

# “Inter agency working”

Working group 3: Services for the homeless

Thematic Report 2005

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
1. Main characteristics of the social welfare regime in Austria	2
2. Comments on systemic aspects of services for vulnerable people in Austria	4
3. Inter agency communication and cooperation in regional comparison	5
4. Case study: Juvenile with severe problems in the context of addiction and homelessness in the county of Tyrol	14
5. (No) funding for cooperation and networking	18
Literature and materials	22

## Introduction

In the opening of this article I think it is necessary to focus on specific characteristics of the social welfare regime in Austria and the special position of services for vulnerable and / or homeless persons. At a second step of the argumentation I will give an overview on systemic aspects of the smaller part of services for the homeless.

That will be the fundament for the following discussion of structural frameworks and provisions for (inter agency) cooperation in the range of the services for the homeless. The results of a workshop (in the context of the BAWO – conference in April 2005 / Graz) are the empirical base of this report. Additional evidence can be found in a case study focused on risks of homelessness with the specific target group of juvenile addicts in the regional context of Tyrol.

The end of this report tries to figure out the perspectives and the future of networking and inter agency working in Austria – focussing on the services for vulnerable and / or homeless persons and families.

### 1. Main characteristics of the social welfare regime in Austria

The Austrian welfare regime is (more or less strictly) divided into three strains. Only two of them are regulated by federal laws and general frameworks of distribution and control.

- The first social network is directly connected with the labour market. The rent system and the system of unemployment benefits are working like an insurance association. So the social transfers (rents as well as unemployment benefit) depend on the summary of wages one has earned in his / her time as employee.
- The second social network consists of family bound benefits like child care benefits, rents for children without father or mother, rents for widows without a rent of their own etc.



These two strains of social security are definitely based on monetary funding and make up the highest part of the social budget in Austria.

- The third strain of social security differs from the first strains according to the fact that in this area there are (almost) no general frameworks on a federal level. The systems of social benefit (Sozialhilfe) as well as the legal frameworks for youth care and social services for different target groups like handicapped persons, poor persons and families, migrants and refugees, homeless etc. are a matter of regional competence. So it is fact in Austria that there are nine different legal frameworks (provisions and services, conditions of access, administrative rules etc.) which differ from each other in a wide range.

So, looking at the (social) welfare regime in Austria, we can state a huge dominance of monetary benefits – which are almost the only systems with federal frameworks. Mostly the social budget in Austria (more than 70%) is donated on monetary benefits. Beside that there are many different frameworks on a regional base which are the constitutive basis to build up social services. The social services have in common that there are no regular standards and / or rules. Furthermore the regional systems of monetary benefits and the provisions of social services are only slightly linked with each other.

The different strains of social welfare are divided into different bodies with very special frameworks, standards and models of realization. At least these different service lines are very hermetic and there are only very weak links and intersectional transitions between them. For example it is difficult to combine services dedicated to handicapped people if a person with handicaps is in need of additional services, for example, in the range of the services for homeless persons. If furthermore a handicapped person who needs personal assistance lives in a residual home for homeless persons it is almost impossible that other service providers from the line of services for handicapped people will provide the necessary services. If this handicapped person is living in a self sustained accommodation but in order of a rent array there is the danger of eviction it is very likely that this person will have individual support from a service provider for handicapped and help from another service provider to prevent eviction – mostly without knowledge of each other.

Monetary dominance at the one hand, segmentation and fragmentation on the other side are constitutive characteristics of the Austrian welfare regime. The outputs of the different systems of services are not systemically linked and / or adjusted to each other.

Communication and cooperation between services of different spheres (like target groups or methods) are only exceptional. There are just a few models of interactive frameworks but there are no general structures and provisions to provide cooperation.

So in the Austrian welfare regime there is a structural intersectional problem and in many cases services for homeless persons are just confronted with problems of interagency cooperation – without any provisions to deal properly with these complications.

