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Housing First Model In Spain: Habitat Programme¹ 12 months- results

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The Habitat programme, launched in 2014, is the first Housing First (HF) approach being systematically implemented in Spain. This article displays, on one hand, the different stages and difficulties found during the launch process, such as defining the profile of the participants, selection of the clients and how to refer and place them in the programme or the services provision. These are some of the challenges faced by the Habitat teams, yet at the same time are seen as relevant learning processes. On the other hand, the article also presents the methodology and first results of the comprehensive Habitat evaluation. The evaluation seeks to provide evidence on the effectiveness of the HF model in the Spanish context as well as identify difficulties and strengths. Programme results regarding the users after 12 months are very positive, at the same level as other international experiences. The housing retention rate is 100% and improvements have been observed in all areas, especially in the perception of wellbeing, family relationships and the financial situation. The comparison showed that participants in the group attended by the mainstream services model experienced less improvement than the people participating in the Habitat model. Moreover, a fidelity test of the pioneer approach has been made, revealing a high fidelity to the HF principles.

Introduction

The widespread diffusion of results and research projects of the Housing First (HF) programme to support homeless people has been crucial for the expansion of the programme in the last decade. Since the first publications about the programme *Pathways to Housing*, at the end of the '90s (Tsemberis & Asmussen, 1999; Tsemberis & Elfenbein, 1999), the number of studies and evaluation reports about the Housing First model have risen remarkably. Among others, in the EUA (Tsemberis, Kent & Respress, 2012), Canada (Aubry et al, 2015), Australia (Johnson et al, 2012) and other European countries (Busch-Geertsema, 2014) have addressed general and specific aspects about model implementation.

Despite the limited methodology, this research has provided solid evidence of the effectiveness of the HF model, with users managing to remain in their accommodation and other aspects are also benefited, such as substance abuse, quality of life and the reduction of hospital admissions (Groton, 2013; Waegemakers Schiff & Rook, 2012). This evidence has prompted the introduction of the HF model during the last few years in the Spanish context.

With the launch of the Habitat Project in 2014, RAIS Foundation² is the first organization to systematically implement the HF model in Spain. Since then, other organizations and local authorities have been increasingly interested in the model and its implementation.

¹ Data update after 12 months, according to the original article which will appear in the 10th edition, n°1, of the European Journal of Homelessness of FEANTSA.

As the first programme HF in Spain, Habitat has faced challenges on different levels. Some related to strategic aspects, such as the need to change the mentality among professionals and responsible figures on homelessness in local authorities in order to take on an innovative approach, while others are more operational aspects, such as the difficulties of having no previous experience in the implementation of the model.

This article aims to present the experience of the implementation of the Habitat programme for the support of homeless people in Spain, the evaluation methodology and the most relevant results, bearing in mind also some of the challenges of introducing the HF model in a new context.

1. Homelessness context in Spain

Homelessness policies in Spain have been traditionally geared to attend emergency situations, providing attention to homeless people's basic needs, but failing to include structural measures aimed at ending homelessness and its impact on the person. The great majority of the current services for homeless people (from soup kitchen or outreach teams to day centres, emergency centres, hostels or sub-tenancy rooms in apartments) perpetuate the so-called staircase model and fail to provide long-term responses to homelessness. According to INE³, (National Statistics Institute), the amount of services for homeless people in 2014 included 794 shelters in Spain (7.7% more than in 2012) with 17,572 professionals covering these services (8.8% more than in 2012) and an average of 16,687 beds offered daily. However, the average occupation of these services was 81.8% (4.8% less than in 2012), suggesting that the model is not working efficiently.

Aware of this, some organizations started to believe in the need for long-term solutions for the entrenched homeless. This position had an impact on the National Strategy for the Homeless People 2015-2020, approved by the Ministers Council on November the 6th 2015, which proposed, in the Strategic Line 7, a progressive implementation of the HF model in Spain, along with the development of other type of services for homeless people⁴.

2. Housing First model implementation in Spain: the Habitat Programme

RAIS Foundation launched the Habitat programme in July 2014 as the first systematic experience of HF implementation in Spain. Habitat's objective is to provide a permanent solution to the most complex and entrenched situations of homelessness. Following the HF model, Habitat is addressed especially to those people who, on account of the complexity of their exclusion process, have no access to traditional support services (staircase model). Habitat users are provided with immediate access to housing, not subject to housing-readiness conditions, with a wide array of services delivered based on the consumer's choice and self-determination (see Tsemberis' HF principles, 2010).

