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BUDAPEST METHODOLOGICAL CENTRE OF SOCIAL POLICY AND ITS INSTITUTIONS

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Budapest Methodological Centre of Social Policy and Its Institutions (*Budapesti Módszertani Szociális Központ és Intézményei*) was founded in 1993 by the Budapest Municipal Council, but it is an independent legal entity with its own budget. The financial resources are provided by the Municipal Council and by the state. In order to provide higher level service, the Social Services Centre also enters competitions to access additional funds. The EQUAL Programme aimed at improving the employability of the homeless is funded by the European Union and the Hungarian State; whereas Cooperation Public Foundation (*Összefogás Közalapítvány*) supports the subsidised housing programme.

Budapest Methodological Centre of Social Policy and Its Institutions is the largest service provider for homeless people in Hungary. Its 17 centres work on a wide range of services aimed at the diverse homeless population.

- ♦ The hostels can accommodate 937 people. The shelters can provide overnight stay for 373 rough sleepers.
- ♦ Special shelters serve as temporary housing for homeless mothers with children.
- ♦ Day centres are daytime shelters for the homeless.
- ♦ Street social workers trace rough sleepers and help them in getting institutionalised support.
- ♦ The Medical Care Crisis Service (*Orvosi Krízis Szolgálat*) reaches out to the homeless needing medical assistance.
- ♦ Budapest Methodological Centre of Social Policy and Its Institutions also acts as the regional methodological centre for homeless services in the Central Hungary region.

Budapest Methodological Centre of Social Policy and Its Institutions employs 163 social workers and 65 social assistants altogether.



ACTIVITIES OF THE METHODOLOGY CENTRE

- ♦ Preparing strategic decisions;
- ♦ Improving cooperation;
- ♦ Supporting social work at all levels of homeless care;
- ♦ Setting the standards for social work;
- ♦ Creating a framework for quality assurance.

This comprises the following responsibilities, in cooperation with SHELTER FOUNDATION (*Menhely Alapítvány*):

- ♦ Consulting with local councils and government authorities on the professional background of homelessness legislation.
- ♦ Organising workshops and professional trainings related to homelessness services, social services and housing.
- ♦ Professional support, initiating and organising new regional services.
- ♦ Operating a coordinator network.
- ♦ Managing the EQUAL Programme.
- ♦ Publishing professional studies, including the series “Homeless.... Action for People”. (*Otthontalanul... Tégy az emberért!*)
- ♦ Editing the periodical “Ferryman” (*Révészek*) targeted at the employees of the Budapest Methodological Centre of Social Policy and Its Institutions.
- ♦ Coordinating the so-called annual “February 3 survey” of the roofless population in Budapest.
- ♦ Running arts projects, competitions, exhibitions for homeless artists.



STRUCTURE OF THE SERVICES

The Budapest Methodological Centre of Social Policy and Its Institutions has a multi-level structure, in line with the complex needs of the homeless population.

One of the basic pillars is the coordinator system, which comprises the four key areas of tackling homelessness:

- ♦ employment,
- ♦ housing,
- ♦ addictology,
- ♦ social care centres / nursing homes.

All the above areas have their own coordinators at the service centres who trace changes and possibilities and can provide up-to-date information.



With the help of the coordinator network, the experts based at the service centres can forward information to their teams.

- ♦ In order to increase efficiency, the service centres specialise in tackling a particular type of crisis. In the case of hostels, Kálvária Hostel accommodates and rehabilitates homeless people with special health care needs. Bánya Hostel prepares users for admission into nursing homes. Váltó Hostel cares for homeless with substance abuse problems. Külső Mester Hostel aims at reintegrating the homeless users into the labour market.
- ♦ All social centres provide services and care to satisfy the individuals' needs. A personal social worker is assigned to each user, who is responsible for surveying the person's needs, physical and mental condition; providing information and mental support; and assisting with applications and other paperwork. Social workers and users draw up and sign a Cooperation Contract. The social workers also prepare a Plan for Social Work, document the necessary steps to be taken, the commitments of both parties in the co-operation, and the achievements. These plans are assessed, monitored and changed if necessary by the social worker and the professional team of the social centre.
- ♦ In order to supplement one-to-one social work and thus improve efficiency, social centres also organise group sessions, either in the form of clubs run by professionals (e.g., groups to facilitate admission to nursing homes, job-seekers' club), or self-supporting groups (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous).

