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03/09/2021

An analysis of the use of restorative practices in schools to avoid negative social outcomes related to homelessness in Dublin.

FLAVIA VIEIRA DE OLIVEIRA

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1 Introduction

Homelessness in Ireland has been a constant social issue. The Department of Housing has considered homeless, individuals who are in State-funded emergency accommodation. However, According to Focus Ireland (2020), ‘a wider definition of homelessness can be divided into [...] visible homelessness [...], hidden homelessness [...] and at risk of homelessness [...]’. It also may be associated with addiction issues. Our study will consider the impact of negative outcomes in young people's lives that may lead to homelessness. World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) defines 'youth' as those aged 15-24. This group has been one of the smallest groups regarding homelessness data in Ireland, but still a significant number. According to the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government, in April 2016 there were 664 young people counted in the official figures, 924 in April 2018, and 749 in April 2020. If we include people aged 25-44, this number increases nearly four times. Dublin has the largest numbers comprising 70% of the homeless population between 18 and 44 years old in Ireland (Homeless Report | Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2021).

Our study, however, will be limited to those aged 18-35 years old taking into consideration that this period approaches the time individuals are entering adult life and the time expected by common sense most people may be able to settle down regarding work, family, and housing. In other words, this is the period individuals are expected to be on their way for stability in life, however, negative outcomes during childhood and youth may have such an impact that may divert individuals from this path. That is possible to be witnessed when we explore the root causes of homelessness. According to Focus Ireland, ‘young people are among the first victims of the housing crisis, with private landlords, social housing bodies and local authorities reluctant to rent to them’. (Focus Ireland, ‘About homelessness’, 2021)

Some young people are particularly vulnerable to homelessness. The official figures involve three broad groupings:

- 1-Young people who grew up in the care system and for lack of network of family support may be unable for independent living.
- 2- Young people who are unemployed and receive a reduced rate of social welfare payment.
- 3- Young people who are parents and are accommodated as the parent in a ‘homeless family’.

The three broad groupings mentioned above demonstrate a general view of identifying the path of young people into homelessness. We can add to it the idea that young people may also be vulnerable because they tend to get involved in high-risk behaviours which may expose them to criminal offences, emotional trauma, among others (Arora et al, 2015, para. 1). Exposition to these, may lead to negative outcomes such as social exclusion, mental issues, among others, which are strongly related to the root causes of the social issue.

In December 2014, the government announced an Action Plan to tackle homelessness in the country (Homelessness | Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2016). Yet the numbers have not decreased consistently as is illustrated below.

| | Adult homeless | Homeless aged 18-24 | Homeless aged 25-44 |
|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| December 2016 | 4643 | 765 | 2829 |
| December 2017 | 5508 | 818 | 3413 |
| December 2018 | 6194 | 869 | 3653 |
| December 2019 | 6309 | 784 | 3629 |
| December 2020 | 5873 | 728 | 3335 |

That makes us wonder if the plan has been efficient. The absence of an efficient program for housing and current figures indicates a likely homelessness crisis in the country. Therefore, there is a need to understand the root causes and current contexts of those who are at risk of and/or already experiencing homelessness to inform proper support and create preventive strategies in Ireland with main focus in Dublin where it has been by far the largest homelessness report and for that became the focus of our study. This research points out that difficult childhood experiences and lack or poor educational opportunities, among others, are related to homelessness. It is also acknowledging the importance educators have at identifying underlying problems such as signs of abuse, education disengagement, family conflict, etc. that may lead to young homelessness.

Bearing that in mind, this study seeks to:

- 1- Understand how childhood and youth experiences are related to homelessness and how early intervention strategies through education can prevent negative outcomes (use of drugs, early leaving school, social exclusion) related to it;
- 2- Identify the role of educators in the participation of the prevention of negative outcomes that is related to root causes of homelessness;
- 3- Explore the need for qualified and trained professionals to tackle the issue.

This research will explore an alternative resolution for preventing negative outcomes which may lead to homelessness and discuss the importance of encouraging and engaging educational professionals to be active in their role in society to the point of even contributing to the prevention of such a complex social issue such as homelessness through education.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This study will start by describing the different definitions of homelessness and why the young community may be considered vulnerable on the aspect already mentioned. Due to the involvement of the school in society, it will discuss in which way education can be used as strategy and participate in the prevention of negative outcomes related to homelessness. Furthermore, it will review the role of educators in influencing young people's lives when identifying issues that may result in negative social outcomes. Finally, the Restorative practice approach effectiveness, as an early intervention in our complex community, will be explored and directed to its practice in schools approaching the benefits and challenges and critically evaluating its efficiency at preventing negative outcomes related to youth homelessness in Dublin.

2.2 Definition of Homelessness

In discussing homelessness, its definition can be very broad. Generally speaking, there are various perceptions of what homelessness may be, and they can be related to different aspects such as socioeconomic conditions, the vulnerability of certain groups in society such as ex-criminals, children in care services, drug users, among others. It can also be sorted into few categories which include housing condition, length of time, and severity. (Bouchard, Pacheco and Ravenswood, 2016, p.3).

The United Nations describes experiencing homelessness as 'not having stable, safe and adequate housing, nor the means and ability to obtain it'. (United Nations, 1998, p.50)

Chamberlain and Mackenzie review three different approaches present in literature exposing different perceptions of homelessness concepts along time: the conventional model definition (1960s and early 1970s) which refers to people who live in impoverished areas ('skid row'),

the 'radical' conception (1970s and early 1980s) which focuses on accommodation conditions but also takes into account people's perception and needs, in other words, somebody may be considered homeless even though they are living in a conventional house in case they have no emotional support from other family members or find the dwelling unsatisfactory. The next one is the conservative 'reaction' (1984), also called HUD-Rossi, which relates to people who are deprived of an ordinary shelter or in need of putting themselves through the use of emergency accommodations (government services, armouries, schools, boarding homes, etc). Their own theory is based on cultural perspectives. They argue that 'homelessness is a relative concept that acquires meaning concerning the housing conventions of a particular culture', in other words, it must be identified 'according to the community standards about the minimum housing [...]' in a specific culture. (Chamberlain and Mackenzie, 1992, pp. 276-290).

Most European countries, however, support the ETHOS theory. Its description is embraced by the European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA). (Bouchard, Pacheco and Ravenswood, 2016, p.3). Yet most nations are not able to measure homelessness which, consequently, result in difficulties at tackling the issue in society.

According to ETHOS- a concept developed by Bill Edgar, Joe Doherty, and Hank Meet-homelessness typology can vary between the following categories: 1) Roofless; 2) Houseless; 3) Insecurity, and 4) Inadequacy. Edgar 2009 (cited in Amore, Baker and Howden-Chapman, 2011, p.24) describes having a home as: 'having a decent dwelling (or space) adequate to meet the needs of the person and his/her family (physical domain); being able to maintain privacy and enjoy social relations (social domain); and having exclusive possession, security of occupation and legal title (legal domain)'.

Although ETHOS definition is recognised as being conceptually grounded, it has also received criticism. Kate Amore, Michael Baker and Philippa Howden-Chapman (2011, p.22) have

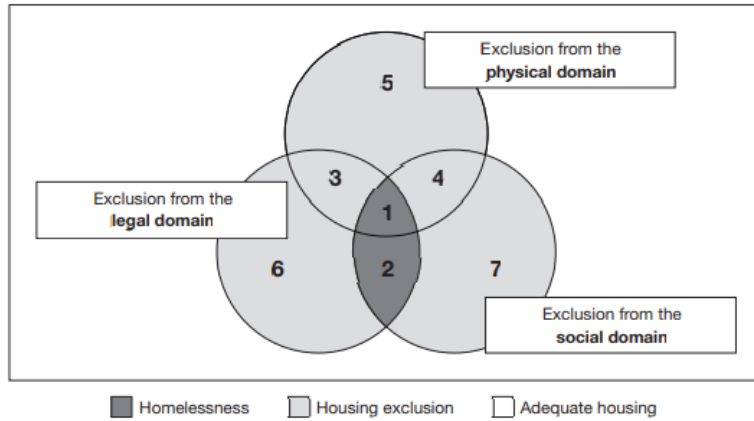
pointed some gaps regarding this concept. According to them, ‘defining and measuring any phenomenon involves a large number of factors or considerations’ which are: context, conceptualisation, case definition and ‘can do’. In relation to context, they mention the importance of understanding the reason why the responsible institutions are interested in, in this case, measure homelessness and what their motivation is. Conceptualisation, however, is linked to the different theories which will fundament its credibility. The case definition is how the theory will be applied in a meaningful way, for instance, to identify somebody as homeless they must fit in the criteria developed by the concepts. Lastly, ‘can do’ would be the action plan concerning the issue being defined.; this will **assist at** the gain of reliability about the definition developed.