## **2. Comments on systemic aspects of services for vulnerable people in Austria**

Services for the homeless in Austria are mostly provided by NGO's working in a restricted regional / local area of activity. There are only few services which are in the hand of governmental bodies like towns (therapeutic residual homes and asylums in Vienna, residual home for homeless men in the city of Graz, asylum in Innsbruck etc.). Except of these services of municipal authorities the situation of services for homeless in Austria can be described with 2 main characteristics.

- Services for homeless are provided by large welfare bodies, most of them are organised in separated associations at a regional level but connected with a federal umbrella organisation in a close way. This is the case with services provided by regional members of Caritas, the Volkshilfe, the Diakonie etc. Services for the homeless in the support of regional bodies of large associations are more likely to be less connected to services for other target groups of the same body. But at the same time these services don't have autonomy to cooperate with services for homeless persons in the range of different bodies in the same regional / local context.
- In most Austrian cities there are single associations which are specialized to provide services for homeless persons and families, more or less strictly focused on activities in the communal / regional area (for example: Innsbruck, Bregenz, Salzburg, Linz). It is fact that these private associations at local level have developed a whole range of different services, specialized according to different issues and / or target groups like homeless men, women etc. and / or according to different methods like residual homes, supported housing, prevention of eviction etc.

Additional these services are – different from providing body and / or the regional / local context – completed by specialized services like supported employment, psychiatric care, services for addicts etc.

Service provisions for the Homeless in Austria are in a way a reflex on the general system of the welfare regime and the general characteristics of segmentation and fragmentation. Specific for each city / region in Austria the provisions of services for homeless are different and distinguished from provisions in other cities / regions. For example: the Volkshilfe in Vienna is a very important provider of services for homeless persons – in Vienna; regional members of the Volkshilfe Austria in Salzburg, Styria, Tyrol etc. don't provide any services for the target group of homeless persons at all. The same differentiation one can view with the large service provider of Caritas, very important in Vienna, less important in Salzburg and almost not existent in the range of services for the homeless in Linz, Bregenz etc.

### **3. Inter agency communication and cooperation in regional comparison**

Homelessness is a multidimensional problem consisting of extreme poverty and additional deficits, which are causing problems that these very vulnerable persons are not able to realize self sustainable forms of living and housing. These multidimensional needs make it necessary that also the services can deal with multidimensional needs and manage a whole range of provisions. But – viewing the situation in Austria – we can observe that cooperation between the different segments of social security and the services from different ranges is not realized at a structural level – just exceptional there are models of interagency practice granted at the level of some cities and regions.

Many service providers therefore have chosen a strategy of diversification so in effect their services will cover a wide range of different needs. As a result of these developments some service providers are providing networks of different services at their own. Finally these providers can cope with some of the deficits according to structural provisions for intersectional coordination and / or for cooperation at an interagency level.

Additional it is necessary to focus on the fact that in some counties and regions of Austria services for the homeless are handicapped by poor resources and standards. Some of the services in counties like Styria / Graz, Klagenfurt / Carinthia don't have enough resources to realize adequate standards of housing and / or individual support. Under conditions like that it is almost impossible to realize cooperation with other service providers, e.g. from parts of the social system which are traditionally at a higher level of resources and standards.

Under conditions of deficits and poor standards services for homeless are not accepted as equal partners – and somewhat obliged to fill in what is asked for / under conditions that they just can handle.

Networking and cooperation – under conditions of lacking resources and standards – are necessarily informally; depend on relationships at a thoroughly personal level of single employees. In counties and regions with structural deficits in provisions for the Homeless intersectional cooperation can be found only in the range of informal networking on issues of lobbying.