Habitat started as a pilot project in three Spanish cities: Madrid, Barcelona and Málaga, and some data is provided in this article. It has also started in Seville and at least three more cities will launch the Habitat programme during 2016. It started with an initial group of 28 users in 2014, 10 new clients were incorporated in 2015, and at least 200 people are hoped to be housed in 2017. Aiming to provide evidence on the efficiency of the model in the Spanish context, the programme includes a comprehensive evaluation based on a methodology of experimental design using a longitudinal random assignment, with repeated measures during two years addressed to the Habitat users (experimental group) and another comparable control group.

² More information at www.raisfundacion.org/en

³ National Statistics Institute. *Encuesta sobre centros de atención a personas sin hogar, 2014* (Attention Centres for homeless people Survey)

⁴ <http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/docs/ENIPSH.pdf>

2.1 Habitat participants' profile

Participants, both in the experimental group and the control group, meet a number of criteria at the time of entering the programme that defines the targeted population:

1. Older than 18.
2. Sleeping rough at the time of entering the programme (ETHOS⁵ 1 or 2).
3. Enduring long-term homelessness (3 years in ETHOS' categories 1, 2 or 3; or over a year in ETHOS 1 or 2).
4. Meeting one or more of the following exclusion factors added to their homeless situation: mental illness, substance abuse and/or some disability.

This profile was determined taking into account prior experiences of HF implementation, especially those made in a European context, assessed in the project *Housing First Europe* (Busch-Geertsema, 2014). In these experiences, the participants suffered mental health problems and/or substance abuse. The disability was included as an inclusion factor for Habitat, as it was defined as a relevant exclusion aspect which generally remains hidden in homeless people⁶. The participants' average age in the evaluation is 48 and they have experienced homelessness for 9.5 years on average. The percentages of the social exclusion factors are listed below:

Table 1. Added exclusion factors* of Habitat participants at the start of the programme

Additional exclusion factors	Habitat group		Grupo de Control	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Mental health problems	9	32.14 %	26	44.82 %
Substance abuse problems	23	82.14 %	39	67.24 %
Disability	6	21.42 %	19	32.75 %

*28 (Habitat) and 58 (control) people in total are affected by these three factors

2.2. Habitat participants

RAIS selects people for the Habitat programme by contacting the local network's services for homeless people in the cities where the programme is implemented. Private and State organizations supporting homeless people (especially those offering street outreach or emergency services) are requested to identify people who meet the profile criteria. The corresponding professional fills in a report with a brief description of the person's current situation and some key aspects regarding the criteria profile.

The evaluation team receives the report (250 were submitted in Madrid, Barcelona and Málaga) along with other relevant documents which confirm the criteria is met, such as social records or disability certificates. The cases are evaluated with the corresponding professionals when there is a doubt over the criteria being met, eventually creating a final list of cases as well as a waiting list to access the programme (192 people in Madrid, Barcelona and Málaga). From that list, both groups are randomly assigned: the experimental group (Habitat users) and the control group (users of traditional services).

All Habitat participants who are provided housing receive enough information to facilitate their entry process into the programme. The HF teams hold different initial interviews where a detailed explanation of the four commitments a Habitat user assumes when participating in the programme is included:

1. Accepting at least one weekly visit by the HF team.

⁵ ETHOS is FEANTSA European Typology on Homelessness and Housing exclusion (2005) <http://www.feantsa.org/spip.php?article120&lang=en>

⁶ Research conducted by RAIS Foundation in 2013 revealed that, despite 12% of homeless people in Spain having a recognised disability, at least 23% of homeless people suffered a disability according to users and professionals' perception (Panadero and Pérez-Lozao, 2014).

2. Provide 30% of any income. If the person has no income, the programme will cover rent and basic needs (rent, bills, food and hygiene).
3. Adhere to basic rules of coexistence in the community, like any other citizen.
4. Evaluation interview every 6 months.

28 people moved into their homes from August 2014 to January 2015. The progressive start let the teams devote enough time to entrance processes. One of the challenges in this phase –also pointed out in the project *Housing First Europe*– was to guarantee quick access to state or private market housing, while also enabling users to choose between different housing units. The housing supply and the allocation of the first 28 people was complex, and in some cases up to 1.5 months passed between the notification of a place being assigned and the person entering. On the other hand, the knowledge brought by this initial process enabled quicker entry processes to be achieved for the second group of users, who started in 2015 and the people who are being incorporated now.

