



# **Thematic Report 1: Trajectories into homelessness and reinsertion points**

**July 2010**

***This report is one of the deliverables of the CSEYHP project: Combating social exclusion among young homeless populations: a comparative investigation of homeless paths among local white, local ethnic groups and migrant young men and women, and appropriate reinsertion methods. The project is funded by the European Union Seventh Framework Programme under the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities theme.***

***The lead partner for this report is CIES-ISCTE, Portugal.  
Authors: Filipa Menezes and Vera Rodrigues***



This is one of the reports in a series produced by the Combating Social Exclusion of Young Homeless Populations (CSEYHP) project. There are four thematic reports:

- Trajectories into homelessness and reinsertion points
- Social exclusion and homelessness in Northern, Southern and Central Europe
- Capability and resilience among homeless youth
- Gender, ethnic group and migrant dimensions of homelessness

The four reports are complementary and it is recommended to read the full set.

Other CSEYHP publications include:

- Four national reports on the situation regarding homeless youth in Czech Republic, Netherlands, Portugal and United Kingdom
- A comparative Report on Youth Homelessness and Social Exclusion in the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Portugal and the UK
- Methodology Annex on Working with Co-researchers
- Methodology Annex on Life Trajectory Interviews

All of these publications can be downloaded from the project website at

[www.movisie.nl/homelessyouth](http://www.movisie.nl/homelessyouth)

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## **Executive Summary**

This thematic report – “Trajectories into homelessness and reinsertion points” is a deliverable of the CSEYHP project: Combating social exclusion among young homeless populations”. It is part of a series of four complementary reports under specific approaches to homelessness, based on the interviews conducted by the co-researchers to young homeless people in four European countries – Netherlands, United Kingdom, Czech Republic and Portugal.

This report follows both a quantitative and a qualitative approach. It gathers profiles, or models, of homelessness paths identified in each country through an analysis of the life-trajectories of the several interviewees. This qualitative data is both contextualised and reinforced with the quantitative analysis of the interviews.

This combination of approaches enhances the possibilities to tackle the ruptures and constraints that disadvantaged and homeless youth have faced along their life-trajectories, as well as at the present moment, and according to specific social domains, such as education, employment, housing and access to social services. Social services are a key element of social capital that this project aims to analyse by taking into consideration several social actors, or more precisely key workers and young homeless.

As first part of the analysis, this report systematizes the main risk factors found along the studied life-trajectories. The theoretical framework of the project consists of a youth life triangle taking into account three levels of risk – biographical, social and social capital - is at this point updated taking as data source the life-trajectory interviews. Taking into account key transition moments of the youth period, the constraints and obstacles the young homeless have found are presented: during their childhood, with a particular focus on intergenerational disadvantages; their housing paths; at the moment of leaving education; for “moving out” and finding independence. It is also highlighted, through the identification of transition moments with particular vulnerabilities, that the youth period is a moment of heterogeneity in terms of challenges that should be addressed using approaches tailored to individual needs. To this extent, different risks are identified for the several age ranges of the broader youth period.

The second part of this analysis brings to attention the profiles of homelessness paths found by each partner while analysing their national samples. These

profiles aim at a risk levelled approach but prove that an explicative qualitative approach is also necessary. Therefore this part of the study is also based on presenting case studies, for each of the sample groups - young homeless born and not born in the country.

The report goes on to consider the relation between the homeless trajectories and points of reinsertion for past ruptures, highlighting the importance of social services for prevention; the relevance of trustful adults and supporting persons; giving voice to the young homeless for identifying the social fields they value for early intervention and prevention, as well as for promoting ascending turning points on homelessness life-trajectories; access to education with a view to combating intergenerational poverty and exclusion, and an exploratory analysis on a risk based approach for triggering reinsertion points.

This analysis is based on the assumption that understanding the whole process of homelessness, and not only the current situation, allows us to align it adequately with EU guidelines for promoting social inclusion and fighting intergenerational poverty. The report follows the "EU Youth Strategy – Investing and Empowering" particularly by illustrating the need for creating more opportunities for youth in the fields of education, employment, creativity and entrepreneurship, health and sport, participation, and also by fostering mutual solidarity between society and young people, particularly addressing social inclusion.

The report highlights that an investment in social services provision is an investment with revenues. Nevertheless, this investment should be sustainable and strategic. It is more important that services are designed in such a way that they take into consideration that youth is a period that requires tailored measures, not only according to case specific needs (several homelessness life trajectories were illustrated under a case study approach), but also considering the multiple challenges attached to the key transition moments that are part of this life period, from leaving education to living independently. Special attention should be paid to preparing the transition to adulthood with settlement support, taking care not to interrupt this abruptly when formal adulthood is reached.

The transitions of young homeless reveal that in spite of a general improvement in living conditions of young people in Europe, there are still multiple achievements to be fulfilled, including combating intergenerational exclusion, discrimination, addressing the psychological and emotional sides of exclusion,

such as bullying, promoting early intervention measures, particularly family mediation, where other trustful adults can be of fundamental support, among other aspects.

## **1. Young homeless people at risk in European countries**

The 27<sup>th</sup> November 2009 resolution of the Council of the European Union proposed a new framework for European cooperation in the field of youth beginning this year, 2010, and continuing until 2018. The framework includes: mainstreaming youth issues into other policies, reaffirming the European Youth Pact (March 2005 European Council) and its role in promoting the Lisbon objectives for jobs and growth, and supporting the Renewed Social Agenda which targets youth and children as a main priority. Much of its evidence derives from the EU Youth Report 2009 <sup>1</sup> and Member States through the successful use of the open method of co-ordination. The two primary objectives of the resolution are to:

- '(i) create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market, and to
- (ii) promote the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people.' (p3).

Whilst the resolution respects Member States' responsibility for youth and the voluntary nature of co-operation in the youth field, to achieve these two primary objectives requires a dual approach of both specific and mainstreaming initiatives. Both the specific initiatives – including non-formal learning participation, voluntary activities and youth work – and the mainstreaming initiatives in education and training, employment, health and culture, are of particular importance to young people interviewed for the CSEYHP research project. The four thematic reports address the challenges of these objectives in the context of a study of homeless young people who have had fewer opportunities than other young people. These reports on the situation of young people experiencing homelessness in the Czech Republic, Netherlands, Portugal and UK form part of the evidence base for co-operation in the youth field.

The thematic reports are presented in the context of previous research into young people's transition to independent adulthood in Europe. The UP2YOUTH project (Youth – Actor of Social Change, funded under the Framework 6<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Referenced as 9008/9 ADD

Research Programme, [www.up2youth.org](http://www.up2youth.org)) brought together the findings of European research in the field of youth and reported on the difficulties facing young Europeans seeking to achieve the three traditional markers of transitions from youth to adulthood through success in the labour market, in family formation and active citizenship. The most recent European Youth Report of 2009 reports on the comparative situation of youth in member states based on data from European surveys and also reports previously funded European research projects.

Young people without family support – young people who have been in the care of government authorities and those who rely on formal and informal support structures outside the family setting – face even more difficulties in making these transitions. Questions to be asked include: Is their education level sufficient? Do they have training for work opportunities? How will they find and maintain low cost housing? Two current European Commission Framework 7 research projects are aiming to research and to address some of these issues: the YIPPEE project on young people leaving care and the CSEYHP project on young people who are homeless. The CSEYHP project has collected information on early life experiences, family and other support systems, experience of education, homelessness and work, and life aspirations and achievements and will test both early intervention methods and case work methods in its 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase.

### **1.1 The CSEYHP study in CZ, NL, PT and the UK**

*Phase I:* In the first phase of the CSEYHP project each team reported on the particular issues facing homeless youth in their country through a review of secondary literature and interviews with agency workers in the field of youth homelessness. Average European youth unemployment (15-24yrs) was 15.4% in 2008 but the Netherlands had the lowest rate of youth unemployment at 6%, then CZ at 11%, UK at 14%, and PT at 17% (EYP 2009). UK and NL have higher rates of people not born in the country (10.6%, OECD) and the UK has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy.

Each of the four countries has protective legislation for children and young people; in PT the core legislation was passed in 1911, in the UK in 1989, in CZ in 1991, and in NL new legislation has been passed recently to enable the Ministry for Youth and Families to support families through family and youth centres (CJG). PT, NL and UK in particular have attempted to counter the risk of young

people falling out of education. Both NL and UK have targeted pre-school children as well as school-age children in order to reduce educational disadvantage whilst in PT education support has concentrated on children aged 6-18. In CZ, high rates of educational engagement has led to policies that provide financial support for the poorest rather than general educational intervention.

Of the four countries the UK has the lowest age of criminal responsibility (England and Wales, 10 years of age) and imprisons more young people; CZ also has a punitive approach. Both NL and PT take a less punitive approach to young offenders; NL has developed early intervention programmes whilst PT has a small youth prison population.

Each country team also interviewed key workers and agency managers. Their understandings of the issues facing homeless youth in touch with or supported by their agencies are reported in the Comparative Report, Section 1.5. In CZ key workers reported that unemployment amongst their clients was not the most problematic issue (in 2009); the issues of most importance are the quality of the employment they achieve, their ability to maintain their employment and their lack of qualifications. The lower salaries that the young people receive because they are in poor quality employment leads them to a housing crisis; they cannot afford adequate housing in Prague and are living in squats, poor quality hostels, and other types of temporary accommodation.

Dutch key workers reported a major problem of insertion into adult life for young people in the Netherlands because of the break in social support that occurs at 18 years of age; leading young people to be seen as entirely responsible for their own situation in a country where the labour market has demanded greater levels of qualifications and more young people are living at home. Young people aged 19-24 years frequently move to or within the city.

Of the four countries Portugal has the lowest proportion of young people with secondary qualifications and the highest proportion of young people leaving school early, particularly young men. A large majority (80-90%) live with their parents and 18% of young people aged 20-24 years are supported by their families. Key workers in PT are particularly concerned by the situation of youth living in social housing areas in which half the people are aged under 30 years, with few years of schooling, and many having been reported for youth crimes.

Many of these young people have limited institutional connections having dropped out of school very early.

The UK presents a divided picture. The proportion of young people who complete secondary education is similar to NL (80%) but the proportion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) is the highest in this study. An important concern for key workers is the proportion of young people growing up in workless households (the highest proportion in Europe). Polarisation of opportunities is marked in all areas of life for young people in the UK. Those who can live at home stay at home for longer and longer periods but those who cannot must either find affordable housing in the private rental market or move into homeless hostels. The age at which young women have children has risen but the proportion of disadvantaged young women having children is the highest in Europe.

One manager of a supported housing project in the Medway towns (Thames Gateway, a predominantly UK born white ethnic area) identified a problem of motivating and engaging young people from family backgrounds in which no adult works and who live in areas of predominantly social housing among other workless households. But managers of Birmingham supported accommodation identified the same problem with black ethnic youth born in the UK. Key workers in the UK were more likely to identify young people not born in the UK as being more motivated to do well.

The other issue identified by key workers in the UK is the increasing number of young people coming into homeless hostels with a criminal conviction. Anti-social behaviour orders have been used to control the behaviour of people in communities, predominantly young people; these are civil court actions but if the young person breaches them they are taken through the criminal court. In CZ and the UK young people with criminal convictions are disadvantaged in finding employment.