Social centres	Maximum number of users	Number of social workers and social assistants
1. Street Care Service	–	4
2. Fehér Day Centre	120	8
3. Western Railway Station Day Centre and Shelter	70 20	10
4. Könyves Shelter + Könyves Day Centre	75 50	14
5. Előd Social Centre	232	18
6. Dózsa Shelter and Convalescent Centre	143	18
7. Hostel for Mothers with Children 4 temporary homes	14 12	5
8. Medical Care Crisis Service	73	21
9. Táblás Centre	92	14
10. Kálvária Care Centre	48	8
11. Váltó Centre	66	25
12. Bánya Centre	64	12
13. Külső-Mester Centre	129	16
14. Alföldi Special Centre	303	24
15. Dózsa Hostel	338	40
16. Kocsis Hostel and Students' Dormitory	185	17
17. Methodology team	–	8
Altogether:	2034	262

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE CENTRES AND SERVICES RUN BY BUDAPEST METHODOLOGICAL CENTRE OF SOCIAL POLICY AND ITS INSTITUTIONS

SOCIAL INFORMATION CENTRE

The setting up of the centre was carried out as a part of the EQUAL project aiming to help homeless people into jobs and/or training. Its main task is to collect and distribute information to homeless people as well as social workers helping them. This is partly achieved by the system of coordinators mentioned above, partly through individual counselling. The centre also provides legal aid and psychological counselling one day a week.

JOB CENTRE

The setting up of the job centre was also carried out as a part of the EQUAL project mentioned above. It officially opened November 2, 2005. It is open 4 days a week and helps homeless people find training and/or job opportunities. 5 social workers (job counsellors) assess their needs and interests, get them in touch with the appropriate employers or courses, help them write CVs, obtain missing documents, use the telephone or prepare users for job interviews. As homeless people often face multiple problems, the counsellors often have to act as general social workers.

STREET CARE SERVICE

Social workers assist homeless who are roofless, do not trust day centres or shelters, and thus do not receive any other institutionalised help. Care includes social and mental support, life saving in emergencies, prevention and integration. The street care service cooperates closely with other service providers working in the streets.

Time and location of street care service is as follows: midday to midnight in the whole municipal area, from November 1 to March 31; 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. in two districts and in the vicinity of Western railway station from April 1 to October 31.

4 social workers are permanently employed, 1 additional worker help out in the winter. 1443 users were contacted in 2005.

FEHÉR DAY CENTRE

The day centre provides possibilities for socialising, relaxing, personal hygiene, washing, cooking and eating.

Other services provided by the centre include:

- ♦ Jobseekers' club: participants inform each other, share experiences on potential employers, browse job openings and make calls to inquire about the jobs.
- ♦ Arts and crafts club: participants make drawings, paintings, small objects.
- ♦ Computer club: participants can study basic computer literacy, write CVs and emails to apply for jobs.
- ♦ Film club: participants watch films of their choice; there are also books on loan for 1-2 weeks.
- ♦ Medical Care is available at the day centre once a week.
- ♦ Social workers are available for individual consultation, to seek advice on individual problems, and to get information on possibilities for moving away from rough sleeping.

In 2005, there were 120 users a day on average, most of them regular visitors. There were altogether 52,100 "visits" (47,511 male and 4,584 female).

The day centre is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Mondays, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Tuesdays to Fridays. In wintertime and on holidays, services are available from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The centre is run by 4 social workers and 4 social assistants.

WESTERN RAILWAY STATION CENTRE

The centre was set up in February 2005, with 20 (+15) beds in the shelter and a capacity of 70 homeless users in the day centre. The centre caters for the roofless population staying permanently at the railway station and in the adjacent underpasses, who had refused daycare and night shelters previously offered to them.

The day centre is open to all homeless in need from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday. Services are provided by a staff of 8 social workers and 2 social assistants.

In the night shelter there were 19 users a night on average, 6,343 bed-nights altogether (5,825 male and 518 female). In the day centre there were altogether 10,851 "visits" (8,273 male and 2,578 female) – it was closed for three months in the summer.

KÖNYVES SHELTER AND DAY CENTRE

The centre typically caters for homeless with jobs near the city centre. Users can stay at the hostel for 30 (+ 30) nights and get assistance in finding a vacancy at a hostel or workers' hostel.