Moreover, in this initial process, there were seven people who didn't join the programme. In the majority of cases, it was due to people with complex exclusion processes and/or severe mental health problems giving up their place. To tackle this situation, the team extended the inclusion process up to 4 months and during that time the people were visited daily by their case worker at the time. These cases were fully analysed and the knowledge gleaned taken on board.

2.3. Housing: search and preparation

The structure of the real estate market is one of the features that can affect the adaptation of the HF model in Spain. Spain has just 1% of the social housing total in Europe and the amount of social housing changes notably between regions. However, due to the last few decades' real estate boom, 30% of the empty flats in Europe are in Spain⁷. All this could have an important role in the future development of the model in the country.

These are the following Habitat housing features, met in all cases:

- Self-contained dwellings; the majority have one room and some have two.
- Scattered-site housing, allocated in different city areas.
- Integrated in apartment blocks in residential areas with access to basic services and public transport.
- Basic and adequate supplies (hot water, central heating, furniture, bed clothes and services, kitchenware, etc.)

Housing for this first group was provided both by the private rental market (10 in Barcelona and 7 in Málaga) and the state market (10 by the City Company of Land and Housing in Madrid and 1 in Málaga by the Housing City Society). Direct rental contracts were made between the users and RAIS Foundation.

2.4 Support services for Habitat users

Habitat provides users with a level of support based on a user-centred approach. Due to the characteristics of the Spanish welfare system an intervention approach based on Intensive Case Management (ICM) is employed by Habitat. This approach has been the support modality used in many HF European programmes (Busch-Geertsema, 2014). General and specific support is provided in the context of the user's tenancy and further intensive support is provided through the regular health and social services network if needed (health, substance abuse, employment). This use of the available networks is seen as another community integration strategy, since it focuses on building or restoring the person's broken bonds with society.

The programme has a relatively high professional/user ratio, with differences seen between the three cities. The ratios are 1:8 in Málaga; 1:5 in Barcelona and 1:10 in Madrid.

⁷ Further information at Amnistía internacional Spain, "Derechos desalojados" (*Eviction of rights*), Madrid, 2015. https://grupos.es.amnesty.org/uploads/media/informe_vivienda_jun_15_Derechos_desalojados.pdf

The variety of services provided to Habitat users is also quite broad: from general information about the neighbourhood and support with paperwork to housework tasks, accompaniment, emotional and financial support and mediation.

After a year of the programme being implemented, we know by the qualitative information laid down by the HF teams, that, in general terms, intense support has been provided on a permanent basis, although there's a greater level of autonomy. The current support centres more on the deepest processes of users, linked (to a higher or lower degree) to emotional support, active listening and the need to share personal processes.

3. Habitat Programme evaluation

3.1 Objectives

When the Habitat programme was designed, the inclusion of a comprehensive evaluation was considered necessary, given that the HF model was a new approach with no previous experience in the Spanish context. The evaluation allows us to appraise the programme results and provide evidence for policy decision making, as well as monitor the project's planning and implementation by identifying discrepancies with the original HF model and, therefore, detecting challenges with its implementation.

Consequently, the specific objectives of the evaluation are:

- Identify problems or difficulties during the launch and implementation of the programme, as well as possible discrepancies with the original model.
- Know the programme results and compare them to the traditional intervention approach aimed at homeless people.

This article presents the main results after 12 months of implementation, linked to these objectives.

3.2. Methodology and evaluation results of HF approach fidelity

Over the last few years, research on HF approach fidelity evaluation has been developed across international programmes. Some of them have outlined fidelity test instruments (Guilmer et al, 2013; Stefancic et al, 2013; Watson et al, 2013) and have served as groundwork for the application of the fidelity test in other HF programmes. With regards to the programme evaluation results about users, the fidelity test is important, since it can confirm the HF approach as being responsible for the results observed.

To evaluate Habitat, it was decided to adapt the methodology *Pathways to Housing* used in different EUA and Canada programmes (Goering et al, 2014; McNaughton et al, 2015), evaluating not only Habitat's fidelity –and identifying contextual discrepancies with the pioneer approach– but also providing knowledge which could be shared with other HF international projects.