*Phase 2:* The CSEYHP second phase included interviews with 54 young homeless people in each country undertaken by trained co-researchers who were themselves homeless or ex-homeless youth (see Annex on Working with Co-researchers at [www.movisie.nl/youthhomelessness](http://www.movisie.nl/youthhomelessness)) . As far as possible each country sample was to include 18 young people from the dominant ethnic group of that country, 18 from minority ethnic groups, and 18 migrants including refugees – each quota should include equal numbers of young women and young

men. Only the Portuguese sample achieved this precise breakdown (18,18,18). The Dutch sample interviewed more young people from the ethnic dominant and migrant groups, and slightly fewer from the ethnic minority group. The UK sample interviewed more young people from the ethnic minority group and slightly less from the ethnic dominant and migrant groups. The Czech sample – because of the particular circumstances of CZ- was predominantly composed of ethnic dominant youth.

**Figure 1.1. Structure of the Sample**

Sample Quota	UK	PT	CZ	NL	Total
<b>Born in country/ethnic dominant</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>99</b>
	<b>(8F/9M)</b>	<b>(9F/9M)</b>	<b>(14F/30M)</b>	<b>(8F/12M)</b>	<b>(39F/60M)</b>
	<b>7,9%</b>	<b>8,3%</b>	<b>20,4%</b>	<b>9,3%</b>	<b>45,8%</b>
<b>Born in country/ethnic minority</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>57</b>
	<b>(12F/9M)</b>	<b>(9F/9M)</b>	<b>(0F/3M)</b>	<b>(7F/8M)</b>	<b>(28F/29M)</b>
	<b>9,7%</b>	<b>8,3%</b>	<b>1,4%</b>	<b>6,9%</b>	<b>26,4%</b>
<b>Immigrant</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>60</b>
	<b>(7F/8M)</b>	<b>(9F/9M)</b>	<b>(1F/6M)</b>	<b>(8F/11M)</b>	<b>(25F/35M)</b>
	<b>7,4%</b>	<b>8,3%</b>	<b>3,2%</b>	<b>8,8%</b>	<b>27,8%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>54 (25%) (27F/27M)</b>	<b>54 (25%) (27F/27M)</b>	<b>54 (25%) (15F/39M)</b>	<b>54 (25%) (23F/31M)</b>	<b>216 (100%) (92F/124M)</b>

Note: F - Female; M - Male

*Age and gender:* The UK and PT samples have equal numbers of young women and men, the CZ sample includes 15 young women and 39 young men and the NL sample includes 23 young women and 31 young men. Therefore the total survey population comprises 92 young women and 124 young men. A third of the sample are aged under 20 years, and two thirds 20 years and above, but 61% of the UK sample are aged under 20 years, a third of NL and PT (35% and 30%) and 7% of the CZ sample. Women are younger than men; 46% of women are aged under 20 years compared with 24% of men.

*Ethnic minorities:* Ethnic minority youth in three of our samples reflect the colonial pasts of those countries. Ethnic minority youth born in NL include those

with Surinamese heritage (7 young people out of 15), in PT those with Cape Verdean heritage (4), and in the UK young people with Caribbean (11) African (2) or Asian heritage (2). Many young people in the NL, PT and UK samples are of mixed heritage either having one parent from the dominant ethnic group or from another ethnic minority group; in the UK the majority of the ethnic minority group (12 of the 21) are of mixed heritage. In PT and CZ the ethnic minority sample include young Roma: 8 in PT and 3 in CR.

*Not born in the country:* In CZ the large majority of young people (47) are born in that country: others are from Slovakia or Moravia. In the other three samples there is a variety of countries of origin among young people not born in that country. The Netherlands sample has the greatest range of birth countries including: other European (3), Turkey (2), North Africa (2), Horn of Africa (2), South America (2), other Africa (3), Indian Sub-Continent (2), and Suriname (1). In Portugal other birth countries include: other European (1), the PALOP countries of Africa (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome - 13), South America (Brazil - 2), and 1 from Congo and 1 from Afghanistan. In the UK sample other birth countries include: the Horn of Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia - 9), Africa (4, including one from Guinea Bissau via Portugal therefore a European migrant), St Lucia (2), and other European countries (1).

Most young people from other countries arrived through channels outside the asylum process. In UK 6 of 16 young people reported they had come as asylum seekers; in the Netherlands 8 out of 19, and in Portugal 3 out of 18. In the UK the majority arrived through family reunification.

*Religion:* The majority of young people in our sample report having a particular or a general faith (57% vs 43% none); 38% of the sample reported being Christian, Catholic or a member of an Evangelical Christian church, 8% are Muslim whilst 9% report a general belief in a God. In the CZ sample a majority of young people (55%) report no faith compared with 43% in the UK and NL samples and 32% in the PT sample. This is partly associated with different number of migrants born outside Europe in the four samples. In the UK a majority of both the ethnic dominant and ethnic minority groups report having no faith (58%, 59%) whilst 100% of those born outside Europe report having a faith, and this sample includes 5 Pentecostal migrants persecuted in Ethiopia for their faith. In the NL a majority of ethnic dominant youth report having no faith (80%) but not the ethnic minority group (13% none) nor the migrant group

(23% none). These differences are important when we consider the structures of support that can promote resilience.

*Current accommodation situation:* Another major difference between the four samples is the degree to which young homeless people were drawn from those currently living in the street or emergency accommodation or those living in long term accommodation. Within the CSEYHP project we are dealing with homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness. Due to the lack of social provision specialised with young homeless (PT, CZ), the situations of homelessness are, in some cases, broader in terms of the roofless and houseless FEANTSA ETHOS categories. Young people were included for interviews if they were living in one of the following conditions: *without proper and/or legal housing, sleeping rough or sleeping with friends, in hostels or other accommodation intended for less than one year; depending on support services; living in care or move on support; social council tenant having experienced family homelessness (inadequate housing) followed by re-housing (PT).*

The sample of young homeless people recruited in CZ was drawn from young people either living in unfit accommodation such as squats or on the streets (88%) compared with 11% in NL (6 young people living on the streets), 9% in PT (6 young people living in shanty accommodation), 7% UK (4 young people living on the streets). By comparison the sample of young people recruited in the UK was drawn from young people living in long-term supported accommodation (foyers, hostels; 72%), compared with 17% in NL and PT and 0% living in that type of accommodation in CZ. These two samples demonstrate the extreme differences in provision in these two countries – almost no recognition of youth homelessness and provision for young homeless people in CZ and a recognition of the risks of youth homelessness and supported accommodation provision specifically for youth developed over 40 years (particularly in the last 25 years) in the UK. Of the remaining UK young people, 20% were living in accommodation rented from a social landlord (municipal or housing association).

The two samples from NL and PT are more mixed but equally different. The NL sample includes young people who were living in short term accommodation (less than three months, 37% NL), long term supported accommodation (17%), rented from private landlord (9%), refuge (7%), living with partner (6%), social landlord (4%) and others. The PT sample includes young people who were living with parents in owner occupied accommodation (11%), social housing (19%),

private rented (19%), long term facilities (17%), squats/shanty accommodation (9%), and living with a partner (7%).

**Figure 1.2. Previous Accommodation Arrangements**

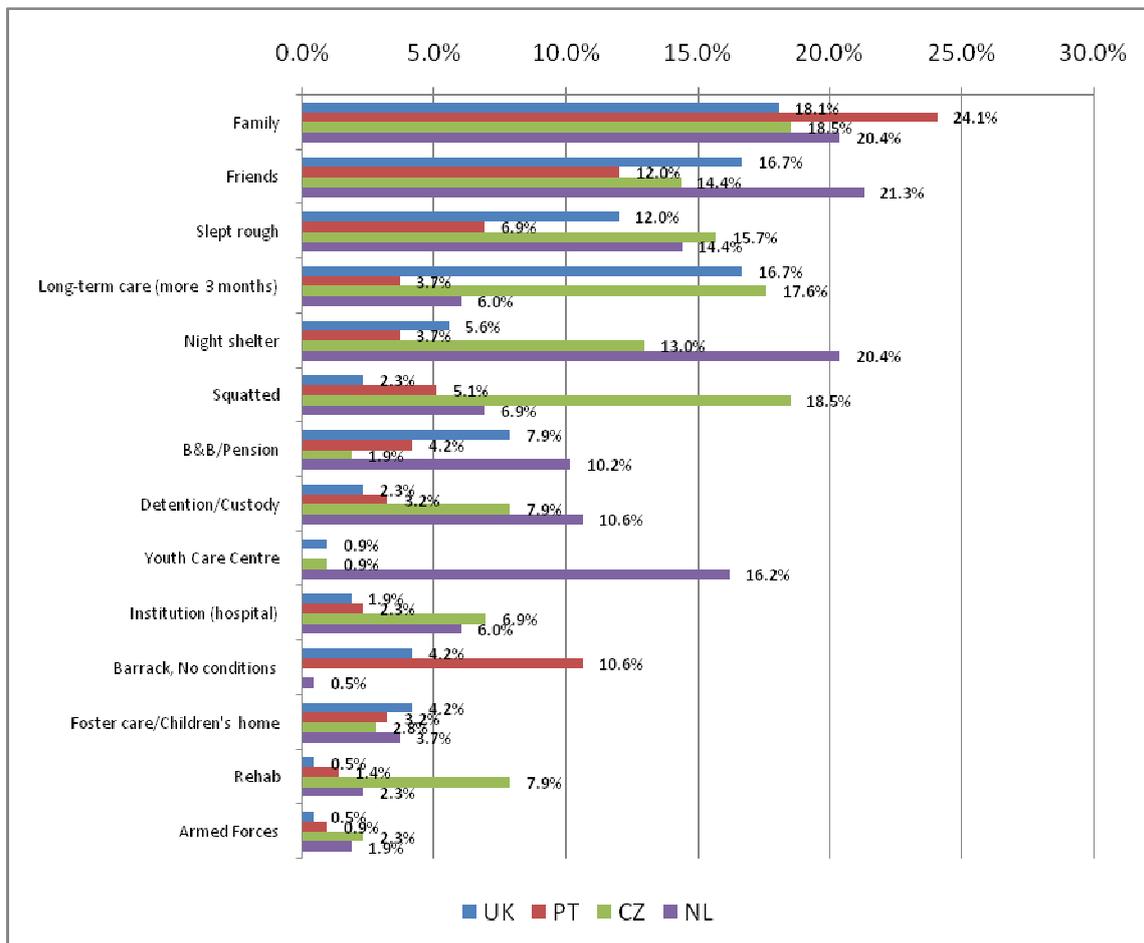


Figure 2 reports on all the different circumstances that our 216 young people have lived in after they left their last permanent home. Some had spent time living with family members, particularly in PT (24%) and NL (20%), whilst others had lived with friends (between 17%-21% in each country). Rough sleeping, squatting, as well as rehab are more common among the CZ interviewees (respectively 15,7%, 18,5%, 7,9% in CZ). Detention and custody have a higher presence in CZ (7,9%) and NL (10,6%). PT has a higher proportion of young people who lived in inadequate housing (houses without minimum comfort conditions, unfit for habitation) (10,6%).

*Current domestic situation:* Less than half of the PT sample reported they were single (44%) compared with 56% NL, 61% UK and 72% CZ. In total 50 young people identified they were parents, and 4 young women were pregnant and 5 young men reported that a partner was pregnant.