Services provided by the centre:

- ♦ Those who work at night can stay during the day.
- ♦ Rent subsidies for rough sleeping couples.
- ♦ Care for dogs: while the homeless take a rest, have a wash, or wash their clothes, their (often only) canine companions are sheltered and fed.

- ♦ Library (600 volumes) and video club.
- ♦ The day centre can accommodate up to 50 men and women, the shelter is open to up to 75 men. 9 social workers and 4 social assistants work at the centre.

ELŐD SHELTER

The centre can provide overnight accommodation for up to 140 users during the summer, which is supplemented to 232 beds during the winter, making it the largest shelter in Budapest.

Services provided include:

- ♦ bunk beds in dormitories accommodating 16, 24, 36 and 48 people;
- ♦ laundry room and bathrooms;
- ♦ facilities for cooking and eating,
- ♦ support by social workers.

The shelter is divided into three separate areas.

Rough sleepers coming in from the street and in need of mental and physical re-socialisation into a community are accommodated in 6 dorms. Another 6 dorms are



reserved for regular users whose condition makes them fit to find employment or joining training courses and thus move away from the hostel. Special care is provided to 40 users on a separate floor.

DÓZSA HOSTEL FOR MOTHERS WITH CHILDREN

The hostel is open to mothers with children who are temporarily homeless or in crisis because of domestic violence or the socio-economic status of the family.

Up to 16 people can be accommodated for 1-5 nights in the hostel comprising 4 rooms, common areas for dining, cooking, washing and socialising, and an office. 3 apartments are available as temporary housing for a further 12 people.

The 5 social workers at the centre aim at finding safe accommodation for the mothers with children during their short stay: possibilities include ensuring places at family hostels, mothers' hostels, or rented apartments.

128 mothers and 222 children found temporary refuge and assistance at the hostel in 2005.

ALFÖLDI HOSTEL AND SPECIAL SHELTER

The centre can cater for 173 users in dormitories with 20 beds. A specially refurbished area is available for the physically handicapped; abstinent users are accommodated separately; and two rooms are reserved for deaf users.

Services provided at the centre:

- ♦ Training for jobseekers,
- ♦ Rehabilitation for the physically handicapped (by therapists),
- ♦ Clubs, individual consultation and programmes to prevent relapse to alcoholism for users aiming to achieve abstinence,
- ♦ Gym, film club, arts and crafts club, games, library, visits to museums.

TÁBLÁS SPECIAL HOSTEL

Homeless users can be admitted if they sign a contract to participate in the compulsory saving scheme.

There is accommodation for 80 people in 2 and 4-bed rooms, with 12 additional beds authorized in the winter. Couples can be admitted into the double rooms. The “couples programme” aims at facilitating their reintegration and access to housing through the saving scheme and rent subsidies.

DÓZSA SHELTER

77 beds in two dormitories can accommodate single homeless women on an occasional basis, for one night at a time.

Services at the centre:

- ♦ “Reintegration programme” is aimed at preparing users with an institutional-based life-style to cope with independent living and at providing chances for a fresh start. A moving-out subsidy is available for participants in the programme; the chance was taken by 15 users in the first phase and 46 in the second phase.
- ♦ “Street programme” is aimed at providing occasional accommodation for rough sleeping couples in three apartments rented by the centre, and at ensuring follow-up care.

Shelters are open to all those who:

- have Hungarian citizenship,
- or have permanent resident immigrant status,
- or have been registered as refugees,
- are over 18 years of age,
- are capable of taking care of themselves,
- have no other housing,
- present a hygiene document not older than 7 days on admission,
- present a negative lung screening document not older than six months,
- identify themselves with the appropriate documents,
- sign a document accepting the house rules on admission.

DÓZSA CONVALESCENT CENTRE

This centre provides medical facilities and three dormitories for 66 rough sleeper men whose medical condition does not need professional hospital care but would get critical if they continued roofless.

The centre provides the following services in wintertime: daycare and night shelter, three meals a day, hygiene facilities, bedlinen, medical care, social care, mental support, medication, clothing and hospital care if necessary. Medical doctors are present two hours a day (four hours during the winter), nursing staff is on duty non-stop.

KÁLVÁRIA CARE CENTRE

The care centre can accommodate up to 48 homeless people (20 women and 28 men) in 1, 2, 3 or 4-bed rooms. 19 places are accessible by wheel chair-users. The centre provides for homeless with special needs because of chronic illness or handicap, and addresses problems during the health and social rehabilitation period.