This evaluation methodology uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative strategies, aimed at identifying possible obstacles and favouring circumstances in the programme's implementation. This combination can help to take a closer look at the evaluation processes, minimizing bias in every method.

In relation to the quantitative strategy, the first step was the translation and adaptation to the Spanish context of the self-assessment scale *Pathways HF Fidelity Self-Assessment Scale* (Stefancic 2013 et al.), composed of 38 items gathered in five areas: housing process and structure, housing and services, service philosophy, service array and team structure/human resources.

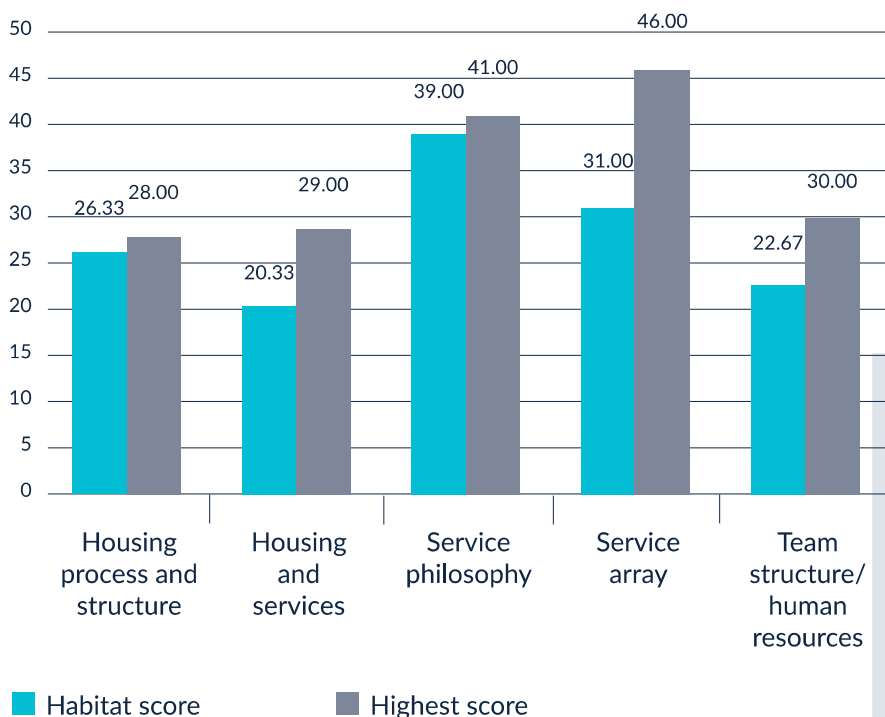
The HF team in every city conducted a survey for the different areas. The survey's quantitative results formed the base of a comprehensive interview of the programme coordinators in the three cities and after that, a discussion group was organized with the participation of the three local

coordinators and the national programme coordinator. The goal of this group was to analyse all approach discrepancies; the contextual elements in need of adaptation and the difficulties found when being implemented, along with the decisions taken to tackle all these aspects.

The results displayed in Graphic 1 show the quantitative information gleaned from the pilot application of the self-assessment survey *Pathways HF Fidelity Self-assessment survey*. These results must be considered with care, as difficulties with understanding some terms in the Spanish version and finding the right equivalent of some items in the Spanish context were observed. According to that aspect, RAIS Foundation is currently co-leading the transnational research into HF fidelity evaluation, promoted by the Doctor Tim Aubry, which will help to adjust the instrument to the Spanish context⁸.

Beyond that methodology perspective, the fidelity test survey results suggest that the Habitat programme presented a meaningful fidelity to the approach, especially in the areas of housing and structure and service philosophy.

Graphic 1. Habitat HF fidelity test self-assessment survey results



On the other hand, the qualitative information collected during the interviews of the coordinators and the discussion groups allowed differences between the programmes in the three cities to be detected. The majority of these adaptations were contextual, such as the different types of social services provision in every region or the type of housing availability (state or private market); also, some operational differences, such as the time invested in accessing housing. The complete process has allowed thoughtful feedback to be carried out about the experience after the first months of implementation and has helped to identify areas for improvement.

⁸ The fidelity test preliminary results, made in this transnational context, specifically in the Madrid programme between February and June 2016, confirm the evaluation test results (made from July to August 2015) collected in this article.