**Table 1.3 Age, partnership status, parenting status in Percentages**

	Country sample				Gender	
	UK	PT	CR	NL	Female	Male
<b>Age</b>						
16-19 years, 33%	61	30	7	35	46	24
20 yrs & above, 67%	39	70	93	65	54	76
<b>Partnered</b>						
Single	61	44	72	56	46	68
Partnered	39	56	28	44	54	32
<b>Has child</b>						
No child, 72%	82	48	71	87	58	82
Yes, living with, 14%	6 (3 cases)	39	4 (2 cases)	7	28	3 (4 cases)
Yes, not living with, 10%	6 (3 cases)	7 (4 cases)	23	4 (2 cases)	9	11
Pregnant, 2%	4 (2 cases)	2 (1 case)	0	2 (1 case)	5 (4 cases)	0
Partner pregnant, 2%	4 (2 cases)	4 (2 cases)	2 (1 case)	0	0	4 (5 cases)
<b>Total cases – Has Child</b>	51	54	52	54	89	122
<b>Missing cases</b>	3	-	2	-	3	2

In all therefore 28% of the total sample reported they were a parent or about to become a parent, a similar result to a study of young homeless people in Birmingham, UK (Smith, 2000). But the pattern was very different across the country samples. Of the 29 young people who report that their child was living with them, 21 are in the PT sample; of the 21 who report that their child was not living with them, 12 were from the CZ sample. This pattern follows differences in levels of family support reported by the four country samples (see Thematic Report 3, Capability and Resilience), but also gender differences as just over a quarter of young women were living with their children but only 4 young men.

### **1.2 The four country samples in context: welfare regimes and young people at risk**

The sample of young homeless people in each country was not intended to be representative but to reflect the range of young people across Europe who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Quotas allowed us to ensure that, within a limited sample size, more young people born outside of the host country could be included. Including the full range of young homeless people allows us to reflect life trajectories of homeless youth, on processes of social exclusion, capability and resilience, and gender and ethnic differences across country samples but

also between young men and young women, and young people from different ethnic and migrant backgrounds.

However, from this brief introduction it is apparent that the contexts in which young people become homeless are quite particular to each country. In 2008, the Up2Youth project compared the structure of welfare policies, education and training systems, labour markets, youth unemployment policies, gender relations and representations of youth across the EU27 countries. They argued that attaining adulthood has become more problematic, as has the timing with which it is attained. Many young people experience a reversible transition to adulthood, in which they may return to the parental home and become dependent once more; the current life courses of young people are destandardised, fragmented and diversified. Moreover these transitions take place within distinctly different welfare regimes for young people: Liberal (Anglo-Saxon); Universalistic (Nordic); Sub-protective (Mediterranean); Employment-centred (Continental) and Post-socialist (Central and Eastern European). In Figure 2 we reproduce the main characteristics of these five regimes which will be discussed in thematic reports 2 and 3.

**Figure 1.4 Transition regimes across Europe**

Dimension Regime	Country	School	Training	Social Security	Employment Regime	Female Employment	Concept of Youth	Concept of Disadvantage	Focus of Transition Policies	Policy Trend
<i>Universalistic</i>	Denmark Finland	Not selective	Flexible standards (mixed)	State	Open Low risks	High	Personal development, Citizenship	Individualised and Structure-related	Education Activation	Liberal (more labour market orientation)
<i>Employment-centred</i>	Austria Germany France Netherlands	Selective	Standardized (dual)	State / family	Closed Risks at the margins	Medium	Adaptation to social positions	Individualised	(Pre-) vocational training	Liberal (more activation)
<i>Liberal</i>	Ireland UK	Principally not selective	Flexible, low standards (mixed)	State / family	Open, High risks	High	Early economic independence	Individualised	Employability	Liberal (more education)
<i>Sub-protective</i>	Italy Portugal Spain	Not Selective	Low standards and coverage (mainly school)	Family	Closed High risks (Informal work)	Low	Without distinct status	Structure-related	Some Status (work, education, training)	Liberal (deregulation) and Employment-centred (training)
<i>Post-socialist countries</i>	Bulgaria Czech Rep. Romania Slovakia Slovenia	Principally not selective	Standards in process of transformation (mixed)	Family / state	Closed High risks	Low (except Slovenia)	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	Liberal (deregulation) and Employment-centred (training) BG, RO: Employment-centred SK: Liberal SI: Universal

In our policy report we summarise our findings of the four thematic reports in relation to the fields of action identified in the November 2009 Council resolution: Education and Training; Employment and Entrepreneurship; Health and Well-Being; Participation; Voluntary Activities; Social Inclusion; Youth and the World: Creativity and Culture. We particularly emphasise the overall thematic priority for the youth field for the period 1 January 2010-June 2011: employment. Over half of our sample are unemployed and looking for work at time of interview and employment initiatives are of particular importance.

## 2. Understanding Youth Homelessness Paths

A relevant analysis of the homelessness paths of the young interviewees relies on several aspects: i) understand intergenerational processes of social disadvantage and vulnerability; ii) trigger the several types of exclusion and ruptures young people go through in order to establish a contextualized set of risk factors; iii) comprehend the relation between the key transitional moments that characterize the youth period.

Fulfilling these goals contributes to a better understanding of youth needs in order to promote a strategic, sustainable and pro-active social integration and better inform policy-makers. Under the EU strategy for social inclusion, Member States should have at their disposal suitable information for developing social services to attenuate and prevent situations of housing hardship, in the field of: early intervention; identifying causes and reducing homelessness levels; reduction of the negative effects on individuals and homeless families and assuring that ex-homeless can maintain permanent and independent housing.

The data source for this analysis is a life-trajectory interview (LTI) that has combined both quantitative and qualitative levels of information. The several partners have conducted a life-grid analysis on a case-study basis for triggering reinsertion points. Following Davis (2006), the *"LTI provide a rich source of contextually situated (spatially and temporally) qualitative data... can also be used as heuristic tools to inform policy."*

The present analysis is in part constrained by one of the specific added value aspects of the project, namely that the interviews were conducted by ex-homeless youth without experience in this field. In spite of the training, the interview technique requires practice and the co-researchers have done an excellent job supporting young homeless with their answers, but did not always manage to identify missing or confusing information.

The concepts of life transitions and homelessness form the basis for the structure of this report, which starts by focusing on intergenerational risk factors followed by longitudinal homelessness risk profiles along with tackling past reinsertion points.

Building on Raffo and Reeves (2000), this Project *"lays to rest the notion of a normative model of youth transition. It highlights the increasing complexity and*

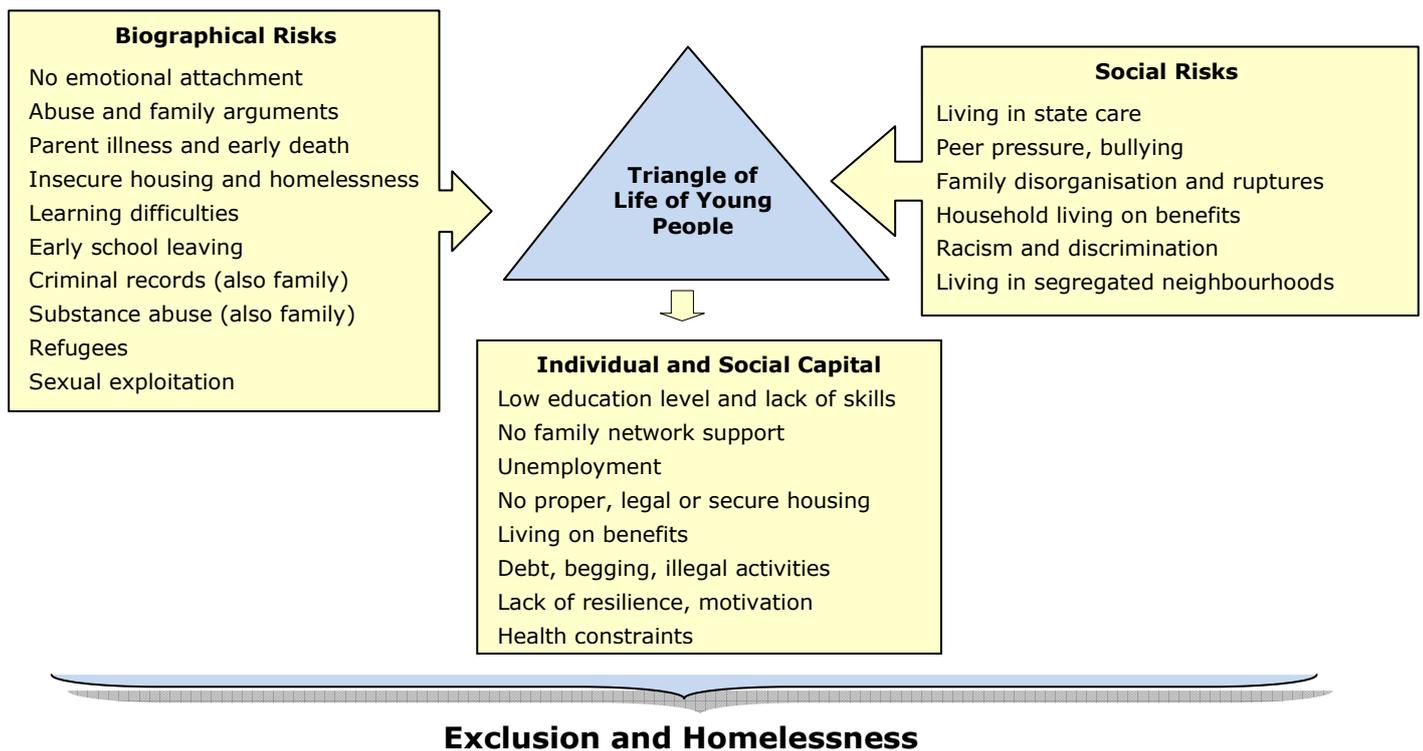
*uncertainty which characterizes young people's lives, both in terms of their apparent options for post-school destinations, and their lifestyle and consumption choices. This complexity is reflective of the impact of economic restructuring and changing labour market requirements, favouring increasingly informal, casualized and flexible work (Ashton et al.,1990; Payne, 1995; Merson, 1996; MacDonald, 1998), and processes of individualization (Beck, 1992), which have created more open-ended biographies for young people. At the same time, social policies (especially those implemented in education, training and social security during the late 1980s and 1990s), which have diversified educational options, deregulated the youth labour market, and increased young people's dependence on parents, or careers, have fractured and extended young people's transitions".*

### **3. Homelessness Risk Factors along the Youth Life-Trajectory**

Following the Comparative Report, each "team reported which groups of young people were particularly at risk of social exclusion and/or homelessness in their countries ... CZ reported three particular groups of young people at risk: young people in care, unaccompanied minors and young people with a criminal record. However these risks are associated both with poverty and with ethnic identity (young Roma). PT reported that young people from Portuguese former colonies (Cape Verde, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe) as well as Brazilians, Eastern Europeans, Chinese and other Asians, despite recent legal safeguards, still find they are constrained in terms of their ability to pursue higher levels of education and employment. The NL report of 'at risk' groups was based on levels of unemployment, lower levels of education achieved, victims of abuse and violence... The UK reported particular studies of risk ... in relation to family background and school/education exclusion."

In addition, under the first phase of the Project, the key workers interviews along with statistic and policy reviews outlined several homelessness risk factors across countries. Those correspond to different dimensions of the triangle of life of young people, now complemented with the risk factors identified along a life-trajectory analysis:

**Figure 3.1. Homeless Risk Factors & Youth Life Triangle<sup>2</sup>**



Source: Adapted from Bruegel and Smith, 1999

As part of the policy guidelines of the European Commission, and under the Youth Strategy, breaking the intergenerational transfer of poverty and other social disadvantages is fundamental for fighting youth social exclusion.

### ➤ **Childhood and Family Background**

To understand intergenerational processes of social disadvantage and vulnerability, it is important to clarify the impact that familial socio-economic conditions and wellbeing have on children and youth, particularly on their possibilities to make life choices. Some of the mentioned risk factors are crucial for social inclusion:

- 8 (3,7%) of the respondents had parents who were refugees;
- 48 (22,4%) had parents who have been homeless;

<sup>2</sup> It is our aim to articulate the capital perspective and the problems facing young people in relation to a triangle, one side of which is their own life history of risk/ their biography; another side is the social context of that risk, their society's moral order underwriting its welfare regime and expectations of other social agents including parents; and the third side is their own social capital.