The following services are available:

- ♦ care adapted to the special needs of the individual;
- ♦ social and mental care;
- ♦ extended health care;
- ♦ a discrimination-free community.

The moving out subsidy is available for users staying at the hostels or shelters of the Budapest Methodological Centre of Social Policy and Its Institutions.

The programme spans one year, with two supplementary phases: moving-out subsidy and rent subsidy for those leaving the shelters or hostels, and follow-up care supporting reintegration. Financial support is available for 11 months and decreases gradually. Sessions with the case social worker are frequent in the first 4 months. Users can learn and adapt to living independently and pay an increasing share of their rent. By the end of the year, they are capable of supporting themselves mentally and financially.

The programme is open to those who:

- are married or live in partnerships but have been forced to stay separately at the hostels;
- would like to move out to a rented apartment on their own or together;
- have been cared for by the centre for at least 3 months;
- are capable of supporting themselves;
- have regular income which covers the rent and expenses if supplemented by the subsidy;
- participate in the saving scheme while staying at the centre;
- sign a cooperation contract with their social worker.

The integrated social services aim at helping users to regain the physical and mental condition corresponding to their age and abilities.

In 2005, 103 users were served at the care centre.

MEDICAL CARE CRISIS SERVICE

Primary Health Care

There are no administrative limitations to accessing the standard primary health care services.

The service is a key element of social work in the streets: doctors receive patients directed to care by social workers or transported by the crisis car, act in emergencies, perform disinfection if necessary, and forward patients in serious condition to suitable inpatient care or specialist care.

Special service

Vital medications are available free of charge to patients with financial problems.

The health care centre is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily. Three general practitioners are on duty. A doctor in attendance is available at night and at weekends. In 2005, homeless patients were served on 9940 occasions. 566 patients needed care outside daytime office hours.

Street Medical Service

The street medical service provides basic care and emergency care at day centres and shelters. Its most important tasks are to reach homeless who are otherwise outside the care network but need regular checkups, to direct homeless in critical condition to medical care, and to vaccinate the population as a preventive measure if necessary.

In 2005 the medical service provided care on 2478 occasions.

Special Care

The Medical Care Crisis Service also provides special care in psychiatry, neurology, dentistry and dermatology. In 2005 they received patients on 2988 occasions

Inpatient Care

The Chronic Medical Ward has 50 beds for inpatients, and the Nursing Ward can accommodate 23 inpatients. The first one provides for homeless needing hospital care and attendance because of their general condition or illness. The Nursing Ward focuses on supervision by nursing staff, with the participation of internist, surgeon and psychiatrist specialists.

In 2005 the ward received on 361 patients, and the yearly occupancy stayed over 95%.

Supplementary services:

- ♦ Social work for each inpatient, including personal care;
- ♦ Mental health care with the help of an addictology specialist, hospice workers, volunteer care workers;
- ♦ Physical rehabilitation.

VÁLTÓ CENTRE

This rehabilitation centre is open to homeless with substance abuse or other addiction problem, on condition that they agree to abstinence and self-support group therapy. The aim of the programme is to strive for permanent abstinence and to impart the necessary practical guidance for an independent lifestyle.

The programme comprises the following:

- ♦ “Let’s talk” – a self-support group, with no outside help.
- ♦ “Universe group” – getting to know each other and the world with the help of professional techniques, self-recognition and drama.
- ♦ Film club – discussion group based on selected films.
- ♦ “Pulse” – an open group with the aim of developing communication skills, self-consciousness, and participation in community life.
- ♦ “Stay sober” – relapse prevention group
- ♦ Learning basic computer literacy in the computer room.

The centre provides care for 66 homeless people (56 men and 10 women) in 4 and 5-bed rooms. In 2005, 50 residents left the centre, of whom 33 (66%) were abstinent at the time.

BÁNYA CENTRE

The hostel provides services for those who are awaiting admission to nursing or social homes (old age homes, mental homes, mentally handicapped homes). 64 elderly, ill or handicapped men can be admitted to the centre, who are accommodated in 10-bed dormitories. 2 rooms are reserved for abstinent patients. Social work is aimed at keeping in contact with the nursing or social homes providing long-term housing and care, and at facilitating integration into the institutionalised lifestyle in these homes.