Keeping this in mind and as reported by them, this concept demonstrates a few weak points. Starting with context, they affirm that it is necessary to bring a better definition for homelessness and housing exclusion which involves “the three domains of home” (physical, legal and social domains). In this model, for somebody to be considered not adequately housed/ homeless in this conceptualisation, they must be excluded from two of the three domains mentioned above and these must be related to legal and social domains. They raise the argument of why people who live in physically inadequate and legally insecure living situations or physically and socially inadequate housing are not also considered homeless. They defend that:

“Living situations in which residents are excluded from two or more of the three essential domains, irrespective to which two they are excluded from, should be considered below a minimum adequacy standard. People living in places of habitation that are below a minimum adequacy standard should be considered homeless, provided they also meet the ‘lack of access to adequate housing’ criterion”.

(Amore, Baker and Howden-Chapman,2011, pp. 32,33)

Figure 1. ETHOS model for defining living situations as homelessness, housing exclusion, or adequate housing according to physical, legal, and social domains. Source:



Source: adapted from Edgar, 2009, p. 16.

Table 1.1: Seven theoretical categories of homelessness

| Conceptual category | Operational categories | Physical domain | Legal domain | Social domain |
|---------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Homelessness | 1 Rooflessness | No dwelling (roof) | No legal title to a space for exclusive possession | No private and safe personal space for social relations |
| | 2 Houselessness | Has a place to live, fit for habitation | No legal title to a space for exclusive possession | No private and safe personal space for social relations |
| Housing exclusion | 3 Insecure and inadequate housing | Has a place to live (not secure and unfit for habitation) | No security of tenure | Has space for social relations |
| | 4 Inadequate housing and social isolation within a legally occupied dwelling | Inadequate dwelling (unfit for habitation) | Has legal title and/or security of tenure | No private and safe personal space for social relations |
| | 5 Inadequate housing (secure tenure) | Inadequate dwelling (dwelling unfit for habitation) | Has legal title and/or security of tenure | Has space for social relations |
| | 6 Insecure housing (adequate housing) | Has a place to live | No security of tenure | Has space for social relations |
| | 7 Social isolation within a secure and adequate context | Has a place to live | Has legal title and/or security of tenure | No private and safe personal space for social relations |

Source: Edgar *et al.*, 2004.

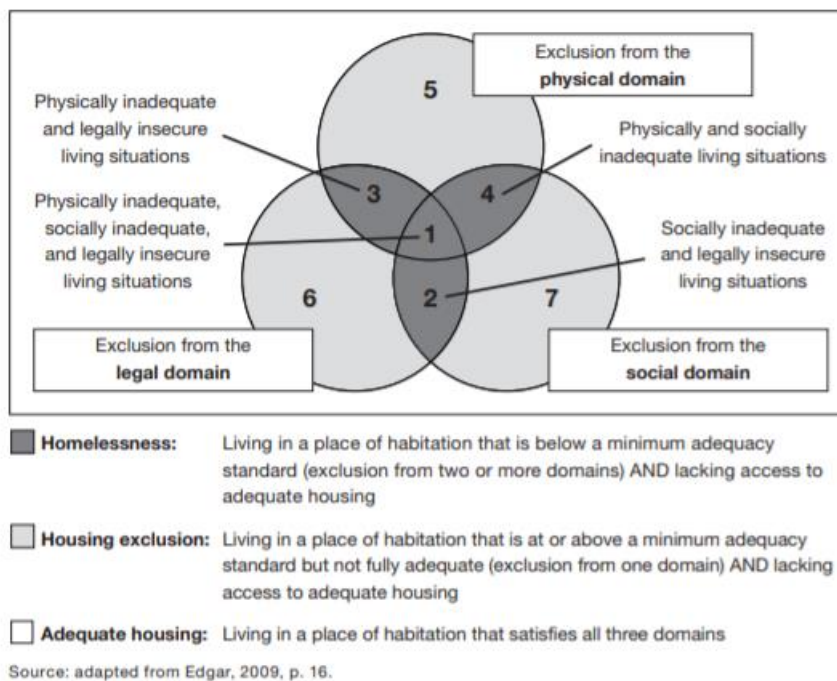


Figure 2 Model for defining a population as homeless, housing excluded, or adequately housed, according to physical, legal and social domains, and access to adequate housing. Source:

The next weakness mentioned is the conceptual definition. In their opinion, the conceptual definition should expose all the criteria necessary to identify a homeless population such as circumstances or lack of access to adequate housing which is not included in the model. At last, the classification should also take into consideration the period somebody is in certain circumstances and besides that, some attention should be given to the population who is at risk of homelessness which does not mean that these should be considered part of the homeless population, but they should be linked to its definition and classification somehow. (Amore, Baker and Howden-Chapman, 2011, p.30)

Finally, they present their position defining and classifying homelessness as 1. 'Living in a place of habitation (during the reference period) that is below a minimum adequacy standard;

and 2. Lacking access to adequate housing.’ (Amore, Baker and Howden-Chapman, 2011, p. 32)

As we can see, defining homelessness has been a topic of debate. In this research, however, we will refer to homelessness based on the Ethos definition and typology considering homeless those who have experienced rooflessness and houselessness as this is the definition adopted by most European countries including Ireland.

2.3 Young people vulnerability to homelessness

Defining terms such as homelessness and vulnerability frequently relates to subjectiveness. As we could see in the topic above, different perspectives can define homelessness which, incidentally, is included in what we called vulnerable groups. The same happens to the definition of vulnerability. In the 1990s the sociologic work of Aday approached community and individual perspectives related to physical, psychological, and social health in the vulnerability description. Thinking about its definition in the 21st century, it includes marginalization, social connectedness, and health disparity (Havrilla, 2017, p.63). Ethnic minority groups, elderly, poor, female, LGBT, children, among others are then part of this interpretation.

“Vulnerable populations include the economically disadvantaged, racial and ethnic minorities, the uninsured, low-income children, the elderly, the homeless, those with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and those with other chronic health conditions, including severe mental illness” (Vulnerable Populations: Who are they? 2020)

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However, others could narrow vulnerability to things only related to disabilities, disorders, or weaknesses. As an example of different perspectives, we can think about government parties. Potter and Brotherton 2013 (cited in Jopling and Vincent, 2016, p.6), ‘suggest that governments

with a broadly social-democratic perspective have tended to focus on developing structures which reduce or compensate vulnerabilities'; in a broader way we could say that their policy sees vulnerable groups as individuals who need support. On the other hand, more conservative governments, according to the same authors, would consider vulnerable individuals as 'architects of their own disadvantage' thus bringing the definition back to the idea that vulnerability is a deficit or weakness.

From a common-sense position, having the [New Oxford Dictionary of English](#) as our base, to be vulnerable means 'to be exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally. In turn, in the academic world, there is always the concern of [ensuring](#) that vulnerable groups will be protected in research. According to Schroeder and Gefenas, vulnerable groups are 'prone to exploitation in medical research, that is, they are easily taken unfair advantage to serve another's interests.' For that, ethical approval is required before starting a study. ([Schroeder and Gefenas, 2009, p.113](#))

Knowing about vulnerability is important to understand that vulnerability is a dynamic process, and may be experienced by anyone, in different ways or times of life ([Havrilla, 2017, pp. 63-68](#)). Focusing on explaining our topic - the vulnerability of young people to homelessness- we will first explore how and why a child/young person is included in the vulnerable group.

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is considered every human being under the age of eighteen. This same age is also described as the age of majority for most jurisdictions in the world. ([OHCHR | Home, 2020](#)) It is known that childhood is a period of life where primordial functions of the brain and body are passing through a process of development. Therefore, due to their physical and mental immaturity, children are included in what is considered the group of vulnerability; for that, it is important to ensure that they are protected against any kind of discrimination or punishment that may deprive them of having a

favourable environment for their development and welfare. Furthermore, their best interest should be a primary consideration that involves necessary assistance, harmonious environment, dignity, equality, freedom, among others (OHCHR | Home, 2020). Emotional, physical, and psychological aspects are extremely important, especially during the early years of our lives. In early childhood, as already mentioned, our brain is passing through a process of formation, aspects of that can be seen later in an individual's life. Therefore, children who are raised in a vulnerable environment can lead to a negative developmental outcome, according to extensive literature in psychology (Coogan, 2011, pp. 347-358).