In the rural parts of most counties of Austria there are only very few provisions and services for homeless persons which are mostly even forced to leave into urban areas. Mostly services for the homeless in a rural context can be characterized by very poor standards. Because lacking resources and standards are bad conditions for intersectional cooperation in the rural context there are not even structures and provisions for common lobbying. In the rural context therefore cooperation between services from different segments of social security are restricted to the most elementary forms of exchange of information in the range of social case work. Any way in the rural context of Austria until now there are no models of structural based provisions for cooperation and networking in the range of social services.

### **COOPERATION IN THE RANGE OF SOCIAL CASEWORK**

Cooperation in the range of social casework is the most common way of cooperation – also in inter agency affairs dealing with intersectional issues. But mostly these experiences of inter agency cooperation are founded only at an informal and very personal level. So there is no general perspective which can be reached. So also after the experience of successful cooperation in a special case it will afford almost the same efforts to realize an equal approach in the next case with similar conditions and needs.

We can state that even in the range of coordination at the level of social case work between the most important services there are no provisions and / or structures for coordination – not to speak about cooperation.

## **FROM INFORMAL COOPERATION TO AN INTER AGENCY APPROACH IN COORDINATION AND COOPERATION**

There are only few cities and regions in Austria where new structures and provisions for coordination and cooperation in the range of intersectional affairs could be developed. It is somewhat typical for Austria that these models of good practice didn't become a model for accorded and adjusted development so that also other regions and / or cities start to copy these models and / or implement adequate structures and / or provisions to cope with the need for intersectional cooperation. Instead of a process of learning of these models of good practice, for example in the range of cooperation between individual support in the services for homeless and the attachment of affordable and adequate accommodations by housing companies, these experiences of successful cooperation keep restricted on punctual efforts in a regional and / or thematic context.

At least until now there are no models and provisions how to develop new ways of cooperation between different sections of the social system – probably in the way of an integrative social planning process / a planned form of inter sectional development of resources and standards of integration and intersectional treatment and support is simply missing.

## **COUNTY SPECIFIC DIFFERENCES AT ALL THEORETICAL LEVELS OF COOPERATION**

Looking at the provisions of communication and cooperation between different parts of the social, health and housing systems we can distinguish large differences between counties and cities, for example:

- networking of services for homeless persons and families at the level of different services provided by the same organisational body – this is the most common form of cooperation which can be observed in Austria
- networking of services from different parts of the social, health and housing system at the level of single service providers (for example between supported housing services and health services, between psychiatric services and residual homes for homeless persons)
- cooperation between services for homeless persons and families between different service providers (lobbying, developing standards etc.)

- communication and cooperation between different service providers from different parts of the service systems at the level of case work (help conferences)
- cooperation between service providers from different parts of the service systems on issues like social welfare, housing market etc. at the level of counties and / or cities
- networking and cooperation between large service providers at a federal level, for example according to standards and working conditions in the range of social professions
- cooperation and lobbying between NGO's from a whole range of social, health and labour market issues at federal level like the 'anti poverty network' etc.

In the following I will give some county-specific examples and try to illustrate how inter agency cooperation and networking works.

### **3.1 LOW LEVEL OF COOPERATION IN NETHER AUSTRIA**

In the county of Nether Austria there are only few services for homeless persons and families – mostly provided by local NGO's. The standards of service provisions are very poor because there is no political will to realize social planning in the range of homelessness and / or to develop social and housing security.

Therefore it does not surprise that cooperation between services for the homeless and services in the wider range of social, health and housing services are restricted to the level of case work; highly informal and depending on individual engagement.

But there are some exceptions like cooperative initiatives to implement a new service provision in some rural parts of Nether Austria like supported housing and prevention of eviction. These innovations are the result of the cooperation and networking between different service providers in the broad range of social, health and housing services which have realized common lobbying and are now equally engaged in the implementation of new services.

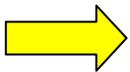
 So there is one special way of cooperation when different service providers state a need of special services and engage in a common lobbying. In the end they will renounce to realize these services by themselves and build up a common and cooperative structure of service provision.