- 188 (94%) of respondents' parents or caregivers got their income from work (19,5% UK; 25,5% PT; 26,5% CZ; 22,5% NL), which is predominantly low paid;
- 70 (47,3%) their parents or caregivers lived on benefits (14,9% UK; 8,1% PT; 9,5% CZ; 14,9% NL);
- 21 (17,9%) their parents or caregivers got money to survive from family members (0,9% UK; 7,7% PT; 6,8% CZ; 2,6% NL).

Families in PT and CZ have more chances to rely on work and family than on government support, which is not the case for the UK or NL where benefits are higher than support from families. The family works as a compensating factor, however those that do not have this safety net available have less support alternatives.

- 103 (47,7%) their parents or care givers had arguments over lack of income/unemployment;
- 90 (41,7%) of parents/caregivers living with the respondent suffered from illness; 57 (26,4%) from a mental health problem; 73 (33,8%) drinking; 33 (15,3%) drug addiction;
- 103 (47,7%) of parents/caregivers were verbally aggressive and 92 (42,6%) physically aggressive;
- 36 (17,1%) had bad relations growing up with their mothers; 46 (24%) bad relations with the father; 29 (28,2%) with the step-father; 16 (21,1%) with the step-mother; 14 (10,4%) bad relations with other caregiver and 4 (8,5%) with foster carers.

### ➤ **Housing Paths**

The housing dimension is clearly one of the main inclusion factors, not only for its physical characteristics, including location and access to infrastructures and services, like education, but also for its effects on belonging and wellbeing. Illustrating the dynamics of the housing paths along the homelessness trajectories of the interviewees:

- At the age of 12, only 26,4% live with both natural parents and 33,3% with just one natural parent; 13,4% with one stepfather/stepmother; 2,8% with adoptive parents; 1,9% with foster parents; 14,4% with another relative; 1,9% just with friends; 6,5% in care.

- At the age of 16, only 17,1% live with both natural parents and 23,6% with just one natural parent; 11,6% with one stepfather/stepmother; 0,9% with adoptive parents; 4,2% with foster parents; 14,4% with another relative; 1,9% just with friends; 2,3% in refugee accommodation; 7,9% in care and 4,2% by themselves.
- At the age of 18, 10,2% live with both natural parents and 12,5% with just one natural parent; 5,1% with one stepfather/stepmother; 0,5% with adoptive parents; 1,4% with foster parents; 10,2% with another relative; 5,1% just with friends; 3,2% in refugee accommodation; 2,8% in a short term care facility (up to 3 months); 5,1% in custody or detention; 5,1% on the streets.
- At the current moment, 7,9% are living just with friends; 7,4% in a short term care facility (up to 3 months); 6% on the streets and 10,2% with a partner.

The housing paths reveal that relative to the general youth population, there is a shared pattern, as the young person grows older, their dependence on parents/caregivers households decreases. However, several specificities characterise this particular group of young people. One of those is the presence of institutional forms of household, from early to later ages (at 12, 6,5% and at 16, 7,9% were in youth care). Also, the crucial moment of living independently is blocked for several reasons (poverty, unemployment, traumas, and addictions) and the prevalence of institutional forms of housing, staying with friends and family, or rough sleeping is significant.

Their housing paths highlight the early age at which homeless and at risk young people (from 12 to 16 years old) leave parents/caregivers households, moving to institutional forms of accommodation. These paths are associated with the appearance of other problems, such as moving to foster care or detention:

*Box 1 Young people moving into state care: foster care, prison, reform school*

*"Me and mum used to argue a lot, started running away about fourteen when went into foster care, kept moving around"* (UK, Nicola, Born in country – ethnic minority; at 12 with one natural parent and 16 with foster parents)

*"I was known to social services I became homeless when I was fifteen I had been in care for two years. My dad kept saying he hadn't kicked me out and they kept sending me back"* (UK, Trina, Immigrant Non-EU; at 12 with stepparent; 16 with foster parents)

*"I think that the worst experience that I had was being sent to prison from the age of 16 to 19... I grew up in a neighbourhood where that is normal... in Curraleira it is normal for everyone to do what they do and I think that influenced me a bit because if I hadn't lived there, I think I wouldn't have gone that way... that I went... I gave myself over badly... to drug dealing and then it was a*

*terrible experience for a girl of 16 years... I went in there as a girl, I left there as a woman, god I was with all types of people, I was with people who had killed, people who had raped, people like me who had dealt in drugs, other people because of fraud... but I think for me they should have found another way... a suspended sentence..." (PT, Cristina, Born in country - ethnic dominant, at 12 with stepparent; 16 at detention)*

*Till he was 1,5 years old he lived with parents. Parents get divorced. Mother found new boyfriend, he had him as his father. Mother was spoiling him till he was 3, then started problems. He had problems at school - since 1st grade. He was placed to sanatorium (mental) when he was 7 years old for first time for 2 months and also when he was 12. 12 years old - was at reform school, he started with stealing. 15 years old - skipping school - again back in reform school and for third time when he was 18. (CZ, Karel, Born in country - ethnic dominant, at 12 with stepparent; 16 at detention)*

*"Then my mother got into trouble because she couldn't pay the rent anymore, our house needed to be cleared and then I also had to leave. And then I got into trouble. ." (NL, Kubilay, Born in country - ethnic minority; at 12 with one natural parent and 16 with foster parents)*

The runaway Nicola, arguing with his mother and going to foster care, is also one of the children that left school before 15 years old.

### ➤ **Leaving Education**

- 47 (21,9%) are still attending school and 167 (77,7%) have left education;
- 102 (48,3%) have changed schools. The reasons include "being kick out"; "moving areas"; "living with another relative"; "parents' divorce"; "successive school failure"; "bullying"; "drugs consumption", and so forth;
- 65 (31,3%) were in schools/classrooms for specific students (10,6% both in PT and NL; 10,4% in the UK; 5,3% CZ);
- 17 (17,3%) are attending training activities;

Across countries 17 years old is the school leaving average age.

PT shows a higher predominance of early school leaving and also more respondents on those circumstances (2 cases with 10 years old; 4 with 12; 6 with 13 and 6 with 14). However, the NL (1 case with 8; 1 with 11; 2 with 13 and 1 with 14) and the UK (1 with 12 and 2 with 14) also show single cases of dropping-out school before 15 years old.

#### Box 2 Young people leaving school before 15 years old

*"I had a very abusive childhood with my step dad, left home when I was 16 was living with my girlfriend" (UK, Peter1, Born in country - ethnic dominant; left school at 14)*

*"I would have liked my dad to live longer and to change the Eritrean president" (UK, Ammanuel, Refugee; left school at 12)*

*"...I got pregnant when I was 14, I got rid of it...then I got pregnant again, I got rid of it for the second time, at 15 I got pregnant with my daughter... he [the father] didn't want it, he rejected me and kicked me out of the house... I showed up at home 7 months pregnant...my granny gave out to me and turned her back on me, I left, I went home to have the baby...I had the baby and one week later my daughter got sick...Social Security put pressure on me and said that if I didn't go to an institution they would take away my daughter...I kept going out a lot... drinking, smoking... my*

*granny ended up with my daughter...Social Security threatened me and I accepted their proposal to go to an institution ...” (PT, Patrícia, Immigrant Non-EU; left school at 13)*

*“when I was 6 years old I lost my mother and my father needed to work a lot to raise four children... he had problems with alcohol, but he was a great man as well...I think their separation hurt me a little bit...I always have good friends but I didn’t like school...I used to hide from my father and smoke...I don’t know...my life changed when I get into the drugs world... I got stuck...then I started robbing everyone...my sister help me a lot and she sent me to three rehab centres, she is an angel...” (PT, João, Born in country - ethnic dominant; left school at 13)*

*“I was in psychiatrics before. And then I got transferred to a lunatic home where I was in detention. Then they send me away because of drug dealing. And then I was on the streets, and still.” (NL, Linden, Born in country - ethnic dominant; left school at 13)*

*“My life isn’t good...even from when I was very young, there was a war in my country and then I fled. And now I still haven’t found a stable place.” (NL, Maryam, Refugee; left school at 13)*

- 101 (49%) had training after school, including in activities related to care, but the representation of IT related courses is significant ; the large majority have finished this training more than 6 months ago;
- 103 (47,9%) have the “lower level secondary or second stage basic” (only 7% in PT where the predominant level of education is “primary or first stage of basic” – 10,7%).

### ➤ **“Moving Out” & Finding Independence**

Looking at the housing paths, and the presence of institutional forms of housing and support, it is obvious that leaving the parental home is not necessarily a choice of independence.

- 23,1% left parental or childhood home before reaching 16 years;
- 18 years (21,2%) is the age that more respondents say they have left parental home.

Taking into account that young people tend to stay longer in their parental home namely 66% of young women and 78% of men aged 18-24 in the EU were still living with their parents (2005<sup>3</sup>), this particular group of young people shows an early independence trend although not synonymous of inclusion but precisely the opposite.

#### **Youth’s Perceptions on Leaving Parental Home in the EU**

*Lack of means to live on their own is the number one cause in restricting young Europeans from leaving the nest. 44% believe that this happens because they cannot afford to move out, and 28% because of lack of affordable housing. A lack of financial resources is given as the primary reason in 16 out of 27 Member States. In 10 other countries, the shortage of affordable housing is selected as the most significant cause.*

*(European Commission, Looking behind the figures: The main results of the Eurobarometer 2007 survey on youth)*

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat, The Social Situation in the European Union, 2005-2006

Looking at the reasons pointed out by the young homeless for their decision of “moving out”, we come to the conclusion that they do not predominantly reflect a decision of adulthood transition, but primarily the “need to get away” from abuse, or arguments, for political and religious reasons (refugees), among others. Moreover, the reasons for living independently also include a relation with a boyfriend/girlfriend or wanting to be independent.

*Box 3 Young people’s reasons for leaving “home”*

*“Mum couldn’t deal with me and vice versa” (UK, left home with 13)*

*“My parents were causing me depression” (UK, left home with 18)*

*“improve my stability” (PT, left home with 20)*

*“because I start working with 12 years old, my wallet was used for everything and I was tired of that” (PT, left home with 19)*

*“ran away from parent’s house to live with my husband” [white young male and she is Roma] (PT, left home with 15)*

*“I could take care of myself” (CZ, left home with 18)*

*“I had to - I had problems with police (drugs)” (CZ, left home with 16)*

*“My mother is alcoholic. Every night she drank 1 or 2 litres of wine.” (NL, left home with 21)*

It is relevant to take into consideration the “quality” of the places the young homeless have moved to while looking for their independence. These places reflect an overabundance of “non autonomous” or shared housing, among which friends, hostels and youth centres, streets.

Looking at the financial means on which young homeless or youth at risk can build their chances of independence, we see a reproduction of their parents’ circumstances, including low paid jobs and benefits. Furthermore, the level of education, which is also an inherited exclusion, constitutes a vulnerability factor in terms of the labour market demands: 62 (30,1%) are unemployed looking for work; 114 (52,8%) get their income from benefits; 58 (26,9%) from work and 118 (54,6%) have debts.

***Youth’s Perceptions on Employment/Unemployment in the EU***

*For 38% of the young Europeans the most important difficulties in finding a job are the lack of job opportunities in their country. Slightly less than one in four thinks that the main problem is a lack of practical experience. 12% blame lack of training opportunities and 11% mention that they have poor careers advice at school.*

*(European Commission, Looking behind the figures: The main results of the Eurobarometer 2007 survey on youth)*

Taking into account the set of specific vulnerabilities accorded to the selected key transition moments during childhood, adolescence and early adulthood, it is

possible to systematise several risk factors. This helps to inform policy makers and social workers in order to promote inclusion measures, key work practice and tailored measured insertion services.