3.3. The evaluation of people-based results

The evaluation methodology of the results about Habitat programme users was designed taking into account previous experiences of evaluations in other HF programmes, especially the projects *At home / Chez soi* and *Housing First Europe*. A social experimentation strategy was designed with an experimental group and a control group determined randomly. Both groups of participants were evaluated at the launch of the project and then again every six months, during a 24-month period. The two groups of participants met the criteria for accessing the programme at the time of their incorporation. In this sense, the size of the participant's group in the Habitat programme was restricted to the number of places available in the programme. The number of houses available at the programme launch was 28. This number also determined the size of the control group, which was decided to be double the number of places available. The decision of doubling the number of participants for the control group was reached taking into consideration some characteristics of the homeless population, which could mean a high loss rate in the control group due to the instability attached to their situation (Panadero, 2004).

The social and demographic features of both groups were compared after the initial interview (M0). Both groups were similar in all the social and demographic variables considered: age, nationality and education. The initial similarity between the two groups in other areas like health, employment and homeless pathway was also analysed. No meaningful differences were found in the subjective quality of life, income or legal situation.

Statistically relevant differences were only found between Habitat and the traditional intervention system in some variables related to:

- Social support: a higher percentage of people in the control group answered yes to the question "Is there someone you can rely on in case of need or difficulty?" (61% vs. 36%).
- Employment situation: the participants in the control group had a longer history of unemployment (112.30 months vs. 70.42 months).
- Health: a lower percentage of participants in the traditional attention group answered yes when they were asked if they had told the doctor they suffered a chronic disease or severe disease (57% vs. 30%).

Twelve months after the initial interview, the second monitoring evaluation was made of the two groups. At that moment, 28 people in the Habitat group were interviewed (all of them continued in the programme), but only 34 users in the control group were interviewed. 24 participants either weren't located or refused to be interviewed.

The evaluation areas were defined taking into account previous HF programmes evaluation experience, presented in different revisions (e.g. Groton, 2013; Waegemakers Schiff and Rook, 2012). The areas assessed in the project *Housing First Europe* (Busch-Geertsema, 2014) were especially considered with the aim of facilitating a comparison within the European context. Apart from the social and demographic features, other areas were also considered such as housing situation, health, social attention, community integration and service provision and use.

To measure these areas in the Habitat evaluation, the use of standardized instruments whenever possible was prioritized, like the *General Health Questionnaire* in its 28 items version (GHQ-28; Goldberg, 1996) for the evaluation of general health. When it wasn't possible, the recommendations of *Social Experimentation. A methodological guide for policy makers* (J-Pal Europe, 2011) were followed. This guide suggests using *questions from existing surveys which have already been carried out on large populations as opposed to designing new questions* (pp. 22). Accordingly, many of the questions for variables where standardized instruments which fitted the evaluation needs weren't found were selected from different surveys used by the National Institute of Statistics (INE), as well as the Homeless people survey (2005, 2012) or the *National Health Survey* (INSE, 2011-12).

These areas are evaluated both for the experimental and the control group, except for programme satisfaction (applied only for the Habitat users)

The obtained data in every measuring is included in a database specifically designed for the programme evaluation.

3.4. First people-based results of the Habitat programme. Users' situation after 12 months

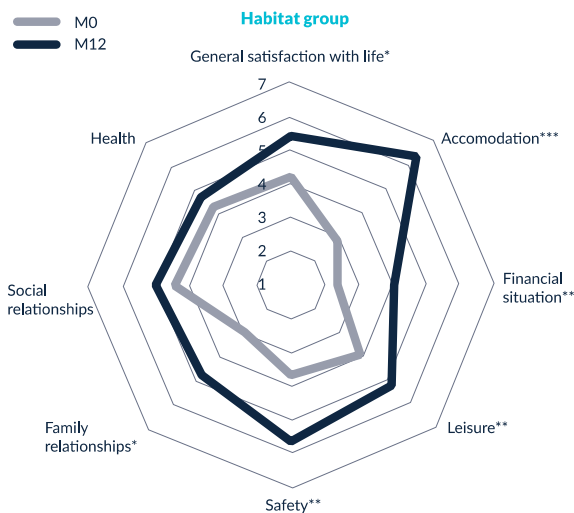
The results presented in this section refer to the initial interview (M0) and the second monitoring (M12).

Twelve months after the launch of Habitat, a high retention rate in the programme is seen: 100% users accessing the Habitat programme continued in their homes, which would correspond to the high retention rate of other HF programmes (80 to 95% the great majority).