### **3.2 COOPERATIVE STRUCTURES OF SERVICE PROVISIONS IN VIENNA**

In Vienna services for homeless persons and families are thoroughly connected into a staircase system of provisions, starting with low threshold services and prevention of eviction at the first level; the second level consists of a broad range of specialized services – mainly focused on supported housing -, and at the third and last level the clients of the services for the homeless will become allocated affordable accommodations from the communal housing stock.

The diversification of services is the result of a planning process, started about ten years ago, which finally succeeded in a paradigmatic change of the former very general approach. Instead of huge (total) institutions and asylums without resources for individual support and / or professional social work now there is a net of small facilities with a focus on individual support and specialized provisions.

Cooperation is mainly realized at the level of case work and somewhat reduced to the areas of access to services and / or detachment into follow up services.



In the effect the Viennese service provisions have a structure based on division of labor.

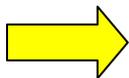
#### **SPOTLIGHT: SUPPORTED HOUSING IN VIENNA**

Supported housing in Vienna is based on a public – private partnership. Since the project has started about ten years ago it was possible to build up an increasing amount of housing places, provided by a consortium of different service providers. In charge of the welfare administration of the city of Vienna the service providers defined standards and implemented a common system of documentation. The process of building up and implementing a new service line went along following steps of realization:

- the service providers rent an apartment at the free housing market
- the apartments become renovated, funded by the municipality of Vienna
- homeless clients with intact reintegration perspectives – mostly recommended by residual homes – will be attached to these apartments and get individual support for a period of two years

- the efforts and the effects of individual support are documented according to the monitoring scheme adjusted with the welfare administration; these documents are the base for the yearly report "Wiener Wohnungslosenhilfe"
- After the time of supported housing the housing administration of Vienna guarantees the detachment into a cheap community flat
- After the detachment the service providers are obliged to keep in contact with their former clients and to supervise the housing reintegration.

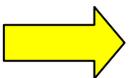
During the period of development and implementation of supported housing in single flats the municipality of Vienna charged the Austrian umbrella organisation of services for the Homeless BAWO to build up a documentation scheme and to evaluate the effects of this service line.



Cooperation between public authority – commercial housing corporations – private service providers is headed on to improve standards and build up an innovative line of social planning.

### **SPOTLIGHT: "FONDS SOCIALES WIEN"**

Meanwhile the municipal services for the homeless were put into a special organisation – still near the administration of the city but with somewhat more autonomy. The administrative body 'Fonds Soziales Wien' (social funds of Vienna) is holding services from a broad range – social and health services. Therefore there are changes in the whole structure which make it necessary to establish new models and strategies of communication and cooperation between different branches of the system of social services. But until now it is to state that the reorganisation of public services has led to insecurity according to cooperation. At least we can observe that services like supported housing have to work out and to establish their base for cooperation with administrative bodies of psychiatric outreach services etc. A member of the workshop on interagency cooperation put the new situation as follows:



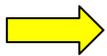
"In the case of networking and cooperation – we have been better off before the reorganisation."

## **SPOTLIGHT: "FAWOS" – PREVENTION OF EVICTION**

Few years ago the service providers in the range of services for homeless persons and families connected to build up a common lobbying to close an eminent gap in the fight against homelessness. As a result the city of Vienna charged a service provider to build up a new service scheme to prevent evictions – a very successful service meanwhile. This service can build on a cooperation schema / contract in two ways:

- Justice is obliged to inform the prevention service in advance of eviction procedures
- the office of social welfare in Vienna has to provide the money – as far as it is possible to keep the tenancy contract if the rent array will be paid.

Meanwhile the municipal office of social benefits has charged FAWOS to administrate the funding of rent arrays – along the access-scheme of social benefit.

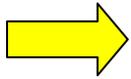


Therefore we can observe a very special form of public – private cooperation in charging the NGO to fill in into duties of the public body.