**Figure 3.2. Risks across Childhood and Youth Life-stages**

Age Stage	Example risks and vulnerabilities
<b>Early years 0-4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poor maternal and early nutrition leading to stunted growth and other life-long negative health impacts;</li> <li>- Poor cognitive development if early care and stimulation inadequate, with lifelong impact</li> <li>- Acute vulnerability to disease and infection/poor access to health services</li> <li>- Exposure to hazardous environments relating to poor housing and/or parents' work</li> <li>- High dependency: risk from loss of parent/carer</li> <li>- Disability through lack of early intervention</li> <li>- Neglect and discrimination of girls</li> <li>- <b>Institutionalisation/living in care</b></li> <li>- <b>Risk of disrupted and dysfunctional families</b></li> </ul>
<b>Children 5-11</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Risk of not attending school because of domestic or income-earning responsibilities or lack of household income to pay for school related costs</li> <li>- Inability to benefit from schooling because of added burden of domestic or income-earning responsibilities</li> <li>- Particular issues for girls: not prioritised for investment in education/domestic responsibilities/vulnerability to sexual exploitation when attending school</li> <li>- Insufficient food or poor diets increasing likelihood of illness</li> <li>- Dependency: risk from loss of parent/carer</li> <li>- <b>Exposure to hazardous environments relating to poor housing and/or parents' work</b></li> <li>- <b>Institutionalisation/living in care</b></li> <li>- <b>Risk of disrupted and dysfunctional families</b></li> <li>- <b>Lack of childcare structures and support to conciliate parents' work and care demands</b></li> <li>- <b>Loneliness and lack of role models</b></li> <li>- <b>Lack of early intervention support</b></li> </ul>
<b>Adolescents 12-24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vulnerability of children to early withdrawal from school due to lack of parents/family income</li> <li>- Impact of triple burden of work, unpaid care and schooling</li> <li>- Risks from early marriage and child-bearing</li> <li>- Lack of access to training/formal employment leading to entry into high risk employment categories</li> <li>- Increased risk of HIV and AIDS infection as individuals become sexually active</li> <li>- Increasing vulnerability of girls due to gender based violence</li> <li>- <b>Exposure to hazardous environments relating to poor housing and/or parents' work</b></li> <li>- <b>Institutionalisation/living in care</b></li> <li>- <b>Risk of disrupted and dysfunctional families</b></li> <li>- <b>School absenteeism and child labour</b></li> <li>- <b>Loneliness and lack of role models</b></li> <li>- <b>Lack of income and housing support to live independently</b></li> <li>- <b>Perpetuation of intergenerational poverty</b></li> <li>- <b>Gender and ethnic discrimination</b></li> <li>- <b>Delinquency and criminal records</b></li> <li>- <b>Informal exclusion: no access to culture, technologies, relationships and belonging</b></li> <li>- <b>Lack of early intervention support and social welfare provision, including move-on</b></li> </ul>
<b>Young adults mid-20s/30s</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of access to credit/ asset building opportunities</li> <li>- Lack of employment or further training/development</li> <li>- Loss of employment/ reduced earning potential for women through pregnancy and childcare</li> <li>- Reduced household income relating to HIV and AIDS prevalence, and other illnesses</li> <li>- <b>Dependency on social provision/subsistence care</b></li> <li>- <b>Lack of income and housing support to live independently</b></li> <li>- <b>Perpetuation of intergenerational poverty</b></li> <li>- <b>Gender and ethnic discrimination</b></li> <li>- <b>Delinquency and criminal records</b></li> <li>- <b>Informal exclusion: no access to culture, technologies, relationships and belonging</b></li> </ul>

Note: **In bold - risks added to the original version**

Source: [In Filipa Menezes, Social Inclusion/Equal Opportunities for the Youth Partnership \(2009\)](#),

Adptade from Astrid Walker, pp. 131, 2009

#### **4. Homelessness Paths and Risk Factors Across Countries**

In order to assess the intersection of the several risk factors along different social domains, distinct models of homelessness paths were identified by the four partners. These profiles were identified reconstructing chronologically the life-trajectory interview regarding specific domains (age and events life grid): family events, housing events, activities events, contacts with services and possible points of reinsertion

The homelessness paths demonstrate that each single case combines distinct levels of risk factors, which can vary both in quality and in intensity, in different social spheres. In this sense, the homelessness risk levels typology should be read as a continuous line of possible combinations of homelessness risk levels. It is important to take into account both the qualitative seriousness of the risk factor and its possible increase to a higher level.

Moreover, national specificities (including structural aspects such as employment dynamics or the design of the educational systems) create different conditions for youth insertion possibilities. Among those, the social services, which this project already highlighted as a major key insertion mechanism, provide visibility to the groups of young people that find themselves homeless. If there are no services, young homeless people are as not easily identified.

The risk factors found in the life-trajectories can be grouped on different levels. These levels correspond to "ideal types" or "profiles", and in a large part of the cases, a young person presents different levels of risk for the several domains. For instance, cases with a high level of risk regarding family background (example of abuse) but not for education (being at the university). This example is of a young interviewee who is in university under a move-on supporting action plan in the transition from children care to autonomous living.

In this dynamic of combining risk factors, we claim that social services should play a major role in combating intergenerational disadvantages, promoting education and quality jobs.

Figure 4.1 summarises the main risk factors per levels according to insertion domains:

**Figure 4.1. Homelessness Risk Levels & Social Domains**

Indicators	Low Risk (LR)	Medium Risk (MR)	High Risk (HR)
<b>Family &amp; Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No disruption</li> <li>- At least with one biological parent (ages 0-16)</li> <li>- No Hitting or abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disrupted family background</li> <li>- Long term lone parent</li> <li>- Relationship difficulties/arguments</li> <li>- Lack of affective support</li> <li>- Lack of social/cultural capital within family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Living in care, diagnostic institutions, detention, custody</li> <li>- Living by themselves at 12 years</li> <li>- Hitting and/or abuse</li> <li>- Parents early death</li> <li>- Siblings and family obligations</li> <li>- Eviction from family home</li> <li>- Running away episodes form home/institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Education (European Social Survey)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 = Post-secondary, non tertiary</li> <li>5 = First stage of tertiary</li> <li>6 = Second stage of tertiary</li> </ul>	3 = Upper secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0 = Not completed primary education</li> <li>1 = Primary or first stage of basic</li> <li>2 = Lower level secondary or second stage of basic</li> </ul>

Youth with high risk (HR) levels in the different social spheres see their emotional wellbeing affected since early childhood, perceiving this period as negative and unstable, marked with arguments at home/institutions often involving violence. Poor social relations, including with peers and neighbours, are also mentioned, in spite of having a “special support person” being a possibility. School disruption relates to problems with teachers, absenteeism and bullying against other children.

Box 4 Different levels of risk in youth background illustration from UK

*“Basically I’m here because my parents have moved to Wales and I don’t really want to go there because it’s pretty isolated and I need to continue with my education and stuff and all my friends and basically I know the area”* (UK, Denk, Born in country – ethnic dominant; Low Risk)

*“I was living at home and we’d moved into the privately rented house thinking that the person that lived there was the landlord and he was actually the tenant and the real landlord got involved and wanted us out so he evicted us... [ ] I moved in with my brother and then I went to Connections and got in here...”* (UK, Claire, Born in country – ethnic dominant; Medium Risk)

*“When I was sixteen my mum kicked me out because she had problems with alcohol... then I went to go live with me dad but I didn’t get on with me step mum so I moved out when I was seventeen and I was like earning and renting a place but I wasn’t earning enough to cover the rent so then I went to live with friends and then I came here”* (UK, Samantha, Born in country – ethnic dominant; High Risk)

In the UK the high risk profiles were dominant, representing 35,2% of the UK cases/8,8% of the global sample. The low risk profile represents 9,3% UK sample/2,3% global sample. The medium is 14,8% for the UK/3,7% global sample. These findings run parallel to the national context. A 2008 representative sample survey found that two thirds 16-17 year olds accepted as homeless had parents separated or divorced; 55% school excluded; 50%

anxiety, depression as a child; 50% step parent moved into family; 50% stayed away more than one night when running away; 48% financial difficulties in childhood; 30% violent relationship themselves (domestic violence between parents higher); 18% spent time in care; 10% young offenders.

It is important to alert for the fact that risk factors can increase along the life trajectory and between generations, but it is also relevant to understand the intersections and accumulation of their effects. Peretti-Watel<sup>4</sup> alerts researchers to the dangers of a multiple risk factors approach that seeks to promote prevention without understanding the individual's centrality and social environment. In this way, multiple factors are identified (none is enough but each increases the probability of a negative effect) while the idea of cause is abandoned ("une toile des causes centrée sur l'individu").

In this context, the project partners have highlighted the examples of homelessness profiles that were more evident, both for a higher or single case expression, among their national samples, which for their complexity and specificities are analysed under case study logic.

#### *4.1 Risk portraits of homeless youth born in the country*

**"On the Road" (UK, CZ, NL, PT):** the "young person on the road", regardless of the family and housing disruption experienced, has as main characteristic that they reject support. It is also a fact that these situations conceal histories of family violence, drugs or school absenteeism but at present, like Martin in CZ, young persons say they are happy hanging around with friends, squatting or living in a boat. The testimonies centre on a perception of living an adventurous or transitory phase. However, it can create serious repercussions in the future due to, among others, not contributing to the social security system or being left with no medical assistance or social security rights.

**State Care Youth (CZ, NL, PT):** ranging from medium to high risk this group includes children that were in care facilities from childhood to late adolescence or early adulthood (21 years, as is possible in PT). This group includes young people who have parents with problems such as addictions or arrest, who have frequent arguments leading to running away, or who have been abused in the family.

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<sup>4</sup> Peretti-Watel, 2004

The PT sample includes young people living in move-on-accommodation (autonomy community apartments) around their twenties after leaving youth care, who are studying at the university.

NL interviewees have highlighted problems related to the design of the social services, in this case youth care. Those are lack of support continuity, safety, one stable caring person, among others. The lacking personal support is also a result of scarce human resources and infrastructures. Therefore the NL made a division in these profiles of youth in care, being institutionalised at an early age and at an older age:

Box 5 Different Care Situations – early and late intervention - illustration from NL

**Intervention at early age (before 15) - taken into care:**

*"When I was small, 4 or 5 years old, my parents got divorced. Then I lived with just my mom and my brother, just until I was 13. Then my mom got together with her new boyfriend, a new man. And... that didn't go so well. I ended up on the street, hanging out with friends, because it didn't feel right at home anymore. But the streets didn't help anymore eventually. So one of my friends brought me to the GGZ (public health services). Three days later I left home. They promised me that my family would get help too. But they never did."* (NL, Joyce, Born in country – ethnic minority; in care at young age)

**Youth that has been living back and forth in care/support situations:**

*"My mom got pregnant at her 19th by my father. During the pregnancy this relationship ended. He was just a bad man, he beat her and was also in prison. So when I was born my mom was actually alone."* (NL, Sharelle, Born in country – ethnic minority; in crisis shelter at 16 years old)

The two profiles identified in the NL can both be found in the sample and in the country homelessness situation (in care before 15 years old represents 27,8% of the NL cases/6,9% global sample, and later intervention is 20,4% of the NL cases/5,1% on the global sample).

For PT, institutional care is a risk factor, as well as for CZ, at the national level, representing this profile 2,3% of the total sample. In CZ, the difference of genders is significant, being, in the total sample, 1,9% previously institutionalised females and 5,6% males.

