

Name: Tran Minh Van
Mykolas Romeris University
Faculty of Social Technologies
☎: +370 6383 7323
✉: van.tm@live.com trvan@stud.mruni.eu



CARITAS HOME SHELTER

Caritas home shelter (hereafter in this document referred to as the shelter) is a non-governmental organization which provides shelter, a place to sleep and to stay temporarily for those who face problems that lead to homelessness. Living spaces in the shelter are separated for men and women. The clients pay 50litas per month as a rental fee. Clients can carry their own stuff but they should not exceed 3 boxes. Moreover, the clients who would like to stay here should follow some certain regulations of the shelter.

The shelter is mainly funded by European Union and Vilnius municipality. Occasionally, the shelter gets support from “Food bank” project for the homeless people. The clients receive an amount of allowance to buy food and cook for themselves.

The target group in this shelter varies from those who lost their own houses due to natural disaster or unemployment to those who have to leave their own home because of domestic conflicts. The shelter also provides emergency support for those who need a place to stay urgently, those who were released from jails or who left hospitals at night and needed a somewhere to sleep. The duration of emergency stay can last from 1-3 nights.

The bedrooms, kitchens and bathrooms here are very clean and neat. However, there is only 1 common room where clients spend their free time to watch movies or play board-games. There is a Spanish volunteer working in the shelter and he comes here to spend time with the clients, to show them new movies, to play games with them or just basically to speak with them. According to his experience, the difficulties he encountered here are the lingual difference and the conflicts raised between the clients because he cannot involve in solving it.

The main jobs of social workers here are to help clients sign up for their stay and to provide psychological consultations because most of the clients here faced some certain troubles in their lives and they are stressful to the clients. There are even some who are alcoholics. Besides, social workers are in charge of making plan and writing

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projects for funding organizations, assisting clients in finding jobs and improving their resumes and other administrative works.

The most significant thing to the social workers here is to see the progress of their clients' lives, client having a job, for instance and this is what impresses me much of the shelter. Also, the social workers contribute to the changes of the clients' lifestyles, for example, rehab from being alcoholic.

In Vietnam, I just found that there is one home shelter called Peace House which provides shelter for women suffering from domestic violence or human trafficking. The shelter is under management of The Centre for Women and Development (CWD):

"Its function is to support the political and social activities of the Vietnam Women's Union under the direction of the Presidium of the Vietnam Women's Union.

Its goal is to support the integral development of the skills, the educational level, and the capacities of Vietnamese women." (Source: http://www.peacehousevietnam.com/about_us.php)

I think being a social worker here, you have to be really strong because you work with the adults most of the time and the clients are at difference ages, there are even some clients who are at their difficult ages and facing psychological troubles. Therefore, providing service and consultation for them is not an easy job. You should be in their shoes, feel their pain, listen to their stories and give them an appropriate advice. I think I am not capable of working with this target group even though what inspires me most is to see their life's improvement.