### **3.3 DIFFERENCES IN STANDARDS HINDER AN ELABORATED COOPERATION – THE EXAMPLE OF INNSBRUCK / TYROL**

Social services in Innsbruck / Tyrol are handicapped by the fact that some service branches are dominated by large service providers. Beside that the services for homeless persons are provided by small associations. So the services for homeless persons depend on cooperation with small parts of the dominant providers which often are not able or allowed to realize reliable contracts of communication and / or cooperation on their behalf.

Networking and cooperation even at the level of case work is in a way complicated by the main figures of the organisational context. Networking / cooperation at the level of more general aspects of service provision is almost impossible. And it does not become easier if one consider the further fact that some of the services for homeless persons are fixed on a quite low standard. Especially between services from different branches like health services on the one hand and services for the homeless at the other reliable communication / cooperation is quite impossible.



A lack of general frameworks to develop comparable standards of services and / or to establish reliable inter agency structures of communication / cooperation hinder the implementation of formal agreements between services from different branches and / or providers.

### **3.4 INTEGRATIVE CASEWORK IN THE CITY OF SALZBURG**

Services for the homeless in the city of Salzburg are mainly provided by one agency (SAG). Probably this is the reason why this service provider has engaged in the development of an interfacial service – the integrative counselling of homeless persons.

Therefore a provider of services for homeless persons has built up an integrative structure according to the fact that services for the homeless have to deal with different needs related to social benefits, provision of accommodations, individual support and access to the labor market and so on. In the effect the integrative counsel office in Salzburg provides a systematically clearing with their clients to find out needs, potentials and – last but not least – legal claims on benefits from the different lines of social welfare (like social benefits, housing subsidies etc.). Together with the clients the counsellor will establish contacts with the competent bodies / offices and will encourage and assist them to realize their claims.

So the counselling office can establish an interface between the different services provided by the SAG itself as well as between the different social / housing / health etc. bodies.



Social counselling becomes a management service and a link at the interface between different strains of social security.

#### **SPOTLIGHT: INTERAGENCY TEAM**

In order to realize the challenge to provide the homeless persons with multiple needs with support from different parts of the welfare system in the range of the counselling office of the SAG an interagency team of social workers was implemented. Employees from different services are working together to provide the adjustment of services in the case of multiple needs. In this interagency team services like psychiatric outreach, probation office, service for ex-convicts, unemployment services etc. are working together – on a regular but informal basis. So in effect the cooperation between the different services depends on the individual engagement of the social workers and is burdened by structural deficits:



There are problems with data protection which hinder interagency communication if the clients don't charge the social workers to build up cooperation with social workers of different services.



Furthermore the interagency team is based on voluntariness of the service providers which send their social workers.

### **3.5 INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH TO PREVENT EVICTIONS IN THE COUNTY OF VORARLBERG**

Vorarlberg is a small county with only few professional services for homeless persons. These services are working together closely and have built up a common platform to develop standards, cooperate in issues of social planning and political lobbying. Recently they have realized a study on the feasibility of a professional provision to prevent evictions in a mainly rural county<sup>1</sup>.

In the course of this study the authors analyzed the state of communication and cooperation between the public bodies of social benefit and youth welfare on the one hand, private housing agencies and non profit service providers from different parts of the welfare system. The main findings of this study are typically for all parts of Austria:

- All participating public and private bodies declare that there is a need on frameworks for communication and cooperation between the different parts of the welfare as well as the housing system
- they state that communication and cooperation between the different systems are more likely to be poor – just related on informal and individual engagement of some social workers but not based upon reliable structures and frameworks
- they agree that it is necessary to improve the cooperation at the level of case work
- all of them declare that they are willing to improve cooperation and to take their role in a new partnership between different services very serious
- at least they state that it will be a necessity that prevention of eviction will be based on straight personal and structural basics. There must be certain persons and a formal commission how to work together.

