

LONGHOME

Development of a tool measuring homeless services impact



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Introduction

Traditionally, one of the main problems addressing homelessness has been the difficulty of defining and conceptualizing the phenomenon (Pleace & Hermans, 2020). The establishment in 2007 by FEANTSA of the ETHOS category became a great improvement. Despite the innovation, most EU countries keep lacking monitoring and evaluation structures allowing to test the effectiveness of homelessness response (Baptista and Marlier, 2019). Impact evaluation represent an opportunity, allowing to identify subgroups within the homeless population, instead of approaching homelessness as a whole (Fitzpatrick, 2005). Regarding evaluation tools, they should be based on longitudinal data since it provides essential information to identify routes in and out of homelessness (Benjaminsen, L., Muñoz, M., Vázquez, C., y Panadero, S., 2005).

The new orthodoxy considers homelessness neither individual nor structural, but consequence of individual and structural factors (O' Flaherty, 2004). Three factors are considered that, if absent, increase the risk of homelessness: personal capacity, formal support and informal support networks (Pleace, 2016). Based on this framework, LongHome tool monitors the residential situation of homeless population present in an intervention programme, by using a longitudinal evaluation that operationalizes the ETHOS. The tool includes variables associated with the evolution of the three factors: personal capacity (resilience, coping skills and access to financial resources), formal support (health, welfare, social housing systems) and informal support (family, partner and friends support).

Objectives

To standardize a methodology for monitoring and evaluation the impact of care services for homeless population

Hypothesis

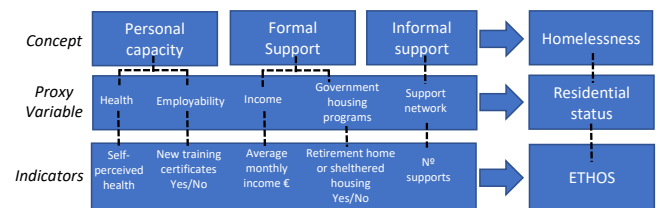
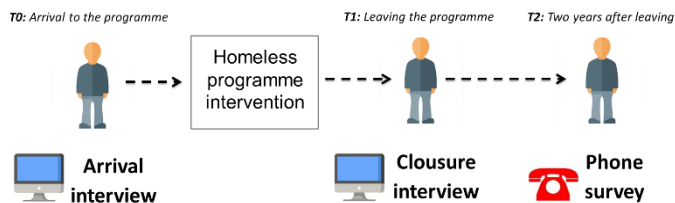
The LongHome tool is based on the assumption that, if personal capacity, informal and formal support and informal support are regenerated, people are more likely to exit homelessness.

Method

The longitudinal study compares the data gathered during three points in time:

- T0.** At the arrival to the programme with a 30-minute interview.
 - T1.** At the moment people leave the programme, with a 30-minute interview.
 - T2.** Two years after leaving the programme with a 30 minutes phone interviews.
- Through these interviews, it has been possible to track ETHOS residential situation and to observe trends in personal capacity, formal and informal support.

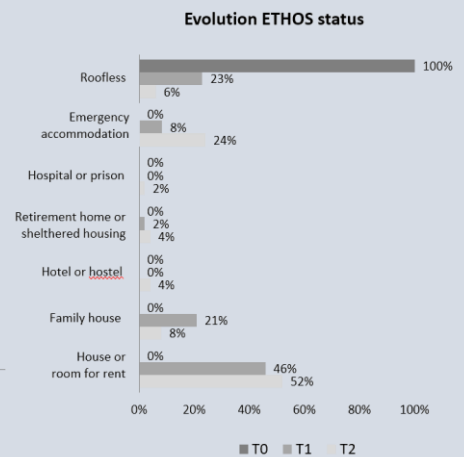
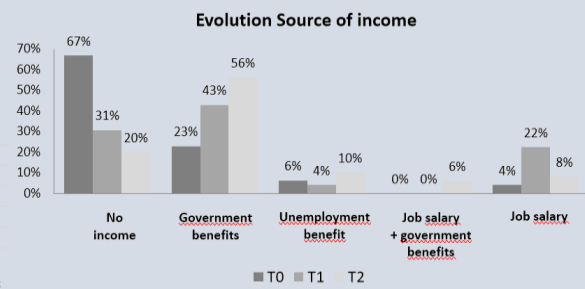
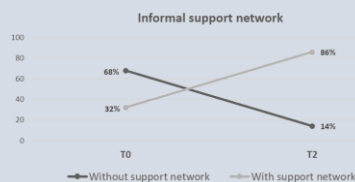
LongHome monitors the residential situation of people in homeless care services using ETHOS. The tool incorporates variables that seek to monitor the evolution of personal capacity, formal support and informal support. The objective is therefore not only to evaluate the residential situation, but also to understand the underlying changes producing it. Given the complexity associated with parameterizing personal capacity, formal support, and informal support, attempts have been made to identify proxy variables that make possible to distinguish variations in each area.



Results

After testing the tool with in two homeless response structures, we can confirm that LongHome allows to identify the percentage of people that were able to leave the roofless situation (ETHOS B or higher) and the people who were able to access housing (ETHOS C or higher) in T1 and two years later, at T2. Additionally, the tool provides information regarding access to formal support, informal support and variations in personal capacity. The results corresponding to a homeless hostel program for low autonomy profiles are shown:

	Entrance program T0	Exit program T1	Two years later T2
% People not roofless (ETHOS B or superior)	0%	77%	94%
% People with house (ETHOS C or superior)	0%	69%	70%
% People working	4%	24%	14%
% People with any source of income	33%	69%	80%
Average monthly income	104 €	373€	541€
Informal support network	32%	NA	86%



Conclusion

LongHome enables to standardize an impact evaluation method addressed to homeless response programs allowing to analyze the effectiveness of each intervention. The tool has been tested in two Spanish programs, a housing led and a temporary hostel, and it turned out to be effective improving monitoring and evaluation in both structures.

Main references

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Download a version of the paper:
"Longitudinal Study of the Homeless
Population in Valencia" in which
LongHome tool is tested