**Young mothers (UK, PT):** can range between low and high risk in family background but overall their narrative is mostly around pregnancy or being a young mother and that they are homeless because they became pregnant – their mother did not want them pregnant, there was overcrowding in the family or family feels that it would be overcharged taking care of the baby.

In the UK young women who leave home whilst pregnant form a distinct group because by virtue of being young mothers they fall into a category of young

persons who are seen as vulnerable and have a right to certain housing and other social supports from the state<sup>5</sup>.

These profiles are represented in these national contexts, being 2,8% (5) of the global sample from the UK and 0,9% (2) from PT.

**Domestic Violence (NL):** this group of young women can range from medium to high risk and are using support facilities after running away from an aggressive boyfriend or pimp (forced to prostitution). Their family safety nets are also scarce or they feel constrained to use that resource for safety reasons. Although domestic violence can be considered frequent among homeless youth victim of abusive parents, this group is characterised by the fact that the aggressor is a male partner. There is one case in the sample. In the country the percentage of homeless girls fitting this profile is higher than reflected by the global sample.

Furthermore, in the NL sample there are cases that, due to a higher specific risk factor, can be grouped around a specific characteristic. This is the case of "custody and detention" (6% of the global sample) and "street" (1,9% of the global sample) youths. The first group fits under the high risk level but there are distinctions: half have been in prison, including a minority at 12 years old; at 16 and 18 most were in detention, in care or on streets; they have alcohol and drinking problems and are engaged in illegal activities. The second is a sub-group of the high risk level more prevalent on the streets. They combine specific risk factors: they have all lived in care, had frequent episodes of running away (usually six times or more), a majority has mental health issues.

The PT sample is specific in demonstrating the role of family safety network in obscuring the visibility of the homelessness situation. This means that there are cases that have, without leaving their parent's or relative's council housing, changed their family household composition to enlarged families (example, of a husband or partner that comes to join the young wife at her grandmothers); have experienced family homelessness, or house without minimum comfort conditions (like, self-made shacks, segregated shanty towns or illegal housing, and so forth); having their parents or themselves been re-housed to social

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<sup>5</sup> The UK sample had less than four young mothers interviewed and they fall into two categories those who have children prior to the age of 16 and those who have children after the age of 16. Those young mothers who have children prior to the age of 16 are largely similar in their life trajectory to the UKborn medium risk young people and those who have children post 16 are largely similar to those on the UKborn low risk young people.

council housing; or were unable to live with their parents (due to prison or addictions) and were raised by another family member or staying in care. Among the last situations, we can find young people that after living in care, or with relatives, are now back living with their parents.

If we look at the current housing situation of these youths, they do not fit in a homelessness situation in a narrow sense, but during their trajectories they have experienced several homelessness risk factors. Therefore, their particular situation is very difficult to fit into the above risk level profile approach.

Box 6 Invisible homelessness in Portugal due to family safety network

Augusto, lived in children's care while his mother was in prison but went back to his mother's after her release: "... I was a person that never had much...I had difficulties in my life...I was 7 years old when I was for a while without my mother...my mother was arrested, my father worked day and night...I run away from that children's home ...I didn't like to stay there...I have my house which is from my parents..." (PT, Augusto, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

Joana lives with her husband and grandmother at her grandmother's: "... the fact of living in a small quarter, of my parents not being well paid, my mother was unemployed 2 years, this brought us some constraints ... when my grandfather died I went to live with my grandmother because she was alone ... besides, several times we already used to sleep over my grandmother's ... it's a house like ground floor and 1<sup>st</sup> floor ... meanwhile, I went to live with my grandmother, I think it was very good ... my husband lived in the same quarter... meanwhile I married.. I decided to stay in my grandmother's house because if I left my grandmother would stay alone ... she already has seventy something ... we decided to have kids, two came ... I think everything was pretty good..." (PT, Joana, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

Mariana, living with her mother and daughter at her mother's place: "... when I was 8 years old my mother was arrested, then in my ten's my father died ... I lived for a while with my aunt, from my mother side, then I took an assistant hairdresser course ... then I started working and got pregnant...my aunts evicted me...then I went to live in a house that was attributed to my mother when her self-made shack was knocked down [by the government under the Special Re-housing Programme]...and I am still there until now...my mother came out of jail one year ago... I cannot say that I am well, well, but I have been worse than what I am today" (PT, Mariana, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

Cristiana, living with her husband and son at her mother's council apartment without her mother: "... at my mother's and that happens because my mother lives now at her husband's house, my younger sister lives also at her husband's, my brothers ... were able to rent an apartment and I ... stayed there in my mother's place, until I get money to rent my own a small house, work ... we are well there because it is a good house, it's from Gebalis [council house]... I pay 2€ of rent, 2,5€, because I do not have benefits ... neither minimum income ... I just receive the allowance of my kid that is 40€, it isn't enough ...so, even if I wanted to get out of there, it is out of question since rent is low but also the income is not enough" (PT, Cristiana, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

Research studies have been pointing out that family support network can be both a constraint and a support source. Samantha in the UK, or Fiona in CZ, exemplify the experiences of young girls that for family obligations reasons, respectively taking care of siblings or the grandmother, see their education trajectories constrained. In other words, the family support exists but restrains the chances of an ascending trajectory and instead perpetuates intergenerational poverty.

It is a factor visible across countries that homelessness may reproduce homelessness due to its collateral effects. This means that the social system contributes to perpetuation of deprivation and social exclusion due to related factors emerging from the homelessness situation. This context of extreme exclusion contributes, without access to social services, to perpetuate the condition of deprivation, due to health accidents, problems with practical functional activities, addictions, loss of documents that limit the possibilities of employment and access to benefits, and so forth.

#### 4.2 Risk portraits of homeless youth not born in the host country

The cases found in the study show a prevalence of non-EU immigrants in the UK (6,5%), PT (8,3%) and NL (7,9%). The CZ only has immigrants from the EU (3,2%), whereas PT does not have any case, and both NL and UK have 2 (0,9%).

- **Refugees:** this group includes refugees and youth driven from their country by religious persecution, military service and imprisonment etc.

In the UK, the paths of the refugees that come on their own are unique. They are all from Ethiopia, Eritrea or Sudan. They have different family backgrounds to the UK group.

##### Box 7 Refugees – UK and NL illustrations

*"Firstly I was born in Asmara. My family are Pentecostal since before it was banned we used to go to church no problem. After when it was banned and we were not allowed to gather suddenly the police came. I was gathered in another group from my parents. I was held for a month and two weeks they took me for questioning. I was taken out of prison by my father, he took me to a friend's house I stayed for five days. Arrangements were then made for me to get out of the country. I was taken to Tessena and then to Sudan. I was then taken to France about a month and a bit and then I came here"* (UK, Sara, Non-UK born came to UK alone, Refugee)

*"I have been living in insecurity for a long time. I came here when I was 10 years old. And since then I have been living in insecurity. Because I may be sent back soon, they haven't decided yet."* (NL, Ancha, Refugee)

In the NL, a subdivision of two groups among the refugees is pertinent: the ones with a pre-migration situation aggravated by risk factors, as living in care and aggressive relations with parents (closer to the HR profile); and the ones in a post-migration situation (closer to the LR profile). The latter group registers no experience of abuse or family disruption but are living at early ages (16/18) in refugee centres, by themselves or sleeping rough, due to their refugee status.

For both cases, the lack of access to employment, housing and school disruption are a clear consequence of the lack of legal citizenship status.

Moreover, both UK and NL register situations of women that have suffered family disruption, including violence, due to their rejection of arranged marriages. These women can fit either a refugee situation (running away from their countries) or domestic violence (NL - using women shelters for domestic violence victims).

- **Family reunion/reconciliation:** the young person has come alone to the country and afterwards the family joins.

In the UK, all of the family reconciliation cases are coming to new family arrangements but had very strong families in the countries where they were raised.

PT also knows cases of family reunion under the existing health cooperation agreements with African countries. In this case, the young person, coming to Portugal for health treatment had to face the challenges of living alone, without employment and depending on social provision support, and afterwards another family member joins after succeeding in going through the required procedure.

Box 8 Family reunion – UK and PT illustrations

*"In Somalia ever since I was little living with my uncle in 2000 we moved to Addis Abba, then in 2003 I came here I came to see my family, mum sisters."* (UK, Samira, Family reunion)

*"...I left Guinea due to a disease ...I came alone...I went to live with an uncle that is not a true uncle, is a friend...he was older and sometimes he did not buy food...it was difficult because I did not have money to buy food...when I went to the hospital to receive blood transfusion the doctor seemed concerned and he asked me some questions...one day I decided to tell what was happening at home...the doctor spoke with a key worker from the hospital and then I went to live in centre padre arrupe [long-term care facility]...I start doing the treatments...I discovered that I have kidney problems...after a while I was better and I was living in the centre...I've got a job and start a vocational training...and I've got the legal documents to stay here...then I decided o leave the centre and I've got a room and I brought my mother to live with me...at the moment I am unemployed but I am going to find a new job...I am living with my mother and a cousin...my life is better and I am very happy"* (PT, Luciana, Non-PT born came to PT alone, Family reunion)

- **Economic migrants:** the young person, or their parents, came to the host country for economic reasons.

Box .9 Economic migrants

*"I had a nice childhood (with grandparents in Ethiopia) and that is why I am so strong. The reason I come was because my mum she lives here and education- I didn't want to be an engineer."* (UK, ClairB, Economic migrant)

*"...my parents are divorced, I have 2 brothers and one of them has cerebral palsy...it was very difficult...my mum work a lot...I arrived in PT seven months ago...looking for better life...in the start everything was good...I brought some money with me...I've got a job...but...in the 2nd, 3rd month I*

*was robbed and I lose my passport...now I am struggling to get my documents [legal papers]...without the documents I cannot find a job...no one wants me...it is difficult...it was my decision...and I want to stay here one year and a half, and I would like to go to Spain or somewhere else...I don't want to back to Brazil without anything...and I don't intend to be raised by my mother...I am here as immigrant, without documents, there's no one to help me...to borrow me some money until I get better..." (PT, Bruninho, Economic migrant)*

*"He is from Slovakia, 3 siblings. He was brought up by parents, 1st part of basic school was ok, 2nd part of basic school - he didn't like it anymore. Mother was a teacher. He studied at technical high school. He lived in Slovakia for a long time. He had a long term illness." (CZ, Mirek, Born in Slovakia)*

In the UK, as well as in CZ, the cases found in the sample of economic migrants are all from the European Union space (2 from the UK and 7 in CZ).

In PT all immigrant respondents are from out of the EU area and are mainly economic migrants that came to PT with their parents. Among single cases are refugees (around 2 cases) and the health protocols mentioned.

In the NL there is also a difference between political and economic migrants, respectively those with traumatic and dangerous childhoods in their homeland and the ones with a "relatively" normal childhood. For some (especially for the ones with danger and trauma's in homeland) coming to the NL is an improvement of their lives, even if experiencing social exclusion in the host country. On the other hand, some find aggravated forms of exclusion in the host countries than in the home country, like exclusion from income/work to exclusion from shelter and social networks. There are cases of young homeless that were left isolated since their contacts are limited and their parents had to leave the country after being denied residency. After their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday there is an education disruption due to their citizenship status, which blocks their right to education, and young people have to stay safe from police controls.

This shows that addressing social exclusion should take into account the particular social domain that affects each specific situation: for some young people, exclusion from safety is more essential and for others, it is exclusion from education.