A vulnerable environment can be a trigger for depression in childhood, especially those who have contact with domestic violence and abuse, as well as when the parents have any sort of psychological disorder (Jaenicke et al., 1987, pp. 559-572). In other words, children's exposition to disruptive influences of stress, ill parent, violence, abuse of substances collaborates directly to dysfunctional disorders and negative thinking about themselves, the world, and the future. The reflection of those aspects can contribute to a child developing a negative self-concept, reduced notion of personal worth, and like that, leading to negative life stressors. A complicated relationship between parents and child may also create the possibility for a child, in the future, to become a frustrated adult, develop distress, and from that, repeating patterns through life. A clear example of that is a child who was abandoned by the parents, when becoming an adult, it is likely to face challenges in relationships or have dysfunctional behaviours to avoid situations that can lead to abandonment again. (Davies, 2004, pp. 773-797).

As reported above, a stressful environment may have a strong impact on the development of a child and will bring further consequences to their adulthood. The situations mentioned above such as family breakdown, domestic abuse, poverty, among others; summarizing, any kind of abuse may be emotional, physical, or psychological are related to the root causes of

homelessness. Besides that, young homelessness can also be related to foster care functions. In other words, young people who experienced foster care system when exiting it are likely to find difficulties securing stable housing. (Hodgson et al, 2013, p. 1)

As evidence of the arguments above, a study from the National Institute of Mental Health defends that “childhood background and family experiences may be critical in explaining risk for homelessness.” (Koegel, Melamid, and Burnam, 1995, p.1643). Accordingly, problems identified in homeless adults have their outset in their childhood experience. Moreover, they are unlikely to come on their own or suddenly emerge in adulthood. Instead, they are sequels of inappropriate child development which promotes risk factors that are strongly linked to homelessness.

2.4 How education can help prevent homelessness

2.4.1 The role of education in the society

The first thing that comes to our mind when talking about education is probably associated with academic qualifications. Surely, education may be seen as an investment which is going to give us opportunities in life, it can also be a contribution to the development of our country, as qualified professions would involve scientists, businessmen, professionals of health, among others that are intrinsic to build a society (Idris et al., 2012, pp. 443-444). To prepare and qualify individuals for work is important, however, education should go further than this superficial concept. It is also responsible for teaching values and morals and for preparing our children to be future adult members of our society; socializing, creating identity and a sense of responsibility. Attitudes are unfolded and behaviours are developed from the social climate, physical environment, and the organization of the institution; broadening its definition even more, and maybe giving it a new perspective that would bring about a deeper meaning that is

related to our human being: the need of development, constant changes and the capacity of learning and doing things through our lives. (UK Essays,2018, para. 6)

Weller and Wilson (2018, p. 10) refer to learning as ‘the process by which we change our minds and then come to align our actions in the world with our new views’. They also cite Benjamin Franklin who speaks to the learning that comes only from experience: ‘Tell me and I forget, teach and I may remember, involve me and I learn’.

From that, we can affirm that education - which in this case does not refer to the academic meaning of the word, but goes deeper and involves the sense of learning, developing new views, being an active part of the world and our society - is related to change.

Idris et al. (2012, p. 444) state that ‘the role of education is to help provide the opportunity for all people to develop as fully as possible’. In addition to that, it is mentioned that ‘education should be a means to empower children and adults alike to become active participants in the transformation of their societies’. Therefore, we can affirm that societal transformation starts from personal transformation. Through the learning process, we can recycle and change our minds and then combine our views to actions becoming an active part of our society.

Full development, encouragement, and empowerment in people, which are mentioned as the role of education, may happen when, in the world of education, the concrete meets the abstract domain in learning, as learning involves cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains. Weller and Wilson (2018, p.10) relate ‘the cognitive to what can be learned in books, facts’. ‘To the psychomotor domain belongs the physical skills’. Lastly, the affective domain ‘is related to emotions and behaviours; it is where the judgment, values, traditions, culture have room’.

Linking all domains, we understand that all of them are crucial for personal development and consequently social change - as we are not isolated, but part of a community- and consequently, are intrinsic for a complete definition of education.

As explained above, in the world of education, those three domains- cognitive, psychomotor, and affective- should be present in the school environment so that opportunity is given to individuals to fully develop. What is noticed from our experience is that the two first ones are not rare to be found, however, when talking about the latter, challenges can arise.

Although it is expected that schools will have a positive impact on our formation, they can also have a negative role in our development. Keeping in mind that a great part of our lives we spend in the educational environment, it is worrying to imagine the negative influence it may bring to our personal world. Schools are the first contact children will probably have outside their family circle while they are developing. During this time, their persona is being formed and there is a whole adaptation to this new environment which can be a place where they will feel weighed down or feel they can triumph. Moreover, as we are all unique individuals with unique characteristics, we will adapt ourselves in different ways. Because of that, adaptation can be either smooth or catastrophic. **Vygotsky (2020, p.19)** states 'adaptation to the environment may [...] denote the most brutal struggle with individual elements of the environment [...]'

As we know, adaptation is linked to emotions. It sometimes involves controlling or/and suppressing our feelings/ desires to adapt to the environment. For instance, we are not supposed to do whatever comes to our minds without thinking about the other. There are also rules to be followed in our society with the objective of keeping the order and so it is in institutions such as schools. As we go on, there are also consequences if we break them, which in the traditional educational system that we are more familiar with is usually related to punishments that may influence children's development negatively. As we grow up, the problem of adaptation and the way we react emotionally to it become part of our features. Still according to **Vygotsky (2020, p.14)**, 'emotional reactions turn out to have a substantial influence on absolutely all forms of our behaviour'. We can go further and affirm that they have become part of our life

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history. Pedagogics principals approach that 'adapting the children to the environment in which they will have to live, and function is the ultimate goal of every form of education' (Vygotksky, 2020, p.19). The adult has crucial importance on that, they should help the child understand the surroundings, establish their first contact with the outside world and also deal with their feelings. In other words, the child in development would need the grown-up help to steady themselves. (Vygotksky, 2020, p.19). This adult could be part of their family or bringing the discussion to the education field, teachers, for example, could fulfill that position. The problem is when it is not possible to have a healthy environment to self-develop.

Sometimes children are fortunate to find that support at home which will help them develop everywhere they go, but other times they come from a broken family, or a difficult background and the school would be their refuge. (Vygotksky, 2020, p. 27). However, unfortunately, many times school would not provide that safe place to be either. Consequently, as our emotional system is designed to reinforce pleasure and avoid suffering, when we feel insecure, threatened, neglect, humiliated, scared among others; imbalance in our emotions takes place and our basis is undermined. These individual experiences are likely to reflect on the child's behaviour and on the role they play in the environment. It may result in aggressive behaviour, lack of interest, difficulties at socializing, along with others.

So, thinking about the ideal role of education in society-which would be providing opportunity for full development, encouragement, and empowerment of its pupils- the school environment should have a substantial positive impact on their lives. However, in the real-life world, it is constantly kept outside the school walls and that may bring failure to the education system resulting in fuel for the rise of negative outcomes.

2.4.2 Education used as strategy to avoid negative social outcomes that may lead to homelessness.

Hugo Munsterberg (cited in Vygotsky 2020, p.4) states that 'if we were to seek an expression for the most important truth that modern psychology can furnish the teacher. It would be simply this: the pupil is a reaction apparatus.'

In the topic above, it was discussed the role education should have in our society. It is understood that education may have a positive or negative impact on individuals' lives depending on how the institution is committed to its role. For this topic, we will identify how education can be used as strategy to avoid children experiencing adversity to fall at risk of poor well-being in the future and consequently negative social outcomes such as social exclusion, early leaving school, early pregnancy, use of drugs, mental issues, etc. which has been found related to homelessness.

First, how can we even relate these negative social outcomes to childhood and in which way they may contribute to homelessness? Second, can educational support make a difference in the fight against this social issue?

A study made by DCU Educational Disadvantage Centre (Dublin/Ireland) reported that '34 of 50 questionnaire participants of the study indicated that they had experienced 'traumatic childhood events'. According to it, 'there is an increasing acceptance in research of the significance of the experience of adverse childhood experiences' in adulthood (Murphy, McKenna and Downes, 2019, p.10).

Risks for issues in adult life are rooted in adversities and pain generated in many cases by childhood suffering (Mate, 2018, p. 28). Homelessness, addictions, early-school leaving, and other negative outcomes for children and young people can easily be included in such risks. Traumatic experiences that may lead to those, could be family breakdown, including poor

relationships with parents, neglect, poverty, bereavement, physical and/or sexual abuse, experiencing foster care, being forced or placed out of the home, etc.