Apart from housing stability, other aspects were considered, such as the users' perception of different areas of life. Graphics 2 and 3 show the Habitat users and the control group's subjective perception regarding to different areas of their life (M0 and M12). In the Habitat group, statistically significant improvements were found in some areas apart from the housing situation, like the financial situation, leisure, safety and family relationships.

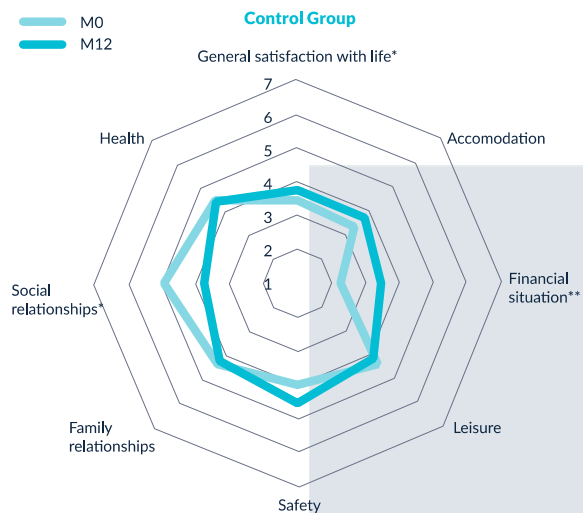
With regards to the control group, changes were only found in two areas: social relationships – which had worsened in relation to the initial situation- and financial situation –where the perception had improved.

Graphic 2. Changes of living standards observed by the Habitat programme users (QoLI)



*p ≤ .05; **p ≤ .01; ***p ≤ .001

Graphic 3. Changes of living standards observed by the control group (QoLI)



*p ≤ .05; **p ≤ .01; ***p ≤ .001

Information about their living standards was also collected, with changes in diverse variables being seen, as shown in Table 2. It must be highlighted that with respect to basic needs like meals, a significant decrease in the percentage of people in the Habitat group who had skipped any meal during the week prior to the interview is revealed (from more than the half of users in M0 to less than 18% in M12).

Moreover, some changes in the financial situation of Habitat users were found. Although the amount of money wasn't particularly different during the first twelve months, the type of income did change. The percentage of people begging reduced (39.3% to 10.7%) and there was a significant increase in the percentage of users getting Income support.

Regarding the vulnerability of Habitat participants to different assaults and crimes, a statistically significant reduction in the number of insults and threats received after 12 months was observed, in

relation to the initial situation. In the control group, there were no statistically significant changes in the victimization area during the first 12 months.

The discrimination felt by the programme users was also reduced during the first 12 months of their participation: in M0, 43% of users referred to not having experienced discrimination; in M12 this percentage increased to 75%.

Table 2. Changes in participants' living standards

	Habitat M0 participants (n=28)	Habitat M12 participants (n=28)	(1)	Control group M0 (n=34)	Control group M12 (n=34)	(1)
Basic needs: Food						
During the last week. have you skipped any meal once or repeated times through the day?	53.6%	17.9%	*	43.1%	22.6%	
Financial situation						
In the last month ...						
Have you received Income support?	17.9%	35.7%	*	17.2%	25%	
Begging	39.3%	10.7%	*	27.6%	9.4%	
Leisure and free time						
Did you practice any hobby during the last month?	35.7%	67.9%	*	42.9%	36.7%	*
Safety and victimization						
Have you been beaten during the last 6 months?	14.3%	7.1%		16.1%	6.7%	
Have you been robbed (money, belongings, documentation) during the last 6 months?	28.6%	10.7%		32.1%	20%	
Have you been a victim of any sexual abuse during the last 6 months?	3.6%	0%		1.8%	0%	
Have you been tricked during the last 6 months?	7.1%	0%		12.5%	3.3%	
Have you been insulted or threatened during the last 6 months?	35.7%	10.7%	*	33.9%	13.3%	
Discriminación						
Have you felt discriminated during last 6 months?			-			
Never	42.9%	75.0%		43.1%	34.5%	

(1) Test "t" test was applied for the repetition of measures in continuous variables. McNemar for dichotomous variables and Wilcoxon for the rest of the categorical variables *p ≤ .05; **p ≤ .01; ***p ≤ .001

In contrast to the control group results, the programme users' family relationships increased in terms of contact. This occurs in the two different ways of establishing contact: the percentage of people who kept in touch frequently with their family by phone (daily or weekly) rose from 7.2% to 35.8% after 12 months; and the people who hadn't physically seen their family decreased from 89% to 78.6%, although that change wasn't significant in statistical terms. In both cases, there wasn't any particular change in the control group.