The groups of young people non-born in the host country also share homelessness risk factors with the ones born in the country. Considering that the interviews were not conducted by researchers but by young ex-homeless persons, limiting the access to information on life trajectories, it is not possible to objectively disentangle the main risk factors specific to each group. Some cases clearly share the same issues at family and housing background levels, accompanied by interrupted school paths, while for other interviewees the main

issues seem to be cultural or citizenship factors. This means that some “non-born in the country” justify their current social exclusion situation basing their discourses mainly on immigration related issues (cultural factors, documents, language, and so forth).

In the UK two young people come to the country with family and experience family breakdown after they have lived as a family in the UK. In some ways these two cases are similar to family disruption for UK born but the narrative changes, namely highlighting issues that seem to point out to disagreements on work-life balance related with cultural conceptions on the role of man, women and family. In the NL we find Muslim-girls who are forced to marry against their will, or are oppressed at home, that are using women shelters for protection from family cultural issues. The process of acculturation that the migrant population encounters calls for a further in-depth analysis.

Another example is the situation of the non-UK born Timothy: *“There was a war on everyone was running away and I’ve been here for almost ten years. I got into problems with my family with my dad and unfortunately I got kicked out of the house so I had to find my own place to live. I got to St Basil’s and they got me a place. My family is still in contact with me. I just can’t go back.”* (UK, Timothy, Immigrant Non-EU)

The case of CZ is specific due to the impacts of Czechoslovakia dissolution. Keeping in mind that the national context has recently dealt with citizenship changes, the Slovaks assume a particular status also under a homelessness trajectory analysis.

The profile - “Slovak, apprenticeship with uncompleted secondary education, with no family background disruption” – is found for both male and female and includes youth born in Slovakia, now living in CZ. They show a disruption profile between high and medium risk with factors of both risk levels, having reached a professional level of apprenticeship but from the age of 18 started a descending life trajectory. Moreover, they have also issues of the high disruption, including running away, violence in childhood, absenteeism, health problems including depression and stress.

## **5. Trajectories and Points of Reinsertion for Past Ruptures**

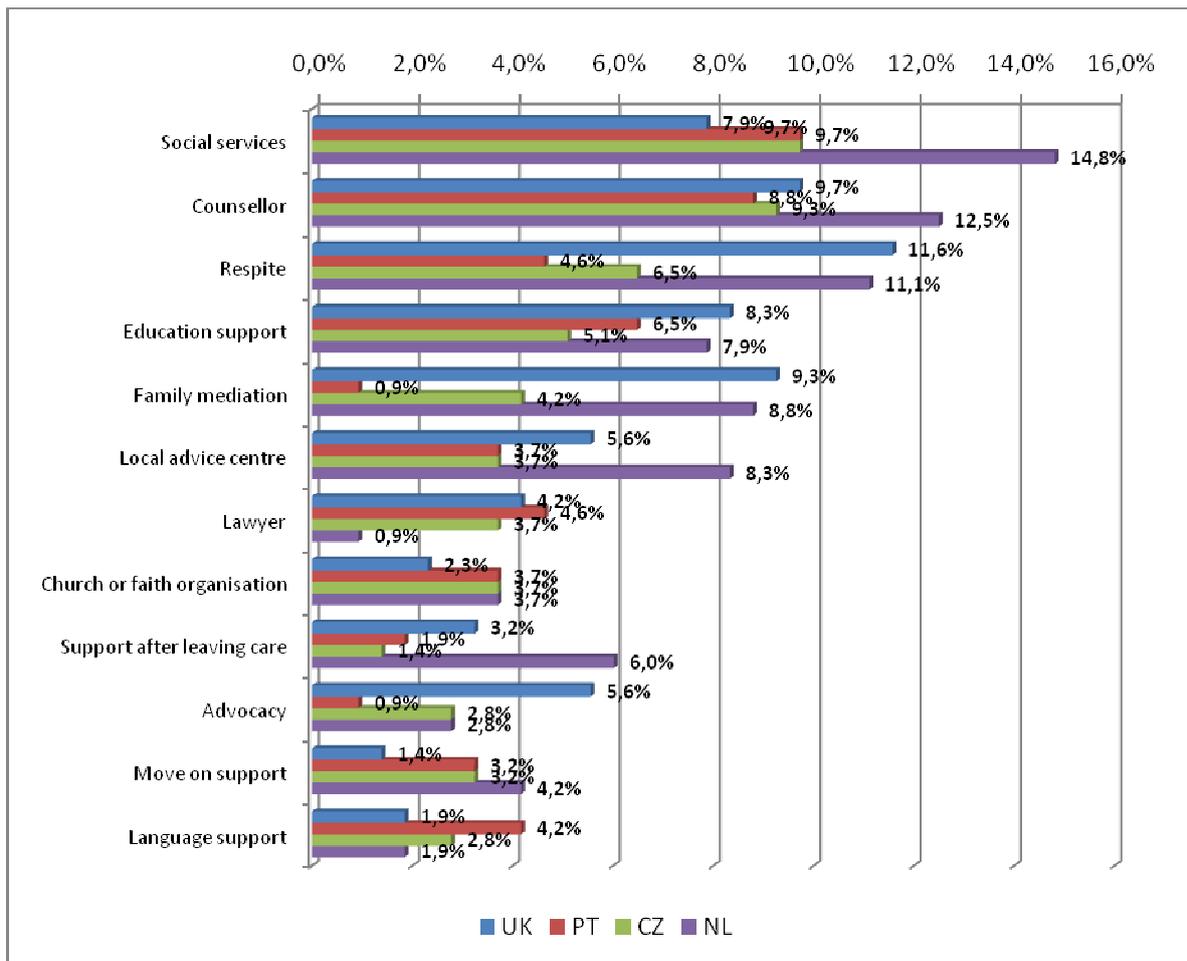
This report looks at points of reinsertion in the past. Social exclusion is a process of risk intersections and the social support provision is a dimension of social capital analysed along the homelessness path (prevention or attenuating role) and as a mechanism for finding inclusion (social reinsertion).

- **The importance of social provision**

The project aims to identify reinsertion points with social capital, namely prevention and early intervention services. In this context, the most needed services for attenuating or preventing the homelessness paths of the interviewees are "social services" (42,1%) followed by "counsellor" (40,3%), a place to stay in emergency or "respite" (33,8%), "education support" (27,8%), "family mediation" (23,1%) and a "local advice centre" (21,3%). The service "language support" applies to the immigrant population with a different language from the host country, scoring lowest (10,6%).

For the UK group of interviewees, "respite" has the highest score (11,6% of the total); in PT, and CZ the "social services" assumed more relevance (9,7%) and also a "counsellor" (8,8% and 9,3%); for the NL interviewees the three most referred services have a representation of 14,8% "for social services", 12,5% for "counsellor" and 11,1% for "respite".

**Figure 5.1. Relevant Services for Homelessness Prevention**



Note: The interviewees didn't share a clear idea on what prevention is. Answers include services used and important for prevention or attenuating the homelessness risk, as well as services that were not used and would have made a difference.

The social services can represent security for young people: *"the fact that I came here [living in care]... because I had been abused... contributed to my life becoming a bit more stable... I think I'm better, I'm safe"* (PT, Soraia, Born in country – ethnic minority)

However, the early prevention approaches still need further development to reach the hidden situations: *"... I needed a bit more support... when I was a child... my mum was put in prison, my dad worked day and night and he couldn't give us much attention... because of this there was never anything to eat at home..."* (PT, Augusto, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

The key stage of completing compulsory education, or when the educational system design calls for a change of schools, are crucial moments of ruptures of education itineraries. From this point onwards, protection systems also face more difficulties to deal with children in risk situations, including child labour, family violence and delinquency in general, since there is no longer a school

intervention. Early intervention and mediation services are fundamental for reverting social exclusion processes and other concerning issues, such as neglect and isolation.

- **The relevance of trustful adults/supporting person**

In spite of the relational problems with family, the young homeless have, in most cases (87%), identified a main support person while growing up, who: "provides"; "gives advice"; "is just there for me"; "someone that inspires do to the best"; "takes time to listen"; "understands"; "trustful"; "is there for anything"; "helped with school"; "feeling safe". A support person is present in 45 cases in UK, CZ and NL, and 50 in PT.

This person, a peer, a family member (most often the mother), a social worker, represents a key insertion element and the one that is present when things get rough: *"I promised them I wouldn't do anything crazy, that I'll hold on. That I won't take my own life.... That promise is the only thing keeping me alive now."* (NL, Tina, Immigrant Non-EU)

It can also be someone near the family (an aunt, neighbour) who becomes like extended family, playing an important (even crucial) role in raising and supporting the child when parents fail. However, it often happens that this person falls away for some, often unknown, reason.

The findings allow corroborating the importance of mobilising and including as partners other trustful persons in the design of reinsertion programmes. The approximate total of 27 cases that did not report having any support person show particular points of exclusion: 70% (18) have slept rough; 44% (12) have squatted; 48% (13) have used a night shelter; 60% (16) long term care; 81,5% (22) have run away at least for 1 night; 70,4% (19) find their life "mostly unsettled".

However, having or not having networks does not seem to be the main risk factor since, regardless of the level of risk profile, it is usual that the young homeless have some sort of contact network: 42% feel part of a group and around 90% have a regular contact with a family member, friend or partner. What is relevant is the quality of the contacts in terms of support and safety net (See Social Exclusion Thematic Report for the differentiation made on "supporting social contacts vs. perverting social contacts").

- **Fields of early intervention and prevention**

The life-trajectories show a trend of intergenerational social exclusion, often with family problems at the root of the problem (*"the crappy dad that I had"; "...the absence of my parents, basically the lack of family support"*) and descending processes are the most frequent.

When asked about the things they would have liked to change, interviewees mostly reported family and education followed by friends, relationships, self-identity, legal issues, addictions, and the place or country to live:

Box 10 What young people could change in their pasts if they could

*"Education. I wish I was in America with my aunty"* (UK, Reane, Born in country – ethnic minority)

*"People who I hung around with"* (UK, Ashley, Born in country – ethnic minority)

*"Not living in UK at all. Mum to be happier. Mum to have support"* (UK, Laura, Born in country – ethnic minority)

*"I would change everything with my childhood if I could"* (UK, Claire, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

*"Be more settled and actually going to school"* (UK, Philip, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

*"I would like to have a better relationship with my parents as well as my education"* (UK, Peter, Immigrant Non-EU)

*"Living in a different area"* (UK, Kim, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

*"Liked my mum not to be mentally ill so my dad would have been working. We would have been like a normal family"* (UK, Sylvia, Born in country – ethnic minority)

*"if I knew what I know now I would like to be dead"* (PT, Chico Zé, Born in country – ethnic minority)

*"... I would like... for my life to change... to study, take a course and get a fixed job, house and... to live better I have to study and do a course and work"* (PT, Segunda, Immigrant Non-EU)

*"where I lived because we lived in a shack, it's a bit complicated as well, with no electricity... we had water but then we had to do some big jobs because it rained inside there... less arguments..."* (PT, Vera, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

*"...above all I am a very insecure person and that is what I'd like to change, I would like to be more certain in relation to everything I do..."* (PT, Silvio, Immigrant Non-EU)

*"... I would like other people to have changed... my parents... because one thing that I don't have that everyone else with family has is knowing what it is to live in a family context... mother and father, brothers and sisters... I don't know what that is..."* (PT, Fernando, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

*"I would like to have changed, to be honest, to have gone to school... there was a lot lacking... a gypsy [Roma] house, I couldn't stay in school until I was grown-up... we couldn't date anyone"* (PT, Rita, Born in country – ethnic minority)

*"I would like, if I could turn back time... I would study... I think I miss having studies now"* (PT, Alexandre, Immigrant Non-EU)

*"...it is different living in care in comparison to live in family..."* (PT, Mário, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

*"Less theory, traditions, church duties, be less in church and more in the word"* (CZ, Evzen, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

*"The wedding of my mother and my stepfather, more time with parents and a girlfriend"* (CZ, Keny, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

"I would have never using drugs for the first time" (CZ, Koátko, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

"Everything could have been different. My entire school, my entire life, not using drugs, the entire sex-thing. Everything." (NL, Babs, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

"The whole thing about the document, I don't have any, and if I use one it is fake." (NL, Dhow, Immigrant Non-EU)

"I could have invest more time in school and listen more to my mother about school." (NL, Mr. X, Immigrant Non-EU)

"I wished my mother understood me more, she didn't understand me at all... every step I took, everything I said, she misunderstood..I just wanted somewhat more love, understanding, more love and a hug once in a while." (NL, Michelle, Born in country – ethnic dominant)

When asked about the causes for their homelessness, the interviewees referred to the same issues they would have liked to change. But also other complementary factors, such as unemployment and eviction, mainly reporting to the current adult situation, were also added,.