According to the same study mentioned above, these adversities were often linked to educational difficulties such as difficulty at concentrating, reduced school attendance, problematic behaviours which may include, antisocial and offending behaviour.

In their turn, working as a cycle, school exclusion, and lack of academic qualifications, which are easily associated with educational difficulties, have been reported to contribute to the risk of homelessness. The same adversities together with poor social networks are also relevant to the prospect for starting drug and alcohol use as well as mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, among others, all factors strongly addressed to contribute with the social issue.

(Shelton et al, 2009, p.465)

Although childhood experiences have a great influence on the root causes of homelessness in adulthood, it should not be considered the cause itself, but 'a marker for associated processes in the individual, in the family, or in the interrelationship that is causally related to homelessness'. (Susser et al, 1991, p.1026)

The more these traumatic experiences and their effects are understood, the more enlightened the causes of homelessness are, and the more effective social policies and procedures can be in tackling and preventing homelessness.

As mentioned above, homelessness can be affected by different forces, which make it a complex and dynamic social issue. An analysis of risk factors for homelessness that took place in the United States, in which two groups (ever-homeless group and never-homeless group) were compared to understand the variables that involve the issue, it was revealed several factors directly associated with homeless circumstances. Shelton et al (2015, p.469) have sorted the aspects into three domains:

- 1- **childhood adversity:** involving issues such as running away from home, being ordered out of the home by parents, placement in foster care, incarceration of the biological father, parental/caregiver neglect, and duration of welfare assistance to the family before age 18;
- 2- **socioeconomic situation:** early school leaving, recent economic difficulty, and current employment situation;
- 3- **mental illness and addiction** consisting of: depression, psychiatric hospitalisation, and problems with drugs.

In the ever-homeless group, there were a larger number of reports of neglect, parental-caregiver abuse, rates of adoption than the never-homeless group. Also, levels of involvement in crime and the criminal justice were higher in the group who had experienced homelessness.

Mago et al (2013) converted information taken from different articles related to the issue and analysed how much influence different factors have on it. Through two methods called Fuzzy Logic (FL) and Fuzzy Cognitive Maps (FCMs), it was possible to analyse, model, and test the impact of social factors on homelessness, facilitating the comprehension of vague concepts and values related to homelessness as it is a broad and complex social problem. To explain the system of homelessness, the models were represented by sample scenarios. (Mago et al, 2013, p.2)

First, the map was developed in a 'virtual way' in view of researchers' identification of what aspects they understand may lead to homelessness based on their personal and historical knowledge ('common-sense'), and whether they affect it directly or indirectly, positively, or negatively. An experimentation was done in which three sample cases were created to describe extreme cases where it was likely and least likely to result in homelessness and a middle case closer to reality in which it is not accurate if it could result in homelessness or not. Different

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examples of interaction between the aspects were given to analyse the process. (Mago et al, 2013, p. 4)

In the first case, concepts such as criminal justice system involvement, addictions, mental illness were stated as very likely to result in homelessness. In the second case, it was analysed different relations. Considering an increase in education, concepts such as poverty, unemployment, and government assistance, which are often related to homelessness, were suggested to decrease even when other aspects such as mental illness increment had potential to influence this same social issue. Therefore, education should be considered a strong protective factor to prevent negative social factors in the future. For example, education will hardly prevent mental issues, however, those who have a mental disorder but are educated, are expected to be able to identify and seek treatment. Besides that, they may also be provided with a good income and for that be able to afford a shelter, consequently, avoiding the risk of homelessness. The third case brings a scenario where addiction, criminal justice involvement, and family breakdown (negative aspects) “fight against” income, education, and counselling (positive aspects). In this relation, the first three aspects are strongly linked to each other creating negative effects. It demonstrates three different possible circumstances:

- 1- Because of addiction effects (irritability, alteration of personality, behaviour disorders, etc.), social isolation is built up enhancing the possibility of family breakdown over time. Moreover, challenges to maintaining the addiction may rise, for instance, the loss of jobs the commitment of crimes because of the lack of money;
- 2- Besides the addiction matter, mental illness is added as a reaction of an ongoing dependence, boosting the possibility of risk of homelessness.
- 3- As the issue escalates, social isolation grows, and criminal behaviours are likely to take place enlarging the chances of family breakdown. The “defence network” of education, income and counselling are now found on the verge of disruption due to the cumulative

effects of addictions, mental illness, and crime, paving the way to homelessness. Yet, the positive aspects (education, income, counseling) have a strong influence to avoid the risk of homelessness holding both sides at the bay and making homelessness uncertain in this case.

(Mago et al., 2013, pp.4-5)

The virtual Fuzzy Cognitive Map which was built using researchers' common-sense knowledge, was illustrated for the simplification and a better understanding of the complex issue of homelessness. However, to transform the experimentation into something more concrete, Mago et al have searched for empirical studies related to pairs of linked concepts such as addiction and homelessness, education and homelessness, poverty and addiction, addiction and criminal justice involvement, addiction and mental illness, among others. From this research, linguistic statements were taken per concept pair. It was decided that the statements should describe the association (antecedent-consequence) between concepts. For example, "criminal justice involvement is significantly associated with homelessness". (Mago et al., 2013, p.6)

During the search for empirical studies, different pair concepts from the "virtual map" demonstrated before were considered, and others were eliminated according to the research team's consideration with the objective of refining the map. In the end, 14 concepts that interact with each other were chosen, and together 31 weight edges, which describe the influence each aspect has over each other according to the different studies, analysed. The edges were classified into qualified weights: very low, low, medium, high, and very high. Through discussion and votes and the use of the Oxford Canadian Dictionary to maintain the semantic consistency of the numerous keywords identified that relate to the qualitative weights linguistic terms, values were ordered and ranked. (Mago et al., 2013, p.6)

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Concept pairs received different values classified according to the statements described in different articles searched. For instance, one concept could have been identified as significantly associated (qualified weight= high) with another concept in one study and might be identified as having more limited influence (qualified weight = low) in a different case. Following the FCM method, antecedent-consequent relations are illustrated, qualified weight values (very low, low, medium, etc.) are applied, along with the indication of the type of influence of each aspect (negative/positive). Then, these values were transformed from qualitative into quantitative weight values creating a Fuzzy Inference System. The change of qualitative values into quantitative values was developed through the analysis of the triangular fuzzy membership. (Mago et al., pp. 9-11)

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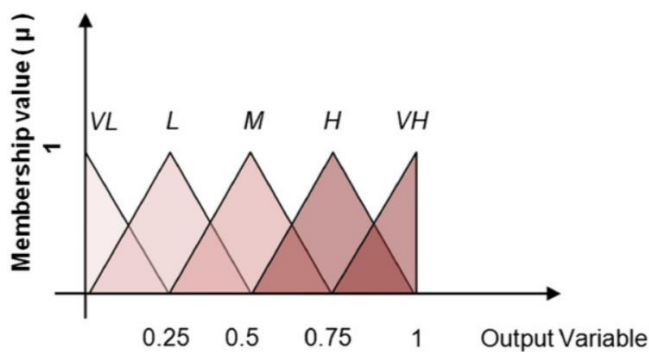


Figure 3. Source:

Several iteration aspects that were recognised as influencers of homelessness were examined in the experimentation of the Fuzzy Cognitive Map supported by empirical studies. Our interest, however, is in the result related to the pair concept education and homelessness. Through the analysis made, it was acknowledged that education has a negative effect on the social issue, which means that with higher levels of education in a society, homelessness will reach lower levels. In other words, “as education rises, homelessness falls”. (Mago et al., 2013, p.12)



Figure 4. Source:

According to what was described in the studies above, we understand that numerous aspects are associated with homelessness. Among them, childhood adversity- our focus- has a strong significance in the social issue. We also understand education can be used as a tool for the prevention of the social issue.

Regarding school being used as a tool and answering the question raised at the beginning of the topic - can educational support make a difference in the social issue of homelessness? - Moore and McArthur states that “school can be a stable and familiar place” where kids are able to learn and socialise. (Moore and McArthur, 2011, p.147)

The connection pupils feel to their school is addressed to be essential to their development regarding health, social and educational fallouts. (Waters, Cross and Shaw, 2010, cited in Moore and McArthur,2011, p. 147). According to them, schools can provide support to children facing adversities, it may be the only place where they can feel part of a community as it is of easy access to them. There, relationships are built and may become essential if or when adversities come up. Adversities which could lead to homelessness.