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<sup>1</sup> Ströhle / Meier, 2004



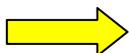
Just to take it in other words – it needs basic frameworks like structures, formal commissions and resources, than interagency cooperation will be:

No problem!

### **3.6 COOPERATIVE STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES OF SOCIAL PLANNING IN THE COUNTY OF UPPER AUSTRIA**

In the last few years the government of the county of Upper Austria has started a social planning process in order to amend the law on social benefits and to develop new administrative frameworks for the social services. The social services were invited to take part in a working group and to participate in this process. When the law of social benefits and services was amended this working group started a new process: to discuss standards of services and to develop measures of quality management and instruments for social planning.

A few years later the participants of this cooperative process state very critically that important players in the welfare system were not integrated – like the body of labor market policy and administration. Furthermore the social planning process was focused on very pragmatic aspects like a normative description of services in the way of 'products'. This was meant finally that the clients of social services should be able to choose the services they need by themselves. At the same time important questions concerning frameworks for communication / cooperation between services from different parts of the welfare system were neglected.



The experience of cooperative social planning therefore did not result in frameworks for communication and cooperation – but in instruments how to control the services by the social planning board which is established now.

#### **4. Case study: Juvenile with severe problems in the context of addiction and homelessness in the county of Tyrol**

Recently the services in Tyrol reported of increasing problems to realize social security and / or adequate housing for young persons with problems concerning addiction and / or poly-toxically addiction. Therefore a survey on quantitative as well as qualitative aspects of needs and realized provisions has been started and was finished in 3/2004<sup>2</sup>.

In the course of this survey a representative sample of services dealing with the target group of young people with combined problems of addiction and homelessness took part and gave evidence about the quantitative and qualitative aspects of their experiences.

##### **RESEARCH -LAYOUT**

- Target group: young addicts in the age between 14 and 25 years
- Indication: addiction of legal and illegal substances in combination with homelessness
- Regional context: county of Tyrol
- Institutional context: Services in the range of youth welfare, homelessness, youth work and addiction treatment
- Period: 1999 – 2003
- Set of methods: questionnaire, interviews with experts and clients of services

##### **QUANTITATIVE RESULTS**

At all the services in the county of Tyrol, which took part in the study, had contact with 1.122 persons (including double counting, because some of the services like streetwork cannot deliver personal figures if they have only loose contact).

During the year 2003 there were about 250 young persons / young adults in contact with services for drug addicts and / or homeless because of a specific mix of existential problems.

About 50% were younger than 18 years; about 40% were young women.

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<sup>2</sup> Heinz Schoibl, Juvenile with severe problems in the range of (poly-toxically) addiction and housing, 2004

## **MAIN FINDINGS IN QUALITATIVE RESPECTS**

The service system in the county of Tyrol is divided into partial systems for social – health – youth welfare – rehabilitation etc. There are further divisions along the main groups of services according to counseling, individual support, supported housing, medical treatment etc. So at all there is a well elaborated system of services working – but constructed like a patchwork which is constituent for problems with certain target groups, especially with multiple problems, like youth with severe problems in the range of addiction and homelessness.

Therefore in the center of the results of this survey stands the statement:

- a lack of special services in the rural parts in the county of Tyrol means problem transfer into the urban region around the capital Innsbruck and a high concentration of problems and needs in this central part of the county
- borders between the services and long waiting lists before an access into the special services (especially in the medical / therapeutically range of services) reduce the effects of the system of provisions
- lacking links between the existing services produce additional needs on services and individual support.

## **TARGET GROUP SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS**

In a second step the survey tried to find out the special needs and characteristics of the target group. There we could find following characteristics:

- the needs of young addicts are multidimensional according to a problem accumulation in the context of severe poly-toxically addiction and housing stress / homelessness
- many clients of this target group are in need for different services and have difficulties to access different parts of the complex system of social, youth welfare specific and medical services
- many clients of this target group have developed elaborated methods and strategies to cope with existential problems (even when these strategies are risky and / or in some reasons not healthy, like prostitution, deviant behavior etc.)

