



Ways out of homelessness

Housing support at Kocsis Hostel

Name of the project	Housing support at Kocsis Hostel
Aims and Objectives	Helping homeless people obtain and maintain independent accommodation
Project Description	<p>Kocsis Hostel opened its gates in 2005. It was the first mixed hostel in the capital, which means that there is a workers' hostel on 8 floors and also a temporary hostel for homeless people on 5 floors, accommodating 148 people (52 in couples + 32 women and 64 men). In 2005 the main goal of Kocsis Hostel was supporting the project "moving on". It means that the tenants agreed to strict criteria to be able to establish their independent housing. Thence the Hostels profile changed and the admission criteria have become more flexible. The housing support project at Kocsis Hostel started in 2006. The project helps the tenants obtaining and maintaining an independent accommodation. Kocsis Hostel managed to give the third most supports among the hostels of BMSZKI. In the beginning the support could be used for renting flat, housing tenders, buying a house and also reconstruct/renovate a house. These possibilities have narrowed down over the years.</p>
Core elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The tenant has to live for at least 4 months in the hostel or cooperate for 30 days with a social worker if the tenant lives on the street to apply for the support - Verified "advance savings" which also requires cooperation with a social worker - Tenancy agreement (renting an apartment or housing tenders) - The tenant must cooperate with a social worker during an after-care social work outside the institutional framework - The tenant's income cannot reach the 150% of the minimum wage (appr. €340) - The support's amount cannot reach 66% of the accommodation's amount - The support can be given once for a tenant
Funding	<p>National funding through a public foundation. (BMSZKI centrally applies for the tenders and then the BMSZKI's Customer service of housing decides over the winning tenants.) The limit of the housing support is 240 000 HUF (appr. €800)/person, which can be paid within twelve months – in a monthly receding amount.</p>
Impact/ results	<p>The project proved to be effective establishing independent accommodation with proper follow-up. In the past 5 years 77 tenants successfully won the tender at Kocsis Hostel. Between 2013 and 2014 this number was 28. Only one tenant got back into the homeless system after winning the housing</p>



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support in the past few years of those who lived in Kocsis Hostel. Unfortunately 2013 was the last year when our tenants (9 people) successfully won housing tenders by self-governments. Therefore most of the housing supports are used for flat renting on the private market.

Participants

Any homeless person who has a regular income and fulfils the support's requirements – no special needs assessment.

Staff

The staff working in the project are the social workers of the hostel who carry out their job with central coordination and supervision. If no one can manage the after-care social work in the hostel, then a colleague in the Customer service of housing will do the task.

In the matter of housing support the social worker has to prepare the tenant, that the life outside of the hostel will be more expensive. During these conversations budgeting and plans for unexpected situations must be discussed. Continuous discussions in the subject will help the tenant to make better choices. Comparison of the accessible accommodations is also an important part.

Innovative aspects

The support's requirements change almost every year to adjust the tenants' needs. The amount of support can be given is also flexible (max. 240 000 HUF - appr. €800), such as the number and length of pay-outs.

Sustainability

Sustainability depends on state support and continuous tendering. One person can only apply for the support once, and receive it for one year.

Lessons learned

Financial support combined with individualised social work proved to be a major help for homeless people to obtain and maintain independent accommodation for long periods. This may increase their independence, self-confidence and their capacity of self-advocacy.

Obstacles

Internal difficulties:

- The support can be given for only 12 months
- The project does not count with the possibility of worse financial status can be occurred by losing a job or have an illness for a longer period
- Currently the support can be used only for renting a flat or winning a housing tender, it cannot be used for buying a house or reconstruct one

External difficulties:

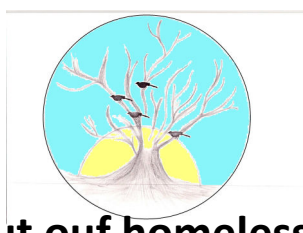
- Increasingly expensive housing on private market
- The low number of housing tenders by the self-governments
- Some private landlords want to avoid signing a tenancy agreement
- No vacancies in workers' hostels

Evaluation

The housing support project proved to be an effective method to obtain and maintain independent accommodation for homeless people. Unfortunately this project is an answer of the problems for only a small number of the tenants – the health and financial state of users has worsened in the last years.



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