

HOMELESS ADULTS IN TIMIȘOARA, DEDICATED SERVICES

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Abstract: Building on existing social realities, in correlation with needs, in Timisoara, services for homeless adults have been developed, in terms of both public social infrastructure and also governmental initiatives. The first initiatives developed at the community level were NGOs that started providing assistance based on actual needs and not covered by the public system - shelter and food. Currently the social infrastructure is relatively settled, two NGOs and a social center belonging to public services come to answer the existential needs of a marginalized category of beneficiaries - homeless people.

Keywords: homeless, communication, social services

Theoretical considerations on the phenomenon of homeless people

English literature deepens the problem of homelessness:

" From a historical perspective, economic cycles are also associated with the cycles of homelessness. O'Flaherty et al have shown links between the two recent recessions and the growing prevalence of lack of shelter ..."(O'Flaherty & Wu, 2006; Cragg & O'Flaherty, 1999).

Apparently the definition of this category of vulnerable people is simple, no shelter includes someone in the vulnerable category of homeless people. There are several definitions of the phenomenon or related with it, so:

Homeless person is one who: can not prove a provided living space or, ultimately, neither has actually where to live, and if he still lives somewhere, he does not have the permission to make legal means." Badea, V (2008) p.6.

Housing and its existence must be seen not so much in terms of legal ownership but through a more complex approach related to the interior comfort of

the person and the need for stability or even medium-term housing, in this sense, becoming home - comfort, safety, stability:

"not having access to adequate housing is a serious manifestation of social exclusion. We might add that not having a home and living in the open is - according to us- hardest form of social exclusion, with perhaps the lack of identity documents. Stable housing - in the sense of having where to live, not the sense of ownership, but stability in the medium term, at least - is a key element in the development of all other daily activities related to shared family activities, leisure, rest and even labor (and of course many others). "Home" is not just an abstract concept; it is a place of refuge and stability and tranquility....." Dan, Dan (2005)

So, beyond comfort and shelter, housing represents stability, balance and foundations on which to build social and professional life. Without this foundation, homeless people, subjected as shown, to the most severe forms of social exclusion are without landmarks. Often consumers of substances, homeless people are victims of severe substance abuse and addiction - alcohol, drugs *"Most of them are reported with alcoholism, but recent research indicates that drug use is more common among homeless."* Dan, Dan (2005)

The issue of homelessness became quite visible in Romania after 1990, after the fall of the communist regime (although the problem was also present during before that); it is important to note that services for the homeless people usually involve shelter and food and not necessarily support for labour market integration. (Goian, Vlaicu, Cojan, 2016)

Certainly skeptics will consider that in Romania, for homeless people we can not speak of addiction. For them it is worth quoting for conceptualizing, classifying substances that give addiction disorders: *"According to the American Psychiatric Association, addictive disorders are caused by 10 classes of substances that include (with common examples): alcohol, caffeine, marijuana, hallucinogens (PCP and LSD), inhalants (glue, thinner paint), opioids (prescribed analgesics, heroin), sedatives, hypnotics (sleeping pills), anxiolytics (Xanax or Valium), stimulants (meth, amphetamines, cocaine), tobacco, and other drugs unknown or emerging, such as K2 or bath salts."* (<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/>)

Romanian homeless adults use at least four categories of substances listed: tobacco, alcohol, caffeine, inhalers.

Specialized services for homeless people transcend traditional philanthropy and represent a rigorous approach, focused on principles and rules, adapted and related with the complexity of problems faced by this category of beneficiaries. The costs of these services, rights and obligations of the parties, the granting period and conditions in accordance with the quality standards set for each type of service, (Gavrilă-Ardelean 2008) must represent the preoccupation of every service provide (Gavrilă-Ardelean, 2016).

However a homeless person is related to the community, lives amidst an urban community - most often, but is not a full member of the community.

Marginalized, excluded, homeless people can not enjoy what we could call the community: parity, identity, community feeling.

Social services for homeless adults, available in the community

The institutional offer of services for homeless people in Timisoara, comprises three service providers namely two NGOs and a public provider, subordinated to the Timisoara City Hall. The latter presents a component as a supplier of temporary emergency shelter, available only during winter, a structure that completes the need for services. While emergency services as UPU-SMURD of the Clinical Emergency Hospital "Pius Brînzeu" Timisoara and Municipal Emergency Hospital Timisoara provides emergency medical assistance to this category of beneficiaries and especially the possibility of early identification of those at high risk and their referral to specialized institutions.

In terms of statistics, the apparent number of beds for the homeless seems high, in the Timisoara municipality. The reality is different, only in the first 25 days of the operation of the emergency shelter in December 2016 790 cases were recorded in official documents (an average of 32 people / day). For these reasons, the number of requests for assistance from homeless, we considered necessary to present the services and assess the coverage needs.