- many clients especially persons with a long career in addiction and living on the street are not willing to give up their individual competence in surviving in order to access strictly organized measures and programs of help
- according to the patterns of addiction many of these clients are not able (or willing) to cooperate with institutional services based on an abstinence-dictate.

So the main characteristics of this target group are somewhat opposite to the main figures of the services. In spite of the accumulated needs of these young persons there are systematically and structurally fixed barriers which hinder the access into services and / or to stay in these services as long as it would be necessary to run through the whole program.

The analysis of the case documentations shows that the relationship between this specific part of the target group and the service systems is in a certain way problematically. Most of the documented clients of the services run through a high number of different services, on the average they are using up to 10 different services from different parts of the service system. So in many cases we could find a real maze of pathways through the service system, in many cases they are using different services from different parts of the service system at the same time.

So in the end there is a complex setting of individual support in work which can be characterized by the fact that these services know of each other but in the most cases there is no specific cooperation structure established. Any way in many cases there is no answer to following questions:

- how works communication between services
- are there contracts between services concerning the specific services the clients are using
- is there an interagency approach how to plan and organize the specific services from the cooperating social workers etc.

Instead of a cooperation of services the management of services relies on the clients themselves. According to a lacking systematically inter agency approach of multidimensional individual support the course of the problem career of the documented users of these services shows aggravation, the existential crisis is becoming worse. In many cases homelessness is the result of an addiction career and – last but not least – the services for

the Homeless in the city of Innsbruck are confronted with enormous problems in dealing with this target group.

Therefore the study shows that there is a need on an inter agency approach in social planning and to build up new structures of inter agency cooperation, integrating the different segments of the service systems (especially concerning housing, social and individual support, medical treatment and youth welfare).

## **5. (No) funding for cooperation and networking**

The development of the services for the homeless in Austria was somehow led by the principle: "If you don't do it yourself it will not be done – at least not in the way you are expecting it."

So the services for the Homeless started to fill in the gaps related to the housing market, to the psychiatric care outside of the institutions, to the care of youth after their time in institutions of youth welfare, protected work, care of the elderly etc.

Anyway this development is led by the empiric statement that most of the regular services are not easy to access. Most of the service systems are to characterize by high demands and detailed conditions, so many vulnerable persons are not able to meet these standards.

In the counties of Austria one can observe that the welfare administrations are more likely to accept funding for additional services than there will be a change in the principles of regular services for different target groups. And – last but not least – the administrative boards are very unwilling to realize and to funds services in the interface to other parts of the service system.

That is one of the problems services for homeless will have when they start to interfere in the competence of other service lines like the health system, the housing system etc.



If there is a need for intersectional networking and cooperation there will be no funding.

The funding of services with intersectional assignments usually fails upon the question of competence and / or legal mandates. For example the board of social welfare administration is not allowed to intervene in the range of housing policy and / or administration. But at the same time they are not willing to establish a funding scheme in order to build up structural

connections between these areas – if the administrative board of social housing is not going to pay at least half of the costs.

### **5.1 IF IT IS FOR COOPERATION THERE ARE NO LEGAL FRAMEWORKS**

In the counties of Austria there are different models and more or less formal structures implemented to realize intersectional communication and cooperation. These provisions for intersectional cooperation have in common that they have troubles to deal with insufficient frameworks and / or resources. Up to a high degree these models are focused on informal agreements between single players, depending therefore on personal relationships instead of institutional cooperation schemes. So we can observe

- informal division of labor at the level of case work (exchange of information, placing a client to another service etc.)
- only exceptional we can find some very limited examples of agreements on division of labor between some service providers like
  - adjustment of provisions according to the demands in handling the needs of common clients
  - mutual delegation of specific additional services
  - definition of mutual competencies in cooperative case work
  - provision of intersectional teams
- in Austria a real cooperative structure of provisions and services cannot be found in the range of provisions for homeless persons and families – not to talk about provisions of intersectional accorded and defined standards of services, eg. standards of quality, mutual access to resources.