Children and young people must obtain support, be encouraged, and be empowered at school which may be the crucial point to find out different perspectives from the adversities they have faced in their lives. Besides that, social programs should be offered in educational institutions which may also help children overcome their difficulties. (Moore and McArthur,2011, p.150)

Rutter 1985 (cited in Aldgate, 1990, p.41) suggests that “good experiences at school may act as a protective factor where children are under stress elsewhere.”

So, if we think about education as an open gate to opportunities in life, but also think about its ultimate purpose of providing opportunity for individuals to fully develop and be empowered,

offering new perspectives, creating identity and personal transformation (the true school role), young people that are found in risk of becoming homeless later in life due to **child** adversity and diverse negative outcomes should and could be identified early. Therefore, investment in education as prevention effort should be done in order to tackle factors that predispose young people to experience homelessness.

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2.4.3 The importance educators have at identifying underlying problems that may lead to negative outcomes

If we think about our school experiences, we will probably remember at least one special/favourite teacher who made the difference in our history. Somebody that connected with us and guided us or even made learning easier and meaningful or who motivated us and influenced in our behaviour and attitudes. In reference to Fredriksen and Rhodes (2004), 'children's relationship with their teachers can be crucially important influence, affecting students' connection to school, motivation, academic performance and psychosocial well-being' (Fredriksen and Rhodes, 2004, p.45). However, what does it mean to be a special teacher?

Alvunger, Sundberg and Wahlstrom (2019) believe that that question can be answered from the understanding of the schools' task/role which was already discussed in the topic before. Considering that, Alvunger, Sundberg and Wahlstrom give an example of what a remarkable teacher would be; he/she is described as one who is respectful of the children, treating them as persons who have feelings, motivating and encouraging them to approach the subject matter in a reflective and disciplined manner. A teacher committed to his/her role goes beyond effectiveness in transmitting knowledge (Alvunger, Sundberg and Wahlstrom, 2019, p. 8). To fulfil the purpose of education, the position 'requires the teacher to possess knowledge', but

also requires them to be ‘an educator, an advisor, friend, organiser, coordinator, associate, assessor’. (Xhemajli, 2016, p. 31) He/she understands teaching is a complex responsibility which should enable students to think, feel and be. Their practice can support those who are dislocated or facing adversities. (Alvunger,Sundberg and Wahlstrom, 2019, p.7) Yet it is a challenge to fit the role of a teacher, the profession requires versatility that is not always easy to develop.

According to Fredriksen and Rhodes (2004), ‘there is a growing evidence that perceptions of support from teachers affect psychological adjustment’. It can be helpful when preschool children evidence poor child-mother relationship; it can help middle school students fight against depression boosting their self- esteem. Further, students’ academic, behavioural and emotional skills may also be impacted by positive student-teacher relationship. (Fredriksen and Rhodes,2004, p.46). They also report that elementary students who are able to have a good relationship with their teachers are more confident to seek for support when they need academic or emotional assistance. (Fredriksen and Rhodes,2004, p.47).

Children spend a great amount of time of their lives under the care of teachers. For that, after the family, teachers become a crucial influence in shaping the child’s character and moreover in developing their academic and social performance. In other words, teachers have impact and importance in the construction of pupils as persons. Uluga, Ozdenb and Ervilmazc (2011) express that ‘the teacher in the personality development and success of students is a fact that cannot be overlooked. [...] Their positive or negative attitude in communication with students and in how he/she reflects this, directs the shape of their lives [...]’ (Uluga Ozdenb and Ervilmazc, 2011, p. 739). Lanier 2015 (cited in Xhemajli, 2016, p. 32) states that ‘the most important task of the teacher is to make effort to enable well understandable teaching experience, which enables the pupils to resolve problems from the real life and demonstrate

that they have learned great ideas, acquired good capabilities, and fulfilled the laws of the mind and the heart, complying with educational standards”.

Therefore, the teacher will be an important piece on pupils’ life puzzle. Towards a positive student-teacher relationship, they are able to play a crucial role in the way the students choose their actions and change their attitudes which may make a difference when children fundamentals are undermined in result of adversities they face. They may find a safe and stable place when turning to their teachers in seek of hope or new perspectives and that may divert them from negative outcomes.

2.5 Restorative practice in society

2.5.1 Restorative practices overview

Nowadays diverse are the fields where terms of restorative practices are applied: criminal justice, social work, education and organizations are among those. Wachtel, the founder of the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP), specifically defines restorative practices as ‘a social science that studies how to build social capital and achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making’ (Wachtel, 2016, p.1). In other words, its concept is considered an alternative to repair and reconcile relationships encouraging individuals and communities to be active in their own decision-making, taking responsibility for their actions and building respect between participants involved in a conflict.

Restorative practices fundamentals come from restorative justice which is cited by Menkel-Meadow (2007) as ‘the name given to a variety of different practices, including apologies, restitution, and acknowledgments of harm and injury, as well as to other efforts to provide healing and reintegration of offenders into their communities, with or without additional punishment’ (Menkel-Meadow, 2007, p.102). However, the IIRP considered the two terms as slightly distinct. In their view, restorative justice is englobed in the restorative practice

approach, and it is a response to wrongdoings after their occurrence. It is introduced with the objective of avoiding reoccurrence while restorative practices are not limited to that idea, it should also be used as a precedent of wrongdoings preventing conflicts to occur at the first place. 'Restorative practices help to: reduce crime, violence, and bullying; improve human behaviour, strengthen civil society; provide effective leadership; restore relationships and repair harm' (Wachtel, 2016, p.1).

Analysing the semantic of the word 'restorative' we can easily relate to the notion of recovering, rebuilding, repair, improvement, healing, among others. From that, we can understand and embrace positive principles such as cooperation, compassion, awareness, reflection, fairness. On the other hand, we should discard practices such as coercion, blaming, and random punishments. That is the difference between restorative practices and what we could call status quo, mainstream, or traditional practices.

In order to clarify and better understand restorative practices, several concepts were identified by Wachtel (2016, pp. 3-6)

1- Social Discipline window

It presents four approaches to maintain social discipline and control social behaviour. Punitive, permissive, neglectful, and restorative. As we can see in the diagram, the restorative approach combines high control and high support and it is characterised by doing things with people, instead of to them or for them.

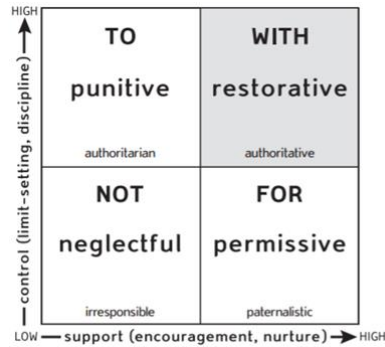


Figure 5. Social Discipline. Source:

2- Restorative Typology

It is represented by the three overlapping circles which involve the three primary stakeholders: victims, offenders, and their communities of care. All three are involved in the meaningful emotional exchange and decision-making and to accomplishing the aim of fully restorative practice at meeting the needs of each participant involved, all three sets must be actively engaged.

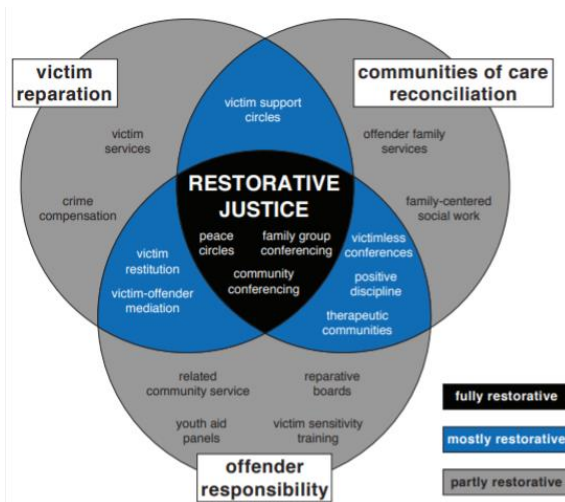


Figure 6. Restorative Justice Typology. Source:

3- Restorative Practices Continuum

Wachtel (2016, p.4) states that restorative practices may be formal or informal. Formal processes include restorative conferences, family conferences, among others. Affective statements and affective questions are examples of informal processes. The first expresses people's feelings while the latter brings reflections to their behaviour and how it affected others. The gap between formal and informal processes is fulfilled with some structured practices that would not need as much preparation as formal conferences, for instance, restorative circles. These 'rituals' will be explained in more detail when discussing the restorative processes.

McCold and Wachtel 2001 (cited in Wachtel, 2016, p.4) states that 'although a formal restorative process might have a dramatic impact, informal practices have a cumulative impact because they are part of everyday life'.