“Timișoara ‘89” Foundation

"Timișoara '89" Foundation is a public benefit organization, according to GD no. 68 of February 27, 2013, was established on December 30, 1989 and is thus known as the first humanitarian organization appeared in post-revolutionary Romania, one of the providers of social services for homeless people. The founder of "Timișoara 89" is writer Petru Ilieșu.

The initial objective of the foundation was to support people in crisis (orphans, elderly or the disabled, families in critical condition because of poverty, unemployment and artists). In order to fulfill its mission - improving the quality of life of users, the "Timișoara '89" foundation began by collaborating with humanitarian organizations from abroad, collecting and distributing clothing, food, medical equipment, medicines, etc. for thousands of social cases. Over time social problems of those who asked for support were investigated, they have made documentation, statistics, information material for Romanian social institutions and humanitarian organizations from abroad.

Thus the direction of intervention was outlined towards the homeless, this service of the Foundation constantly developing. It is not the only service or direction of intervention. For over a quarter century, the Foundation has helped equip a significant number of hospitals (providing medical equipment, medicine, food, various other utilities); through "Timișoara '89" establishments for the elderly, orphanages (clothing, food, equipment, toys, underwear) and cultural institutions (books, technical equipment, office), schools, kindergartens, associations of

disabled persons or chronically ill (furniture, clothing, footwear, underwear, equipment, wheelchairs and various other items) were aided.

An important action of the foundation was the provision with equipment for social housing, which has made hundreds of apartments and homes of families without financial means to be furnished and decorated.

Services – daily at the Foundation, in the community or towns in the county surveys and social assessments are made and, based on an analysis, grants, emergency aid, hot food at noon, five days a week (daily from 40 to 60 portions), clothing, footwear, food, furniture, household appliances; equipment for the disabled etc.

The most important program and in constant development is the Social Emergency Service for people in crisis: adults and street children, day workers, youth from orphanages and leaving the child care system, people who have lost their homes following evictions or inability to pay maintenance costs, former prisoners that in order to integrate need help with shelter and food until they manage to find job and housing; patients without relatives, discharged from the hospital and who also need food and shelter for a certain period of time. This program is in partnership with the Municipality of Timisoara, Night Asylum "Pater Jordan" and orphanages in Timiș, Emergency Social Center for Homeless with social canteen.

As a program with a wide community impact, the Social Emergency Service generated other programs, to a better response to identified needs of beneficiaries:

- Center for counseling and mediation for homeless
- The transit shelter (with residential center)

Founded in 2004, the Transit shelter (Center for temporary accommodation of homeless people) currently has a capacity of 42 seats and provides accommodation for a limited time for homeless people in crisis. (people that lost their homes, occupational travelers, families in difficulty, offenders released from prison) while seeking for a job and until they manage to gather enough funds and materials to rent housing and thus become independent. In the Transit Shelter since 2010, works the Convalescence Department - in cooperation (partnership) with the Municipal Emergency Hospital, the Emergency County Hospital, Psychiatric Hospitals etc.

The department has places for very serious social cases, classified as homeless and without social support who have suffered accidents, surgery or major trauma and after discharge from hospital the need shelter, food, medication and care. The Day Center as an extension of the Transit Shelter includes social spaces for current activities, administrative annexes, psychological and legal counseling office, toilets and office delivery of food.

Since 2014, together with the social services moving to the new location the activity was predominantly aimed at developing and expanding the accommodations for people in crisis in view of establishing the Social Community

"Arhipelag". For this purpose three houses were built with 3 and 4 bedrooms (House Timișoara '89 Foundation, Swedish House U-assist and Lions-Rotary House) following that during 2017, to build another 2 such targets . It is intended that the number of those who live in a residential regime at the „Arhipelag” Community to reach to reach 70 -80 people.

Caritas Federation Diocese of Timișoara – Night Shelter „Pater Jordan” Timișoara

Caritas Federation Diocese of Timișoara, based in Timisoara, str. Corbului no. 2, authorized under Civil Sentence no. 26 dated 21.06.1993 issued by Timiș County Court - Civil Division, is a Romanian private legal entity, with no patrimonial purpose apolitical, independent, legally established in the territory of the Diocese of Timișoara or Timiș, Arad, Caraș-Severin, Mehedinți. Caritas Federation Diocese of Timisoara is a non-governmental organization, initiated and inspired by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Timișoara. It is accredited to provide basic and specialized social services for people in need. It is dedicated to all forms of social support, community support, already operating under the motto "We are here for all people". The provided services are diverse and are offered regardless of religion, nationality or political affiliation of the beneficiaries.

The mission of the association is to ensure the maintenance, restoration and development of the capacity of a person or a group to overcome situations that would result in a state of need, vulnerability and dependency, to prevent marginalization and social exclusion, and also respecting, promoting and safeguarding human rights.