### **DEFICITS AND PROBLEMS ACCORDING TO INTERSECTIONAL COOPERATION**

Specific deficits and problems in the mutual adjustment between different sections of the welfare systems are related to the fact that

- the administrative boards of monetary subsidies and benefits are not linked together systematically

- the provisions for individual support between the different sections of the welfare system like social security and health services are in no way integrated into a common and intersectional elaborated scheme
- the interrelationship between the housing market and the provisions of individual support is not granted.

The services and provisions of the welfare system are regularly fixed on section specific standards and conditions of access. We can state that there are only small segments and services which can provide a low threshold access. Therefore in many parts of the welfare system there are high barriers and many conditions which hinder potential clients to come into the service lines and are therefore able to participate on the specific provisions. So in some parts of the welfare system in Austria the non take up rate must be assumed very high. Homeless – that is the experience of the service providers and social workers are often victims of hindered access to services and / or provisions – in the range of housing market / the health services / care and individual support after institutional treatment in psychiatric wards and so on. For example:



When the services to prevent eviction in the counties of Salzburg and Vienna started to contact persons and families in threat of eviction they found out that only few of these persons had already asserted their claims on social benefits and / or housing subsidies. Only very few of these households had already contact to provisions of individual support (eg. from the youth welfare, from health services etc.). Up to 80% of the contacted families were entitled to benefits and / or support but did not already assert their claims.

Homelessness therefore is up to a high amount the result of a failed access to provisions of the welfare system. Services and provisions for homeless persons are confronted with demands of their clients to realize their claims on different parts of the welfare system, to realize social security and / or housing provisions – after different attempts to assert ones claims by themselves have failed. Services for homeless have to deal with claims in a living situation characterized by multiple deficits and by the fact of a late stadium of decreasing potentials.

## **5.2 A SYSTEMIC CONNECTION OF PROVISIONS IN THE RANGE OF DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF THE WELFARE REGIME IS OUT OF SIGHT – UNTIL YET**

Austria is a rich country and can be characterized by high social standards. But the contribution of prosperity is at least very uneven and some persons are excluded (or at least restricted) from an access:

- to employment and a sufficient income on a regularly basis,
- to affordable housing,
- to sufficient claims on transfer income (in the case of age, unemployment, illness etc.).

Additionally we can observe severe and specific problems concerning the access to welfare provisions and especially to provisions of individual support. So the welfare system is partly closed. Especially persons in multiple needs are in danger not to manage the demands and conditions of social services – in other words: social security is selective, the provisions of individual support are not granted at broad ranges.

Finally we can state that the Austrian welfare regime needs a paradigmatic change in reformulating conditions of access to monetary benefits and subsidies on the one hand and provisions of individual care and support on the other. Especially when we think about improving and opening the provisions of access to the benefits of the welfare system we have to keep in mind that the barriers against the take up of claims are still in force, that low threshold access to adequate services are not given in wide parts of the welfare system and that the political will to manage intersectional affairs – simply – is not given.

A structural basement and / or a legal framework to build up integrated concepts of provisions and to develop intersectional accorded services and provisions between the different segments of the welfare system (like health – youth welfare – social security – affordable housing etc.) is not granted. Until now we can not even find an awareness at the political level about problems caused by failing intersectional cooperation and / or by barriers against interagency working. Therefore the political will to start measures and programs to improve intersectional coordination and cooperation is not to expect in the near future (to look at the national antipoverty programme and reports in the last few years shows very plastic that they don't even try to look at empirical proofs and / or causes for poverty and / or homelessness).

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