Figure 7. Restorative Practices Continuum. Source:

4- Nine affects

The concept was developed by the psychologist Silvan S. Tomkins to describe the expression of emotion in humans. Following his theory, 'human relationships are best and healthiest when there is free expression of affect or emotion' (Tomkins 1962,1963,1991 cited in Wachtel, 2016, p.5). Reflecting on that, we can conclude that aspects relate to heavy control, punishment, distress, along others will hardly be able to create positive emotional

bonds which are crucial for restorative practices as it aims to rebuild relationships. Observing the diagram below we can identify the process that affects may go through. Most of the 'affects' are defined by pairs and represent the least and the most intense expression of a particular 'affect', resulting in six negative 'affects', one neutral affect, which is described as a reset button, and the two positive affects. Still in relation to Tomkins, for the fact that 'we have evolved to experience nine affects [...]' it is as if we are programmed to follow an inner blueprint which according to Nathanson 1997:

'Ensures that we feel best when we 1) maximise positive affect and 2) minimise negative affect; we function best when 3) we express all affect (minimise the inhibition of affect) so we can accomplish these two goals; and, finally, 4) anything that fosters these three goals makes us feel our best, whereas any force that interferes with any one or more of those goals makes us feel worse'.

(Nathanson 1997, cited in Wachtel, 2016, p.5)

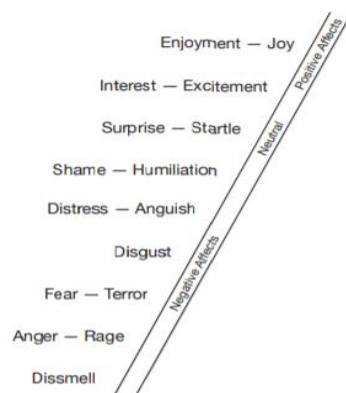


Figure 8. The Nine Affects (adapted from Nathanson, 1992). Source

Therefore, contrasting Tomkins's theory and restorative practices principles which focus on the problem instead of the wrongdoer providing a safe environment for the expression of feelings, perspectives, and moreover, seeking for reflective decision-making, are strongly related. Thus, restorative practices should be considered an important asset in

society for it is funded in giving opportunity for every individual involved (the ‘offender’, the victim, and their community of care). They give the opportunity for participants to express themselves, to be listened and aim attention at maximising the positive and minimising the negative factors which are crucial aspects for healthily building community based on rich principles that will make the difference in the long-term.

5- Compass of shame

It was developed by Bernard Nathanson to represent the various degrees human beings respond to shame. They are withdrawal (isolating oneself, running and hiding; attach self-self-put-down, masochism); avoidance (denial, abusing drugs, distraction through thrill-seeking); attack others (turning the tables, lashing out verbally or physically, blaming others) (Nathanson,1992 cited in Wachtel, 2016, p.6).

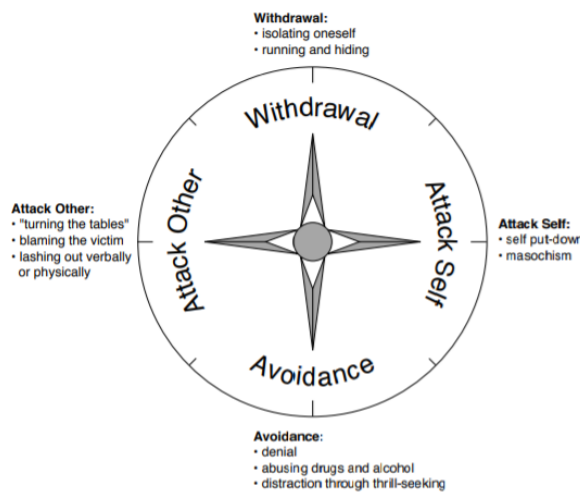


Figure 9. The Compass of Shame (adapted from Nathanson, 1992). Source:

Attentively analysing the different levels of reactions illustrated by the compass of shame, we can easily link them to negative outcomes presented in the root causes of numerous

social issues, in which we include homelessness, **the centre of our study**. Regarding the concept of shame, which is likely to introduce negative behaviours as illustrated in the compass, restorative practices principles are, one more time, seen as an alternative solution for tackling negative outcomes and build a healthy society. Nathanson's idea defends that 'restorative practices, by their very nature, provide an opportunity for us to express our shame, along with other emotions, and in doing so reduce their intensity' (Nathanson 1998 cited in Wachtel, 2016, p. 6)

6- Fair process

In order to describe this concept, **we can think about ourselves**. How do we feel when we are treated unfairly in a game, or a judicial process or even in everyday conflicts? It is reasonable to affirm that we feel disappointed, misled, along with others. Trust is more difficult to be built as well as cooperation and engagement in the **process**. According to Kim and Mauborgne 2003 (cited in Wachtel, 2016, p.6) the central idea of fair process is that '[...] individuals are most likely to trust and cooperate freely with systems-whether they win or lose by those systems- when fair process is observed'. That idea is even better illustrated in 'common sense' when we consider children's behaviour. Even though the results they **get** are not always the desired one, if they experience fairness, they can understand the outcome, trust others and cooperate with them. Furthermore, they are likely to apply the concept in different circumstances.

Still according to the same authors, there are three principles of fair process:

- 1- Engagement-involving individuals in decisions that affect them by listening to their views and genuinely taking their opinions into account;
- 2- Explanation- explaining the reasoning behind a decision to everyone who has been involved or affected by it;
- 3- Expectation clarity – making sure that everyone clearly understands a decision and what is expected of them in the future.

(Kim and Mauborgne, 2003 cited in Wachtel, 2016, p. 6)

The concepts described above are crucial to understanding restorative practices principles and how it has important impact on building **socially healthy communities** in different settings.

From now on, we will identify some of its processes which are where we can see the theory being applied. **Wachtel (2016, pp. 6-9)** will include in the restorative processes: restorative conferences, circles, family group conference, and informal restorative practices.

1-Restorative conference: it is a formal structure that involves offenders, victims, and each party's family and friends. It is voluntary and aims at dealing with the results of the wrongdoing/crime and what would be the best way to repair the harm. It offers the victims the opportunity to express their feelings and participate in the outcome. Offenders will be confronted with questions and hear how their behaviour has affected the victims. The victim is asked about the outcome they desire, and this is discussed with the offender and the other ones present, and if agreed a contract is written and signed.

2-Circles: they can be used both to build community creating social bonds or to amend and repair relationships responding to wrongdoings, disputes and problems. They provide people a safe place to be listened to and to express their feelings and look at different perspectives. It is an alternative to conflict resolution, healing, support, decision making, information exchange, and relationship development. When applying this practice, certain instructions are important for the success of it such as one person speaks at a time and must wait for his/her time, nobody can interrupt avoiding back-and-forth argument. The circle provides the opportunity for even those who usually do not feel comfortable speaking up. There may be a circle facilitator who will present topics or raise questions, but it is not mandatory. The circles can be found in different

formats: sequential which is more traditional and may follow a script, non-sequential, which is more freely structured, fishbowl, and variations of it which is usually suitable when there is a large number of active participants.

- 4- Family group conference: it was originated in New Zealand and spread around the world. The process allows the engagement and empowerment of families to make decisions and plan for their family members after hearing about the case they are involved in. It involves preparation, information about the case, private family time, plan agreement, monitoring, and review. Professionals should still evaluate the plan regarding safety and legal issues, but the purpose is to help with the implementation of what was discussed. There will be monitoring and follow-ups to ensure the progress of the plan.
- 5- Informal Restorative practices: restorative practices are not only limited to formal processes. It may englobe affective statements and questions that express people's feelings and make them reflect on how their actions have affected others which goes beyond blaming or punishing somebody. The strength of informal practices relies on building awareness, empathy, responsibility, and respect through everyday events. Its use may reduce the need for formal restorative practices.