- **Promoting ascending turning points**

Some interviewees reported that they have been already worst off in their lives. They gave testimonies on what they consider being the turning point factors:

Box 11 Upwards turning points whilst homeless

**Family role model:** "my family struggle a lot to have a good life, thus I thought that I can also have the same chance like they did"

".. were the **advices and faith**"

**Learning life experience:** "it made me think it over... I'd say it wasn't good... it's like this, it was wrong what I did when I was a teenager, but on the other hand it was good because we only learn through lived experiences..."

"my life experience and have been in prison help me now, I have a stable life, a family, a house and a job and I could understand what I did wrong"

"Not one thing (I would change). As traumatic as certain experiences were (being raped), they made me the person I am today"

**Self strength and access to move on services:** "... maybe believing in me, giving me... opportunities [people at the children's home] that they didn't give to others, but also because I made an effort for this... and also on the other hand, having my godparents working me in such a way... because it is important to think things through in order to have objectives to achieve... to always be looking towards the future and always moving and working every day towards the future"

"my way of thinking and my willpower with the help of some people that want to see me well"

**Working for social provision services:** "After leaving a children's home she worked as a volunteer in Association of Orphanages. This association supported her housing. Now she has a background and a family."

For these interviewees the homelessness pathway worked also as a resilience building experience, including the fact that bad moments are seen as a "learning platform".

- **Promoting access to education**

Addressing the needs of the young people “not in education, employment or training” (NEET) is a priority under the current EU policy guidelines. At “the European level, more than one third of young people aged 15-24 were NEET. The EU average sometimes hides big differences between the Member States. Indeed, this share reached more than 50 % for Bulgaria and Hungary and around 20 % in Denmark and the Netherlands. By the age of 25 the share of young people in NEET is lower compared to the youngest age class: one might suppose that this decline is mainly due to those who have already found a job or enrolled again in education. Nevertheless, in many countries there are still more than 20 % of young people aged 25-29 years considered as NEET.” (EU Youth Report, COM(2009) 200)

Following the young homeless on the role of education as a key insertion element, establishing reinsertion points must address the obstacles identified by the interviewees in this domain. Therefore promoting access to education needs to be based on the development of motivation strategies (for 20,8% the main obstacle was the lack of motivation). Other relevant interventional measures that are important to promote: access to financial support (15,3% left school due to financial problems); work/school-life balance measures (for 10,2%, mainly girls, having a child has stopped the pursuit of educational goals); support with maths (9,7% had problems in this field) and making available more information services (indicated by 8,8%) including on other training and educational options. Along with addressing the mentioned education obstacles, it is fundamental to tackle informal ways of exclusion (includes feelings of exclusion or associated to the situation of exclusion, like belonging, pressure, being put apart or rejected by the others, the sense that “no one likes me”, and so forth) which are both at the root and at the end of the several coexisting definitions of social exclusion. In this case, the issues experienced at school, including bullying, are part of informal ways of exclusion, which impact on early school leaving and absenteeism, as well as contribute to the existence of a gang culture. Several interviewees have mentioned problems at school: 53,2% had problems with teachers; 41,2% truanted; 36,6% excluded; 26,9% picked on other kids.

- **Risk based approaches for triggering reinsertion points**

The project partners have identified and analysed the role of: early intervention and prevention of youth homelessness and sites and methodologies; services for

young people who appear on the streets; provision of supported accommodation; methodologies for working with young people whilst accommodated; referrals to other services such as health, drug and alcohol, counselling; reinsertion services – housing/employment and income support/into family and communities and through income support.

The life-grid analysis of the interviewees' trajectories has also allowed triggering as ascending points: getting counselling and support; finding employment; finding a boyfriend/girlfriend and marriage.

Furthermore, for the different levels of homelessness risk profiles, the partners have also highlighted specific reinsertion approaches:

- Low Risk (LR): Accommodation, employment, education
- Medium Risk (MR): Housing, education, employment and finances
- High Risk (HR): Accommodation, health, education, employment, language, advocacy services, information services. Moreover, this group requires also early intervention support measures, namely family mediation, counselling, educational support; place to stay in crisis/refuge; having a person of support.

However, the case studies show that a personalised follow-up is more effective than standardised interventions, even if based on risk profiles that are hybrid and can change over time. The fundamental approach is to address the causes of the situation and promote autonomy, resilience and capabilities, instead of perpetuating crisis susceptibility based on indefinite benefits support. The situation of the young person is even worse if related benefits block their access to other social support measures, such as job seekers allowance, housing support, accommodation services.

The CZ profile - "Slovak, apprenticeship with uncompleted secondary education, with no family background disruption" – also calls for specific support approaches since they usually do not have a regular key worker, using the services only on a point-in-time support basis. The trajectory of Bacil, that fits this profile in CZ, is closer to a high risk born in the country, having a history of family violence, drugs, running away, eviction from mother's and currently rough sleeping.

It should be kept in mind that the lower levels of risk profiles may be hidden, while their life conditions aggravate over time. This group is particularly averse to contact services, since they do not usually see themselves at risk or at a homeless situation.

The existence of specific social provision services for youth in the NL and the UK impacts on our sample. There are 40 (19%) to 45 (21,3%) cases that indicate they have a key worker in these countries against 26 (12,3%) and 22 (10,4%), respectively in PT and CZ. Furthermore, 18 (26,9%) young homeless in PT, and 13 (19,45%) in CZ, that do not have a key worker would like to have one.

For the ones that say that they would not like to have a key worker, the reasons include misinformation about the services and not finding the support necessary, since they can do what they need by themselves.

Furthermore, the process of guiding young people into adulthood is a part of upbringing that often seems underestimated since the predominant philosophy is "either a child, or an adult", particularly in countries such as PT and CZ where youth services, including services for homeless, are scarce. After 18, young people get adult responsibilities and without family backup a lot of young people are unable to cope (for example money management; debts). Services should take this adulthood transition phase into account by giving suitable support.

Reaching adulthood can also represent a turning point for a descending trajectory, particularly for young people at risk in their homes that were sort of "waiting for the day of becoming 18 to close the door and leave". Thereafter, at 19 the young person leaves home and school and enters a random daily life. The cases found in this scenario, in spite of experiences of aggressive arguments with the parents, seldom about school, tend to perceive their childhood as "normal, stable and peaceful". In CZ, this group is particularly expressive on a squatting lifestyle made of cash-in-hand jobs and debts, problems with drugs, where going back home is no longer an option.

The challenges of reaching youth "on the road" can also be addressed by parallel approaches, including through community and youth associations. These young people do not see themselves as homeless or having any particular needs and would be less keen to use social services. This group uses night shelters as a cheap place to stay overnight but has no wish of engaging in any sort of action plans. Nevertheless, their future is compromised under social welfare systems based on inter-related benefits – no unemployment or job seeking allowance, no benefits, and no housing support.

The youth key workers also need to be prepared to motivate and involve young homeless people. Overall, this is a particularly sensitive group with regard to strict rules and impositions, as well as embarrassment to look for assistance. The

ethnic identity can also become a constraint. Michal Koki is a ethnic minority homeless youth in CZ who did not approach a local authority/city authority for finding a flat or housing because he was ashamed, as well as feared to become a victim of racism.

## **6. Final Notes**

The changes in family and household patterns closely relate to changing lifestyles and life course patterns. The length of the different life phases (childhood/puberty, family formation/ parenthood, 'empty nest' - parents living without their grown-up children, retirement/dependency) is modifying and the succession of stages is becoming less linear.

However, the particular group of homeless, or at risk youth, fits under the notion of "exclusion trajectories"<sup>6</sup>, which highlight a particular chain of problematic life events, namely difficult childhood (abuse, arguments), problematic housing paths (predominance of deprived housing and institutionalisation), leaving school with low qualifications (also experiencing bullying, problems with teachers, etc.), precarious forms of living independently, marked by a significant duration of unemployment, absence of stable work, recurrent dependence on social benefits as well as by insecure housing.

This report has outlined several profiles of homelessness marked by "damaged transitions" that are far from fitting the transitional model of the 1980s. The risk factors relate to different domains of the youth life triangle, namely biographic, social and individual; they change according to the different age stages. The table on risks across childhood and youth life stages highlights the types of risks that youth face along their lifecycle.

Risks tend to accumulate, due to persisting inequalities and the incapacity of societies to redirect these exclusion trajectories. Furthermore, along with "formal exclusions", others of a more "informal" nature, like loneliness, lack of sense of identity and belonging, are also extremely important and should be tackled, using early intervention and motivation strategies, such as promoting access to culture and resilience. There were reported issues of bullying, loneliness,

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<sup>6</sup> Dubar in Paugam, 1996: 115

socialisation, that impact from an early age on youth inclusion, limiting their capital and driving them, for example, to school absenteeism and dropping out. The various profiles of homeless youth - institutionalised youth; youth on the road; domestic violence; custody and detention and streets youth; refugees; economic migrants; family reunion - have helped to contextualise levels of homelessness risk across countries. National specificities relate also to the design of the social services provision.

Post-industrial society carries new categories of social risks since previous "forms of security" tend to become more and more precarious.<sup>7</sup> The "family welfare" is not sustainable among disadvantaged families.

Under the issue of agency and open choices, the report highlights the same findings as Raffo and Reeves (2000) in the sense that economic and employment changes restrain youth choices. The authors state that choices are limited by the practical knowledge and understanding of what is possible, which is mediated by locality and gender. They are also conditioned by structural factors, to a point that is difficult, as the concept of habitus of Bourdieu illustrates, to disentangle what, upon a choice, is consequence of individual agency or of the exogenous conditions. In conclusion, individual inclusion programmes that work on the personal level (motivation, qualifications, etc) need to be complemented by simultaneous support programmes at the national level, addressing unemployment, lack of low income housing, income inequalities and so forth.

Analysing the relation between the homeless trajectories and points of reinsertion for past ruptures, highlight the importance of social services for prevention; the relevance of trustful adults and supporting persons; giving voice to the young homeless for identifying the social fields they value for early intervention and prevention, as well as for promoting ascending turning points on homelessness life-trajectories; the promotion of access to education assumes an important role for counteracting intergenerational poverty and exclusion, and an exploratory analysis on a risk based approach is essential for triggering reinsertion points.

In sum, the investment in social provision is an investment with revenues. This investment should be sustainable and strategic. In other words, it is more important that services are designed taking into consideration that youth is a period that requires tailored measures not only according to case specific needs

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<sup>7</sup> Esping-Andersen, 1999

(several homelessness life trajectories were illustrated under a case study approach), but also considering the various challenges attached to the multiple key transition moments that are part of this life period, from leaving education to living independently. Special attention should be paid to preparing the transition to adulthood along with settlement support, without abrupt interruptions upon reaching adulthood.

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