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Housing Exclusion and Social Work Strategies in Luxembourg

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Housing Exclusion and Social Work Strategies in Luxemburg

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Overview

- Contextualization
- Research project SOHOME
- Focus on the municipal social welfare offices
- Conclusion & further perspectives

Contextualization

Luxembourgish context of housing

- Demand for affordable housing significantly higher than existing offer and steady rise in house prices
- Housing policy promoted the prospect of property through the gradual abolition of wealth tax and the abandonment of inheritance tax
- Increase of the risk of poverty for financially disadvantaged households: 40% or more of the budget goes into housing costs
- Social success of residents is measured by home ownership versus disintegration of Luxembourgish people into neighboring countries
- Solutions of the housing problem are transmitted to the municipalities or to social housing construction versus persistence of the slow down in land use in order to make it as profitable as possible

Research project SOHOME

Social Housing and Homelessness

Research project SOHOME

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Objectives:

- Obtain a deeper understanding of concerned population in housing difficulties, based on the existing literature and on the complexity of the conditions leading to homelessness
- Establish a Luxembourgish policy and intervention profile in terms of homelessness, by collecting and analysing qualitative data on views from social workers and decision-makers regarding challenges, practices and future prospects of working with the concerned people

What characterizes the concerned population in Luxembourg?

How do social politics and social work respond to the identified issues?

What are the main challenges of the social work in the field of housing exclusion?

Research project SOHOME

- FNR-supported project (call 2018)
- Duration: 2019-2023

Qualitative methodology:

- Literature review on characteristics of concerned populations
- Qualitative meta-study on intervention methods
- Focus groups with social workers
- Expert interviews with stakeholders and decision-makers

Research project SOHOME

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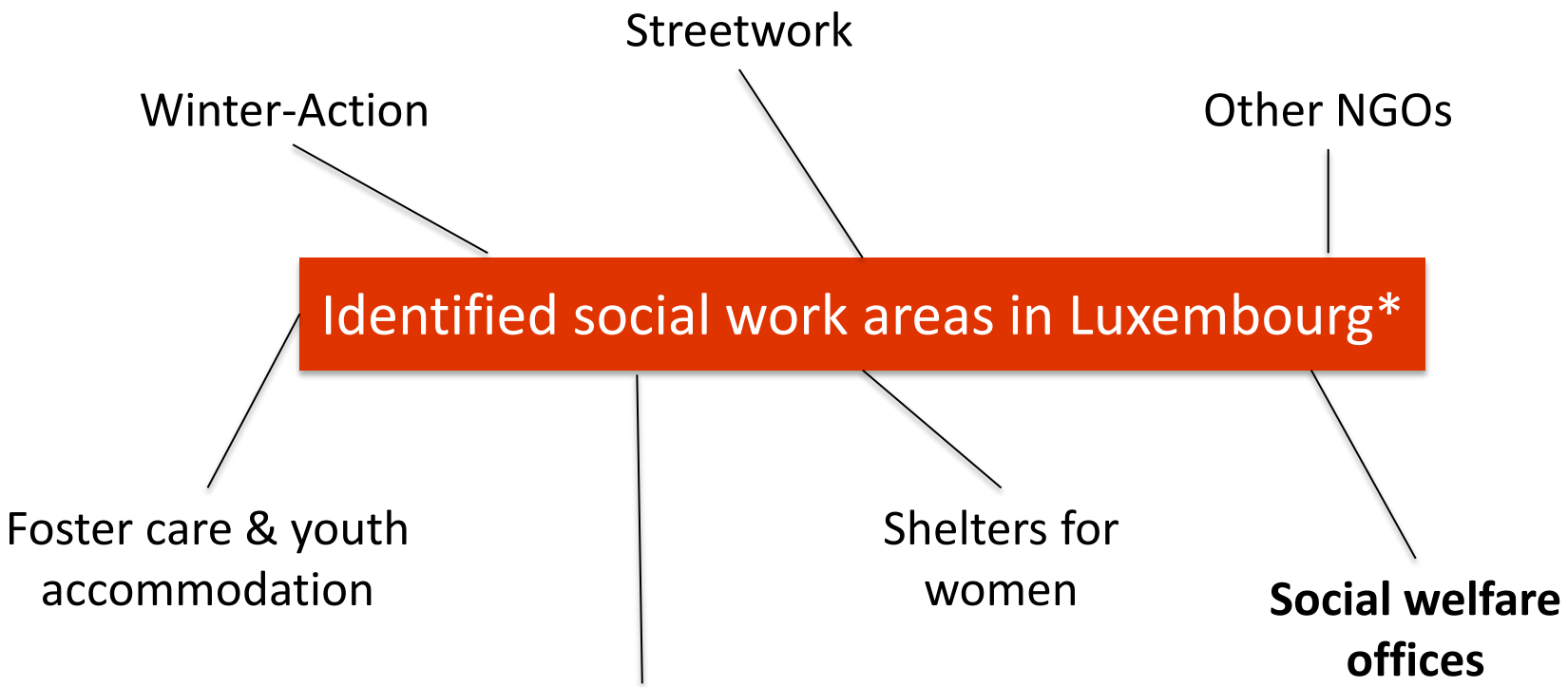
* These services were selected in the SOHOME-project