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2.5.2 Restorative practices at schools

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Schools are a complex communities where different backgrounds are identified. It may be the first place where children will be exposed to diversity, values, discipline, among other social 'requirements' possibly unknown by them before, as well as frustrations, self-development, self-discovery; all of them connected to their persona progress. Because of the social complexity that schools are involved, they are regularly considered co-responsible for the nurture and development of their students. In this journey, schools usually find different

behaviours, difficult situations to manage and conflicts to solve. When things go wrong, action must be taken, however, issues may arise when action is related to meaningless punishment, authoritarian discipline, blaming and exclusion. That brings us to reflect on whether this is the environment we want our children to grow and develop. (Drewery and Winslade 2003, p.5)

Drewery and Winslade (2003, p. 6) compare schools to the criminal justice system. They state that 'school disciplinary systems are often quasi-judicial in nature. Just as in the criminal courts, crimes are primarily thought of as offences against the state, in schools most offences are construed as offences against the school'. In other words, the offences are usually taken as if they are a confrontation to authorities, the break of rules/the law instead of being seen as damage to relationships. However, if seen 'as a matter that affects a network of relationships and should be addressed within those relationships', it could open opportunity for possible restorative actions (Drewery and Winslade, 2005, p. 13). They go on to argue that 'another feature of school disciplinary system that mirrors the criminal justice system is the process of conceptualising problematic situations as the outcome of individual deficits of character' (Drewery and Winslade ,2003, p. 6). Agreeing with this statement may underestimate what could actually be a deeper matter such as the consequence of social negative outcomes the offender has fallen into.

The last comparison made by them is that to protect the majority of citizens, criminal justice systems lock offenders up; similarly, in schools, young persons are locked out, referring to exclusions, suspensions, time out which are frequently present in our traditional educational system. (Drewery and Winslade, 2003, p.7).

Accordingly, what can Restorative Practices do for schools then? In general, it offers a whole different perspective for traditional schools' principles which involve discipline and behaviour

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management but, more importantly, emphasises the importance of relationships, a sense of responsibility, and the creation of a safe environment for students' self-development.

For a better understanding of the argument above, we shall explore the basis of Restorative

Practices. It is understood that Restorative Practices have their roots in the primordial concept of Restorative Justice, and it is strongly related to behaviour management, discipline, and resolving conflicts and this idea has passed over when the approach started to be used by schools. However, Drewery and Kecskemeti (2010) defend that this is 'a narrow interpretation of the power of the concept of restoration as a social practice'. According to them, restorative practices 'is about maintaining the basic values of a diverse and civil society, including generosity, care, and respect for difference'. It is also about 'the skills required to live in a diverse society'. (Drewery and Kecskemeti, 2010, p.102)

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Keeping that in mind, schools should not be selective or exclusive, as mentioned above, but inclusive. By inclusion we mean to embrace diversity in all its concepts; from different abilities of students to socio-economic and cultural backgrounds; moreover, reflecting on it, we could also include "good behaviour" and "bad behaviour". By cultivating an environment of inclusion, schools are able to develop the baseline for a restorative/ inclusive school, which would be quality relationships. (Drewery and Kecskemeti, 2010, p. 103)

Therefore, the best way for an inclusive approach is to do things with participants, if it is done to them that's punishment. If it is done for them, that's permissive, if nothing is done that's neglect. Nevertheless, if you do things with them, that's restorative. (Wachtel,2005, cited in Wachtel, 2016, p. 3)

Although Restorative practices were introduced in schools as an alternative to be used when the damage is done and should be restored, it is noticed that it has been expanded as a preventive strategy, building community, developing empathy, and changing the school

atmosphere (Allen-Mastro, 2017, para. 2,6,7) Considering restorative principles and the fact that school is the place where children are likely to be exposed, to a certain extent, to our complex and diverse society; it should also be the place where they learn how to manage themselves: feelings, behaviours, opinions, perspectives, among others. (Allen-Mastro,2017, para.7). If we think about it, teaching children how to manage themselves is school's duty as much as teaching them how to read and write -it is intrinsic in the role schools play in society. For its success, practices such as listening, respect, support, positive dialogues that they may not find home play an important role. As Drewery and Kecskemeti (2010) state, '[...] how we name behaviour and the meaning we make of it, how we interpret a situation and how we think about our roles (and anything else for that matter), has consequences for how people go on – how they enact their role, how they treat others, what happens in their lives, in ongoing ways' (Drewery and Kecskemeti, 2010, p.111). Therefore, besides teaching academic subjects, schools should meet students' emotional and social needs, children should learn from school that life is not always easy, but they are still able to develop resilience; that if home fails, they can find support at school and understand that there is a place for them in the world.

However, it is still more likely to find schools where the kind of atmosphere necessary for building and restoring quality relationships, which may give them support and avoid negative outcomes, is absent. Our nature is usually quick to judge and dish out consequences that may do more harm than good. When this attitude is adopted, behaviours are treated as an isolated symptom. It may be "treated", but root causes are not addressed, and other issues may come up needing resolution.

In order to challenge this reality, the belief that 'retributive justice' is the best solution for a safe and disciplined institution or yet the limited idea of the use of RP for behaviour management and school discipline must be shaken and give place to supportive systems that involve treating the problem in whole, which means not only focus on the damage done, but

actually dig deeper, collect information to have a better understanding and to find appropriate resolution that it is very likely to result in better outcomes.

A constructive pathway into quality relationships may facilitate the implementation and the maintenance of Restorative Practices as its whole, and result in a radical change in our educational system (Drewery and Winslade, 2005, pp.5,7). This radical change identifies schools as communities of care and is founded on the beliefs that respectful dialogue gives opportunity to understand underlying problems, make things right and contribute to positive outcomes. Moreover, it considers each individual unique with his/her specificities, experiences, and difficulties; furthermore, it aims at developing a system where the individual matters; making school a safe environment where children are looked after, their confidence is built up, they feel empowered to pursue social, emotional and academic growth, thereby, creating a foundation for a successful future where difficulties can be overcome.

2.5 Summary of the literature

Scholars affirm that homelessness can involve a different range of reasons such as poverty and social exclusion. (Murphy, Downes and McKenna, 2019, p.19)

Homelessness experiences may be rooted in childhood and is usually a result of the accumulation of determinant conditions for a certain period. Those could be child abuse, the use of drugs, psychological issues, the breakdown of family, educational disengagement, among others. (Ravenhill, 2016, p. 17)

A powerful mechanism to break this cycle of constant disadvantage is the possibility of access and participation in education (Power, Whitty and Youdell, 1999, p.32)

As schools have the potential to build up and strengthen relationships, identify underlying problems that may result in social exclusion, provide safety, stability and care for children who

live in difficult circumstances, early intervention strategy and its role in schools should be taken into consideration while trying to prevent homelessness.

Concepts were developed to understand the fundamentals of restorative practices. They describe RP's principles and values and how they work together with our emotional system to build and/or repair relationships from scratch and make a change in our society. Processes to make the approach effective have been developed in different fields with the belief that it is the resolution to build socially health communities where relationship matters, and inclusion is essential to tackle social issues such as homelessness.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

According to the Common Rule, research refers to a systematic investigation or examination that will contribute to generalizable knowledge. Saunders et al. (2009) define it 'as something that people undertake in order to find out things in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge (Saunders et al., 2009, p.5). When we think about researching it is important to understand that each research involves a research question that must be answered. To answer this question, it is important to gather information, evidence, and data. This section will describe and explain the research process in order to analyse the effectiveness of Restorative Practices in schools to avoid negative outcomes which may lead to young adult homelessness.

The research methodology section will describe the systematic process, the structure, steps, and procedures for conducting research (Rajasekar et al. 2013, p.5). Through proper use of the methodology, we can have a clear idea of the whole process and ensure it will be valid and reliable. For the proposed research we used the research onion (Saunders, 2019) as our guiding framework for the methodology.

3.2 Philosophy

The Philosophy of the research, the very first layer, has to do with the beliefs related to the reality being investigated. It involves the context of ontology and epistemology. For this study, concerning ontology, we used the philosophy of relativism. In this research, we analysed the knowledge which already existed and compared it to our findings through qualitative study. Regarding epistemology, we chose the EMIC analysis as we were seeking the participants' perspectives and behaviours. We considered the actual background of people who have experienced homelessness aged between 18-35 years old and also their perception of their education experiences, and then contrast to their homelessness situation. It was understood that there uniqueness in each case and considered it individually, however, likely, similarities and collective views also occurred as literature has shown root causes of homelessness converge.

3.3 Approach

The second layer of the research onion is the approach used which can be divided into: inductive and deductive. Inductive logic is defined as 'a type of reasoning that involves moving from a set of specific facts to a general conclusion' (Imam,2021, p.3). The deductive approach on its turn, according to the same author, arrives at a specific conclusion based on generalizations' (Imam,2021, p. 5). It is usually used in scientific research.

In this research, the inductive approach was used as we started the analysis from the observation of the homeless people's experiences. Information was gathered, and through the analysis of it, patterns in homeless people's life and educational experiences were identified and from the understanding of the principles of restorative practices, it was suggested that the use of Restorative Practices at schools may be effective if adopted as an alternative to avoid negative social outcomes related to homelessness.

