cannot be understood as sole responsible for addressing homelessness.

However, such a perspective is still widespread across Europe. As emphasised by a recent European comparative report, “in most countries the different types of support aim at assisting homeless people with their needs through various forms of temporary housing support, up to the point where they are ready to live independently in their own home. (...) ‘Housing-ready’ services seem to be strongly present within a staircase model of service provision (i.e. the provision of temporary accommodation and support usually on a single site, with on-site support staff)” (Baptista & Marlier, 2019: 15).

On the positive side, the same report notes that “in several countries, there is evidence of shifts occurring in the overall pattern of service provision, towards a system where more intensive services are provided together with access to permanent accommodation. In others, the staircase model is still dominant, but there is evidence of small-scale Housing First programmes within overall homelessness service provision” (Baptista & Marlier, 2019: 15).

Indeed, the reviewed literature emphasises that Housing First approaches have proven to be valuable, even for the most vulnerable, basing on a human right framework arguing that all people have the right to housing that is safe, appropriate, affordable, and sustainable, and that no one should have to demonstrate to be worthy or ready for housing. This would therefore imply financing more preventative actions and accommodation and support actions and it could allow addressing the Jury’s recommendations to the European Consensus Conference held in Brussels in December 2010, which acknowledged the need to enhance a paradigm shift away from the traditional policy response of managing homelessness towards a focus on housing as a human right (Jury of the European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2011).

Additionally, the literature reviewed stressed that the strategies and approaches within homeless services need a gender lens that allows the challenging of gendered stereotyping. Even if research demonstrates that males are widely dominant among the homeless population, emerging debates about the role of gender in homelessness and housing (e.g. Baptista 2010; Pleace 2016; Bretherton 2017) have been fuelled by growing evidence that experience of homelessness is differentiated by gender. The use of definitions and/or data collection frameworks which tend to exclude im-

portant dimensions of women's homelessness (e.g. hidden homelessness, family homelessness, concealed forms of rough sleeping) have also been noted (e.g. Busch-Geertsema et al. 2014, Pleace, 2016).

A second layer deriving from literature review derives from the assumption that often the social systems in place to help socially excluded people may be an excluding factor in itself. The requirements, punishments and sanctions imposed on the recipients are frequently understood as a reminder of personal inability, leading to further self-stigma and further exclusion.

Thus, the activation rhetoric is sometimes deemed as curbing the possibilities for self-determination. If recipients make personal choices that divert from established pathways in the social services they may end up being punished or excluded. Such sanctions may impact very negatively on their existences and may even be defined as a form of structural violence, i.e. a form of violence wherein social structures or social institutions harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs (e.g. Galtung, 1969; Lee, 2019).

Reviewed literature stresses that interventions should consider the person's resources, interests, personal values, etc., much in line with what is advocated by project HOOD. Involving users, working with them individually with a focus on positive relations, creating community-feeling among the participants, self-determination and recognising the participants perspective; these are all important aspects.

The third layer links more directly to early intervention, early profiling and/or early recovery and its intrinsic linkage to the dimension of time. Examining pathways into homelessness is deemed as important not only for identifying opportunities to prevent homelessness but also for identifying people at risk and for ensuring that they have access to proper support before reaching a point of crisis.

As emphasised by a recent report, "homelessness services in Europe are not sufficiently preventative in focus, and that there is not enough emphasis on establishing procedures for the early detection of homelessness risk situations (e.g. evictions), on ensuring prioritised access to housing and/or on rapid rehousing" (Baptista & Marlier, 2019: 94).

Hence, time is a core factor that shapes the survival's ability and identity elements. People who spend a longer time living in street and in low-threshold services progressively lose resources and abilities, moving into a more and more vulnerable condition. In order to develop coping strategies to survive as homeless, indeed the person loses other abilities, reduces his/her social network and reduces the horizon of future, becoming trapped in the present dimension.

By adopting the notion of 'poverty career' (Meo, 2000) to consider the homeless people's situation, the effect of time on people's wellness is highlighted hence calling for a more timely intervention. Beyond a certain amount of time spent in streets homeless people tend to standardise their behaviours. It becomes necessary to analyse homelessness with a sequential model that takes into consideration time as a core element of the individual paths of homelessness.

As a result, early intervention should involve policies, practices, and strategies designed to address the immediate risk of homelessness through the provision of information, assessment, and access to necessary support. Early intervention can also be a strategy adopted to facilitate the progressive shift of paradigm from an emergency-centred to a prevention-centred approach. This could



be part of the ‘map to solving homelessness’ identified by Pleace et al., for whom a demonstrably effective response exists and “can be used at a strategic level that will bring numbers down significantly and greatly reduce the risks of experiencing homelessness and, particularly, of experiencing homelessness for any amount of time or on a repeated basis” (Pleace et al., 2018: 97).

Early intervention practices identified in the literature review include: i) poverty and income support; ii) tenancy support programmes; iii) the safeguard of access to universal and targeted health and education services; iv) planning, resources and infrastructure in disadvantaged areas; v) policing, sentencing and legislation around gender violence and vi) providing wider access to familial support programmes especially in early childhood or to single parents.

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