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# Hidden homelessness in Macedonia: reasons, institutional responses and design of a new social welfare system

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# Few facts about Macedonia



**EUROPEAN RESEARCH CONFERENCE**  
**Homelessness and Social Work in Europe**  
**Copenhagen, 23rd September 2016**



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# Few facts for Macedonia

- **Poverty rate** 24.2% in 2013 (State Statistical Office);
- **Participation rate in the labour market** 57.3% in 2015 (SSO, 2016);
- **Unemployment rate** 28% for 2015 (SSO, 2016);
- **Gini coefficient** 39.2 for 2011 (SSO, 2015)

# Purpose of the paper

## TO UNDERSTAND

- 1 THE PHENOMENA OF HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS IN MACEDONIA
- 2 THE REASONS FOR LOSING / DESERTING THE HOME
- 3 THE SECONDARY EFFECTS OVER THE MENTAL HEALTH, SOCIAL RELATIONS AND EMPLOYABILITY

# Research Methodology

Qualitative  
Research



Semi-structured interview  
questionnaire

Sample



65 persons

Time



August 2015 – February 2016



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# Current challenges in Macedonia

- **No legal definition on homelessness available;**
- Data collection- non standardized;
- Homeless are not incorporated as separate vulnerable group in available strategies and action plans on national level;
- Limited public and institutional understanding;

# Available services and support

## Only non-institutional support available:

- ❑ One Center for homeless (capacity for 70 people);
- ❑ One day care center for children from the street;
- ❑ **Red Cross-** social service patrol and one shelter;
- ❑ **Street paper** – Lice v lice (Face to face)

# ETHOS typology in Macedonian context-excluded categories

- Emergency accommodation (2.1);
- Homeless hostels (3.1);
- Transitional centers for homeless (3.3);
- Immigrant-workers (5.2);
- Long-term support for homelessness (7.1 and 7.2);
- Mobile homes (11.1) – not identified;
- Unfit housing (12.1) and overcrowding (13.1)- not defined



# Defining homelessness in Macedonia

**Homelessness** is a process that includes people with limited involvement in the social life, who have problems with their own identity and are homeless, live in insecure and/or inadequate conditions or are temporarily accommodated in shelters or institutions (Ilijevski et al,2016).

# Conceptual categories- Macedonian context

- ❖ **Public homelessness = (ETHOS-roofless)** includes roofless people and people without support in providing of dwelling;
- ❖ **Hidden homelessness = (ETHOS-houslesness)** is category of people without home, sheltered in institutionally or otherwise supported housing;
- ❖ **Potential homelessness = (ETHOS-insecure and inadequate)** encompasses persons living in insecure accommodation, people living under threat of eviction, people living under threat of violence and people living in temporary, non-conventional structures.



# Hidden homelessness

Under hidden homelessness we include the following categories from ETHOS:

- persons accommodated in temporary accommodating for homeless (3.2);
- persons accommodated in shelters for women (4.1);
- persons accommodated in centers for temporary accommodation for refugees and migrants (5.1);
- people due to be released from institutions (Penal facilities, psychiatric hospital and institutions for children without parental care) (6.1; 6.2; 6.3)

# Research findings

## REASONS

**3.2:**  
**Family conflicts:**

divorce,  
domestic  
violence;

**Financial fraud;**  
**Family mortgages**

**4.1:**  
**Domestic violence**

(husband/partner)

**5.1:**  
**Migrations**

**6.1; 6.2; 6.3:**  
**Family conflicts**  
**Psychological Stress**  
**Financial debts**  
**Mortgages**



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# Research findings

## Physical and mental health

### 3.2

Most of them **have health insurance**;  
Suffer from **chronical health issues**;  
Suffer from **insomnia, nausea, headaches, constant anxiety**

### 4.1

Most of the **have health insurance**;  
Do not suffer from any **chronical diseases**

### 5.1

Most of them **have health insurance**;  
Suffer from **chronical diseases** on the heart, hypertension, diabetes, depression.

### 6.1; 6.2; 6.3

Most of them **have health insurance**;  
Suffer from **chronical health problems**: hearth diseases, hypertension, diabetes, depression;  
Suffer from **insomnia, nausea, anxiety**

# Research findings

## Social relations

### 3.2

Solidarity and friendship among persons living in temporary accommodation for homeless;  
Rare contacts with family, public institutions and CSOs

### 4.1

Deteriorated family relations;  
Rare contact with public institutions

### 5.1

Frequent contact with the family;  
Not accepted by the broader surrounding;  
No contact with public institutions and CSOs

### 6.1; 6.2; 6.3

Rare contact with the family  
Judgmental surrounding

# Research findings

## Employability

### 3.2

**Are not active job seekers;**  
Lack of information on opportunities for employment, qualifications or pre-qualifications

### 4.1

**Current employment under threat;**  
A need for assistance in employment towards independent living.

### 5.1

**Very limited access to the labour market;**  
**Complex procedure for work permit.**

### 6.1; 6.2; 6.3

**Very limited access to the labour market** and very limited number of available employment opportunities

# Recommendations

## Persons accommodated in temporary accommodating for homeless (3.2):

- ❑ Advance the conditions in the institutionally supported accommodation and full implementation of the existing regulatory framework;
- ❑ Develop package of welfare services and its regulation with separate by-law;
- ❑ Establish programs for psycho-social assistance and individual work with victims of domestic violence and persons living with addictions;
- ❑ Assistance in employment through training in the process of transition towards independent living;



# Recommendations

## Persons accommodated in shelters for women (4.1):

- ❑ Increase awareness on the institutional support and services available, including the legal aid;
- ❑ Advance the social welfare services available which targets victims of domestic violence;
- ❑ Development of institutional solutions for prevention and timely reactions in times of crises during the first days after the departure of the home;
- ❑ Ensure protection of the current working space for victims of domestic violence and legally supported housing, both regulated under the “Law on prevention and protection of domestic violence”.

# Recommendations

## Persons accommodated in centers for temporary accommodation for refugees and migrants (5.1):

- ❑ Full implementation of the rights of asylum seekers, persons under subsidiary protection and persons with recognized status of refugees regulated under the “Law on asylum and temporary protection” (146/2009 и 166/12). Assure citizenship and all civic rights of persons under this status;
- ❑ Assistance in employment through training including direct access to state and private companies;
- ❑ Re-thinking of procedures for issuing work permits of persons under this status.

# Recommendations:

## People due to be released from institutions (6.1; 6.2; 6.3):

- Design of more coherent system of measures that will ensure independent non-institutional housing;
- Promotion of the model of work integration social enterprises which will ensure transition of these groups from institutions towards independent living and open labour market;
- Involvement of local governments and municipalities in the system of social welfare and development of local programs through public-private partnerships;
- Monitoring and evaluation of the local plans for social welfare



# Operational recommendations

- Develop policy for homelessness through participatory dialog that involves all stakeholders;
- Increase awareness among different institutions on the importance of the right to adequate housing and its secondary effects over mental health, social connections and employment;
- Develop national strategy for homelessness;
- Develop a system for social and professional integration;
- To revise labour market policies to enable flexible work positions;
- Provision of housing.

# Measuring homelessness

## Measuring the severity of homelessness:

- ❑ Syndrome: material conditions, housing, health, vices, physical appearance and contacts;
- ❑ Defined *scaled indicators*

**The arithmetic mean** of all syndromes provides classification of the homeless person: board line threshold, worrying threshold and critical threshold.

*Thank you for your attention!*

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