3.4 Research Strategy and Choice

Numerous research strategies could be employed in a study. We considered the ones developed by Saunders et al (2009) which include case study, survey, experiment, action research, grounded theory, archival research, and ethnography. They can be classified into three main domains: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. For this study, the qualitative approach was chosen, and the strategy was composed by semi-structured one-on-one interviews to gather information of homeless people's life and educational experience to understand how and why principles of restorative practices can be used in schools as an alternative to avoid negative social outcomes related to young adult homelessness. Through the interviews we were able to take into consideration the different voices, life experiences, and current contexts of people who have experienced homelessness and identify adversities they have faced and their perspective towards educational experience in relation to their current situation and then analyse them through the view of restorative practices principles that could have had a positive impact on their lives and divert them from this pathway. Tracy (2019) states that 'through interviews, respondents can provide their opinion, motivation and experiences' (Tracey, 2019, p.10), for that, this strategy was considered suitable for our objective.

The questions emerged from self-reflection and knowledge acquired by the literature review. Interviews happened in person and 14 participants took part of them. The process took an average of 15 minutes.

3.5 Time Horizon

Research studies can be divided into cross-sectional and longitudinal. The first one is when data are gathered just once in order to answer the research question. The second one views the analysis of people or facts in more than one period of time to answer the question.

In this case, the cross-sectional time horizon was chosen as we focused on the reality presented in Dublin so far.

3.7 Data Collection

The research population englobed people between 18-35 years old who have experienced homelessness. The recruitment was done through direct approach. As it is acknowledged the nature of the homeless population is heterogeneous. Therefore, the probability sampling would not be appropriate for this research; non-probability sampling was used instead, and the sample was selected based on those who have experienced homelessness in various ways, which involve sleeping rough, the use of emergency accommodations or couch surfing. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews that were, in their majority, digitally recorded. The questions were developed aiming to clarify the participants' school and life experiences in order to analyse through restorative practices principles, the possible avoidance of negative outcomes related to young adult homeless. Interviews were also used to narrow the broad study and understand the aim population current experience related to the research question.

3.8 Research Limitations

In the research we used a sample of the aim population. As sample is a limited number of the population who represents the whole, for that, we were not able to identify every element in that population. It was quite difficult to recruit the sample as they are included in the vulnerable population. Lack of literacy and participants with severe mental health issues were considerably challenging. Also, because the recruitment depended on willingness, it was not possible to select a similar number of each gender for analysis and, surprisingly, the great majority of the participants turn out to be men, this has risen the enquiry of the reason why which could extend the topic for a new research.

Still regarding the recruitment of the sample population, first, the researcher tried to contact agencies that were related to homelessness and charity services, however, matters such as clients' privacy and bureaucracy made the access difficult. Because of that, recruitment strategy was changed into direct approach of the sample. It was understood and advised that it was a risky approach due to the diverse world the population may be part of, and for that, sensitive questions could expose the interviewees to different emotions which could result in conflict and confrontation towards the researcher. The author found the strategy challenging because of the risk taken, but also considering it was needed to build a certain level of rapport with participants for them to feel relatively comfortable to share their personal feelings and experiences. Besides that, because participants were directly approached by the researcher and the great majority have no physical and/or economical structure and are on the streets, usually worried about making money begging or in need of arranging the place they would sleep that night or the meal they would have later on, the author needed to take advantage of any possibility of talking to them which reflected on sometimes sitting beside them while they were begging (no structured place), managing to simplify the interview process (introduction, presentation) and questions, because they were feeling uncomfortable or under pressure. There were those who were clear that they were not willing to share their experience, others who were apparently open but when the interview started asked to withdraw from it. Some of them agreed to take part of it but did not want to be recorded or sign the informed consent. With all the obstacles risen, it was rewarding to be able to get important information which was essential for this project.

Moreover, it was challenging to remember that although several stories were heart-breaking the researcher had to keep impartiality in order to bring reliable results to the research.

Another challenge was the several modifications made in relation to the first plan of this research. Initially, it was thought to broaden the research along Ireland, however, due to Covid-19 restrictions, it became limited to Dublin.

Furthermore, schools were to be part of the primary resources to have a further understanding of arguments found in the literature review, despite having a positive answer from three institutions in the beginning, and from that, understand they were willing to help, when the time came, it did not succeed. One of them justified stating that due to holidays period it would be actually difficult to reach staff willing to be part of it, and the ones who could help with it were committed to their duties at that moment. The other institutions never responded again.

Although, the challenges were overwhelming, in the end, they brought resilience, sense of confidence and a different perspective towards different scenarios which enriched the research experience.

4. Data Analysis

For the data analysis, demographic data and descriptive information of the participant sample are presented below. In order to guarantee the anonymity and confidentiality of the information, the interviewees were classified as “Interviewee 1, Interviewee 2, successively, at random.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Interviewee 1 | Male. Aged 25 years old. Originally from Ringsend, Dublin, Ireland |
| Interviewee 2 | Male. Aged 23 years old. Originally from Ringsend, Dublin, Ireland |
| Interviewee 3 | Male. Aged 30 years old. Describe himself as a traveller. Originally from Dublin, Ireland |
| Interviewee 4 | Female. Aged 28 years old. Originally from Crumlin, Dublin, Ireland |
| Interviewee 5 | Male. Aged 35 years old. Originally from a village called Salins, Kildare, Ireland. |
| Interviewee 6 | Male. Aged 35 years old. Originally from county Cavan/ Ireland. |
| Interviewee 7 | Male. Aged 30 years old. Originally from Tallaght, Dublin, Ireland. |
| Interviewee 8 | Female. Aged 30. Originally from Tallaght, Dublin, Ireland. |
| Interviewee 9 | Male. Age 34. Originally from Germany. |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Interviwee 10 | Male. Aged 35 years old. Originally from Malawi,Africa |
| Interviwee 11 | Aged 35 years old. Originally from Jamaica. |
| Interviwee 12 | Aged 35 years old. Originally from Poland. |
| Interviwee 13 | Age 34 years. Originally from England |
| Interviwee 14 | Age 34 years old. Originally from Lithuania |

13 from the 14 interviews were digitally recorded and 1 interviewee (number 8) was not, respecting the participant’s personal decision. All the interviews were transcribed verbatim. The interviews were manually analysed to identify patterns and similarities regarding life and educational experiences. The data analysis was divided into three steps:

Step 1: Topics were selected based on commonalities and initial coding of comments and features related to participants’ childhood and educational experiences were applied by the researcher.

Below several questions related to each topic will be listed and relevant answers given by the participants will be transcribed.

Topic 1: Understanding the overall.

1.1 Age of first experience as homeless.

| |
|--|
| How old were you when you first experienced homelessness? |
| Interviwee 4: “Hm...Since I was pregnant with my first child, 2015.” |
| Interviwee 6: “The first time I think I was 25.” |

Interviewee 7: I am sleeping rough since 18.

1.2 Feelings related to homelessness.

Question: What most affects you in this circumstance?

Interviewee 1: "Relationships in a way and families like it was just hard to keep contact with people, you will never know where you're going to be."

Interviewee 2: "[...] just worrying most likely, people worrying about me and if you are alright, you know what I mean? That would be the worst for me anyways."

Interviewee 3: "There is nothing to do, you are walking around town all day."

Interviewee 13: "The feeling of hopelessness, loneliness, solitude, yeah."

1.3 Education level.

When analysing this topic, it was acknowledged people who have finished school and entered college, those who got their leaving certificate, those who have dropped out.

Those who affirmed they had a good childhood, even though they have suffered from traumatic experiences, are the ones who had better results.

Questions: In your opinion, did you have a happy childhood.? / How old were you when you finished/left school?

When asked if he had traumatic experience in life, Interviewee 6's denied, however he mentioned later his father commit suicide when he was only 14.

Interviewee 6: "I had a good childhood. I went to college, I travelled the world, you know."

Interviewee 10: "I was spoiled, I had a good childhood. (...) I had options to go to primary school and went to college. I did computer programming, communications. If you look where I am from, I am not rich, I am not poor."

That confirms the argument...

1.4 Adversities such as anxiety, depression, addictions, etc

Topic 2: Life and educational experience and support

2.1 Traumatic experiences; 2.2 Participants' perspectives of teachers; 2.3 School environment

Topic 3: Reflecting on the past and perspectives for the future.

3.1 Regrets; 3.2 Relationships; 3.3 Linking school experiences and current situation.

Step 2: Primary and secondary data were compared and aspects of the issues that were expected to be found in the secondary research were searched in order to prove hypothesis risen.

Step 3: Summarising the data. Research findings to research aims and objectives were presented and discussed.

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