Focus on the municipal social welfare offices

Social welfare office

- Mission specified by the law of December 18th 2009
- Public-sector establishment who provides social welfare services to individuals (families) living in the municipality or communes
- 30 social welfare offices nationwide
- Offering: advice, information and take steps to obtain material and financial help measures + guidance to improve the situation and overcome the difficulties
- Housing difficulties: humanitarian relief for access to water and domestic energy + arrangement for emergency housing

Social welfare offices

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Data collection:

- Spring + summer 2020: expert interviews with board members for the social welfare offices in Luxembourg
- Autumn 2020: focus group (+individual visits) with social workers from 8 different social welfare offices

Questions:

- How do you describe the life situations of people who come to you with housing-related difficulties?
- What solutions can you offer through the social intervention of the social welfare office?
- What are the solutions pursued outside the social welfare office and what are the remaining challenges?

Life situations and housing-related difficulties of people accompanied by a social welfare office

- All ages concerned, in particular young people and 65+
- Individuals and families, notably single parents and large families
- People with low income, living with minimum wage (cf. REVIS) or in temporary work situation
- Refugees with international protection status as well as people with an immigrant background
- Homeless people without being domiciled in the municipalities

➢ 90% of people presenting to the social welfare office have (also) a problematic housing situation

Solutions offered by the social workers in the social welfare offices

- Submit the application for social housing at the 2 national bodies (long waiting lists)
- Proceed to social rental management in the municipality
- Give access to food facilities and clothes
- Ensure domiciliation so that the person can benefit from health insurance and access to REVIS
- Establish the necessary contacts in the professional network

Solutions pursued outside the social welfare offices and remaining challenges

- Good general collaborations with other institutions as well as with the municipalities
- Strategic work within NGO's versus guidance from social housing policy
- Emerging FSE-projects like « labelling coffee rooms »

General observations

- Housing problematic is growing more and more
- Many municipalities founded own housing service
- Not enough affordable housing + use of unfit or unsanitary housing
- Lack of a database on housing needs in the municipalities (nationwide)
- Lack of a more stable funding perspective in the evolution of the housing market and possibilities for ownership

Conclusion & further perspectives

Conclusion & further perspectives

- Social welfare offices as 1st line service highly concerned by housing difficulties
- Housing exclusion concerns everyone
- Housing difficulties became a constant in the field of social work
- Solid support network versus risk to transmit the problem from one instance to another
- Need of further studies - like city counts - to deepen and to really identify the housing problem

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