The results also suggest a reduced sense of loneliness among Habitat users during the first twelve months of the programme. The percentage of people who didn't feel abandoned or alone increased remarkably during that period (from 25% to 64.3%). As in the previous section, in this case there weren't any significant changes in the control group.

Changes related to health and substance abuse during the first 12 months were more limited, although some statistically relevant improvements were observed in all the areas of the GHQ-28 scale (Goldberg, 1996): somatic symptoms, anxiety and insomnia, social dysfunction, and severe depression, as well as in the global scoring. The GHQ-28 total score decreased significantly from

7.39 a 3.52, which implies an improvement regarding the health of the Habitat programme participants.

4. Conclusion

The Habitat programme is the first systematic experience of HF model implementation in Spain. RAIS Foundation has faced two great challenges with this programme: promote a shift in mentality of the professionals working on homelessness in the local authorities towards an innovative model and operate with a methodology lacking prior experience in the country.

In this sense, one of the key aspects of its success has been the recognition of goals and the importance of informing the different stakeholders', as well as the type and communication means used. The selection process of profiles of potential participants in the programme become a fundamental part of the promotion of the HF approach and in making it understandable for the professionals and social services network users.

Furthermore, as happened in other European experiences of HF implementation, the distinctive features of the national context (in Spain, especially the social services network and health system for homeless people and the real estate situation) have determined some of the model's adaptations.

The didactic scope of the solid evaluation of Habitat programme has helped to overcome some sceptic voices, providing evidence of the efficiency of the HF model and identifying its strengths, difficulties or paths to follow towards its adaptation in the Spanish context. The evaluation results also help to avoid objections to the introduction of an innovative model.

The programme participants have met the profile criteria by following a comprehensive control of the profiles and a random allocation for the experimental group and the control group. This has been a crucial aspect with respect to demonstrating the efficiency of the HF model for this specific profile of homeless people with high support needs. Carrying out the HF model fidelity evaluation has also been useful to prove that the Habitat programme results are the consequence of the HF intervention.

A combination of validated quantitative and qualitative methods for the fidelity evaluation has revealed a high fidelity of the Habitat programme to the HF principles. The fidelity evaluation suggests that areas such as the array of services or human resources need special analysis, since these might be influenced by the Spanish context and/or the programme configuration. Although more work needs to be done in its validation, the translation and adaptation to the Spanish context of the tools developed in the original fidelity evaluation model of the programme *Pathways to Housing* enable a comparison and exchange of knowledge between international HF programmes to be made.

The first results seen in Habitat evaluation after 12 months of implementation are in line with the main results observed in other evaluated projects and outline the improvement of the users in some key areas like housing, security or health.

The retention rate is 100% after 12 months of the Habitat programme, and this is one of the main objectives of the HF model and the Habitat programme: ending homelessness. Linked to this successful housing stability, the security (both subjective and objective) is one of the areas where great improvements have been found. Other current research points out that housing is the basis of 'ontological security', which would serve "the basis for constancy, daily routine, privacy and identity construction; a stable platform for less stigmatization and a more normalized life" (Busch-Geertsema, 2014). These two results suggest that the HF model is an effective method for tackling the problems of long-term homeless people with high support needs.

Other improvements have also been seen in areas such as daily life and leisure. The desire to re-establish family contact (and manage to make it) confirms that the security of the person and his

perception about his situation and about himself has improved enough to make this step and, furthermore, it can be a good starting point to join the family network. On a general level, the feeling of loneliness or abandonment is reduced and the perception of being able to turn to someone you can rely on improves.

12 months after the start of the programme, changes have been observed in the areas where evolution had been previously slower, especially on health issues, where clear improvements can be seen, linked to different aspects of mental health: reduction of anxiety symptoms, insomnia, depression, social dysfunction and somatic symptoms. It's possible that improvements of these aspects need more time to be detected than in other areas, which are quicker and easier to identify by the person himself, yet it's important to see that improvements are already occurring.

Comparing these results to those of the control group's, Habitat evaluation again confirms the efficiency of the HF model. Furthermore, we have proved that it is possible to make rigorous evaluations in this context, which are able to provide relevant information and make the programme's decision-making easier.

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