House "Pater Jordan" is a project of the Caritas Federation, initiated in 1998 by Father Berno Rupp. The project was originally planned for street children who became adults in the streets of Timișoara, but the house shelters other homeless people or those that are seeking protection. The house has about 80 seats divided as follows:

- two large bedrooms, for men
- four rooms for women
- a room with a TV for leisure
- a dining room that serves dinner and breakfast
- a room equipped with cupboards, where those who wish can submit their personal belongings to keep them safe
- bathroom
- kitchen

The target group consists of: people in distress, adult homeless people from deprived areas of the country, families in need, needy families affected by natural disasters, people on the street after the evacuation from claimed homes, adults from foster care.

The offered services mostly refer to accommodation over night for a number of 80 persons. Besides accommodation the following services are offered: hot meal prepared at the Social Canteen of the Caritas Federation, breakfast in the Shelter's own kitchen, mandatory bath once a week, counselling for obtaining identity papers and benefits, information about other services offered by the public and private institutions, referring to other institutions, support for integration, readaptation and professional reeducation, support for families and children in difficulty, for the elderly, social mediation. As for the number of beneficiaries, in 2015, 326 person benefited from the Shelter's services, 78 of them also having benefited the necessary support for identity documents from the Timișoara Police.

Emergency Center for Homeless People With Social Canteen

The Emergency Center for Homeless People With Social Canteen, is Operating since 2015 following the implementation of a European project and the urgent needs that the Timisoara Municipality has felt for years due to the lack of specialized social services for the disadvantaged. The center has a wide range of social services, which are grouped into three functional components:

The Triage Component - provides services to homeless people who do not seek admission to the Emergency component. Under this component personal care services are offered (sanitation, deworming, equipment), medical evaluation and primary health care, information and social counseling in order to obtain rights, counseling and emotional support.

In this component works the "Social Ambulance" offering emergency services for the homeless - initial social evaluation, medical evaluation, information and social counseling and psychological counseling.

The Emergency Component - provides services to homeless people seeking admission in emergency (services provided under the contract, following the admission decision, approved by the head of the center). Mainly, the Emergency Center accommodates people who use the services and spend up to 90 days in a transitional phase until the completion of their file, the medical situation, identity documents, etc. required to be recorded in the personal file and to be presented in the Admission Commission in the residential centers for persons belonging to the Municipality of Timișoara or Timiș County.

People belonging to other counties, can stay in the Emergency Center for a period longer than 14 days, with exemption granted by the Director of Emergency Shelter for Homeless People With Social Canteen (IDs and medical), within 30 calendar days.

Services: Personal Care (sanitation, deworming, equipment), food as 3 meals / day, in the maximum amount of daily food allowance, support for obtaining identity documents or other acts of civil status, medical evaluation, counseling and emotional support, primary health care, information and counseling in order to obtain social rights and social benefits.

Residential component - provides social services with accommodation under the law for a maximum of two years. These services are provided on a contract basis after the Commission Decision on Admissions into the residential service.

Provides: food 3 meals / day, the maximum amount of daily food allowance, primary care and health monitoring, health education, evaluation and counseling and emotional support, evaluation and counseling in obtaining rights or social benefits, formal and non-formal education to assimilate knowledge and skills necessary for social reintegration, recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration for social reintegration, counseling and career guidance, support and accompaniment to getting a job, support and accompaniment to identify housing solutions and monitoring post-intervention.

Emergency Shelter of Timișoara City Hall

Belonging to the Timișoara City Hall, the site arranged at the Învățătorului Street is intended for accommodation of homeless people in the county of Timiș in winter. Shelter capacity is 55 seats. Created for reasons of protection as a matter of urgency for people without shelter during winter, the shelter completes the institutional landscape Timisoara has dedicated to homelessness.

The Shelter aims to protect homeless of low temperatures and reduce the risk of death from hypothermia. Opened in 07.12.2016, in the 25 days of operation in December 2016, 790 cases were recorded; 7.12.2016-31.12.2016 (an average of 32 people / day), of which 581 men and 209 women. Of the 790 cases, 37 were brought to the emergency services by the 112 Emergency Service, three persons by the National Police and seven people from the Local police.

Also in this period the 112 emergency service was called for transport to the hospital for a total of 10 people and 2 times the Ambulance came to change the medical probe of a carrier. Since December 2016, the shelter is coordinated by the of Social Emergency Center for homeless people with social canteen to comply with the Disposition of the Mayor of Timișoara no. 1430 29 .11.2016.

In the three months of operation in winter 2015-2016 the shelter registered 1530 persons of which 1155 men and 375 women.

Daily the Emergency Center for homeless people with Social Canteen provides food and hot tea for 55 people staying in the shelter.

Conclusions

In terms of numbers, the services for the homeless in Timisoara seem to be sufficient. Their representation is indicative for the social magnitude of the problem, two NGOs that work for a long time on the range of services and public institutions that are focused on assisting homeless. The number of beneficiaries, as evidenced by the statistics quoted, is often overwhelming. What the statistics can

not emphasize under any form are the real problems facing the homeless. Therefore the existence of these services is not only welcome but necessary and is likely to relieve some problems faced by beneficiaries for the future being, the multiplication of these services and developing existing ones being a sine qua non.

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