Shelters are free of charge. There is a service fee at some of the special shelters and hostels:

Külső Mester Hostel	5.700 HUF/month (cc. 21€)
Dózsa Hostel	7.400 HUF/month (cc. 27€)
Alföldi Special Shelter	none
Alföldi Hostel	3.700 HUF/month (cc. 13€)
Kocsis Hostel	6.800 HUF/ month (cc. 25€)
Kálvária Hostel	6.200 HUF/month (cc. 23€)
Bánya Hostel	4.100 HUF/month (cc. 15€)
Váltó Rehabilitation Centre	5.600 HUF/month (cc. 21€)

(Users can submit an application for a reduced fee.)

Group sessions:

- ♦ Preparation for life at the nursing home.
- ♦ “Let’s talk about ourselves” – building communities and improving social skills.
- ♦ Addictology group.
- ♦ In 2005, 58 users left the care centre, 19 of whom moved into nursing homes.



KÜLSŐ MESTER HOSTEL

The hostel provides temporary housing for 129 homeless men who have income from permanent jobs or other regular employment, or take part in subsidised training courses. Social work at the centre focuses on reintegration and advance on the labour market.

Special services provided by the hostel:

- ♦ Computers are available for those participating in training programmes.
- ♦ “Addictus group” – helps fighting addiction and maintaining a sober lifestyle.
- ♦ Gardeners’ group – maintains the park belonging to the hostel.
- ♦ Basic computer literacy course.

The hostel accommodated 364 men in 2005: there is high turnover, the average user stays only for a few months, not for years.

DÓZSA HOSTEL

326 homeless people (230 women and 96 men) can be accommodated at the largest facility operated by the Budapest Methodological Centre of Social Policy and Its Institutions.

Special services provided by this centre include:

- ♦ Training and retraining programmes.

- ♦ Taxi driver programme – users who have passed the relevant exams can work as individual entrepreneurs.
- ♦ “Move-on apartments” for users with safe permanent jobs.
- ♦ Rent subsidy.
- ♦ Apartment programme – aimed at maintaining or reviving family relationships broken because of homelessness.
- ♦ Arts and crafts, library with 4,000 volumes, computers with internet access.
- ♦ Visits to museums and other cultural programmes.

Compulsory saving schemes are an important part of social work at the hostels. The aim is to facilitate starting independent living when moving out, as the saved amount can be spent on rent or rent deposit. The minimum sum is determined by the hostel, its exact amount is set based on individual situations (personal income and expenses). Participation in the saving scheme is usually a precondition for admittance into hostels.

Külső Mester Hostel	5,000 HUF/month (cc. 18€)
Dózsa Hostel	5,000 HUF/month (cc. 18€)
Alföldi Special Shelter	3,600 HUF/month (cc. 13€)
Kocsis Hostel	15,000 HUF/month (cc. 54€)
Kálvária Hostel	6,000 HUF/month (cc. 22€)
<i>Váltó Rehabilitation Centre, Alföldi Hostel, Bánya Hostel none</i>	

KOCSIS HOSTEL

Out of the 15 floors of the centre, 5 floors are taken up by the homeless hostel, community area covers 2 floors, whereas the remaining 8 floors operate as workers' and students' dormitories. The homeless hostel can accommodate 195 people (single men and women as well as couples).

The following services are provided by the hostel:

The most modern hostel of the Budapest Methodological Centre of Social Policy and Its Institutions is furnished with new equipment, all rooms have fridge and cable tv. Users have access to medical care, parking, left luggage and safe deposit service, fresh bedlinen, laundry room, kitchen, cafeteria, library, computer room with internet access and a gym.

The centre is a transition between social housing and homeless hostel. There are 10 double rooms, 30 4-bed rooms and 10 5-bed rooms. Users are admitted if they have regular jobs, pay 6,800 HUF (about 25€) and participate in the compulsory saving scheme with a monthly minimum amount of 15,000 HUF (about 54€).

Couples are accommodated separately, in double rooms.

Rooms in the workers' hostel section are available at low rates for workers or employers.



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Hatóság
Budapest, 1133, Pozsonyi út 56.
www.equalhungary.hu
2006

www.bmszki.hu

BMSZKI

Budapest, 1134.

Dózsa György út 152.

Phone: +3612389-500

Fax: +3612389-502

For more information, contact

Fehér Boróka: feher.boroka@bmszki.hu

Phone: +3612389-527

Mob: +3670362-2902