

In June 2019, national implementation and policy workshops were organised in the capitals of the four HomeLab countries, in Budapest, Bratislava, Prague, and Warsaw. These attracted 50-100 attendants, including local and national level officials and decision makers, researchers, and representatives of civil society organisations.



A national workshop was organised in **Budapest, Hungary**, presenting [HomeLab](#) project to a broader audience, and the work of the two Hungarian pilots, one led by [Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta](#) in Veszprém, Western Hungary; and another by [From Streets to Homes Association](#) in Budapest. Organised by the project coordinator [Metropolitan Research Institute](#) in cooperation with supporting partner [Budapest Institute](#), the event had 58 participants. Presenters, panel contributors and audience members represented ministries; municipalities and other public sector officials; research institutes; and a range of NGOs.

Pilot coordinators presented their experience, and focused on the importance of closely cooperating with municipalities. **Social and affordable housing is extremely scarce** in Hungary, as are housing benefits. In this scenario, optimising the limited municipal housing supply is crucial. However, participants also discussed the limitations of this effort: housing very vulnerable persons, like former homeless families, inevitably runs into bottlenecks without some form of normative housing support.

The second panel addressed the **multi-stakeholder networks** and mechanisms the pilots developed to connect clients, employers, public sector economic development companies, human resource managers, support and benefit forms and other relevant actors.

The Slovak National HomeLab Seminar, organised by the pilot implementer [People in Need Slovakia](#) (PIN) took place in **Bratislava** in the social enterprise [Hotel Bivio](#). The audience of 52 people consisted of wide range of NGOs, municipal representatives, researchers, and professionals.



PIN staff presented HomeLab's methodology and the results of the Slovak pilot. A key question to be discussed over the workshop was addressing the needs of PIN's very vulnerable clients, coming from **marginalized Roma communities**. Participants discussed **possible synergies among individual policies** supporting housing, employment, education, and providing social services; as well as their impact on initiatives such as HomeLab.

A panel focused on different housing support models for vulnerable groups, presented by the organizations **Projekt DOM.ov**, **Romodrom** and **Proti prudu** – NGOs focusing on supported housing for vulnerable Roma families in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The adoption of the **Social Rental Agency model** was also discussed. This is already under way in the Czech Republic, supported by a national rental subsidy scheme. In Slovakia, however, implementation is significantly more challenging.

The final panel addressed the issue of employment, with the participation of the representatives of two **companies who employ workers from marginalized Roma communities**: Kovotvar Kutý and Stiga Slovakia implement a supported employment programme for excluded Roma people. PIN staff presented their methodology of **employment counselling**.

[Habitat for Humanity Poland](#) organised a workshop for 101 participants plus 3 keynote speakers in Warsaw's Centre of Creativity Targowa 56. Discussants addressed challenges and successes in providing **affordable housing** in the capital Warsaw and in other major cities such as Gdansk and Wroclaw. Keynote speakers from the United Kingdom shared experience from London and Cambridge, including the challenges of financing, and **developing benefit schemes** which adequately match beneficiary needs.



Social and municipal housing in Poland faces serious limitations: a large share of municipal housing is old and run-down; their maintenance is costly, and expanding the stock takes further investment and efforts, including innovative initiatives. In Warsaw, social housing is complemented by low cost [TBS housing](#), as an affordable intermediary solution; but aligning costs and conditions in the various housing provision forms still constitutes a regulatory challenge. Participants also discussed the potential of a **Social Rental Agency scheme** to relieve other housing providers through involving privately owned housing in affordable provision.

A need for municipal organisations to **build dialogue and cooperate with social organisations** such as NGOs was underlined; both in providing basic services, such as affordable housing, and in supporting the **most vulnerable families** in their daily lives, and in helping them acquiring the skills that allow results to be sustainable.

The **Czech national workshop** for HomeLab took place in May on the premises of [CARITAS College of Social Work](#) in **Olomouc**. The approximately 40 participants represented municipalities, the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, the Ombudsman's Office, NGOs, the Platform for Social Housing and the national Agency for Social Inclusion, and two speakers from the **Polish and Slovak HomeLab pilots**.



The three panels focused on the **Social Real Estate Agency** in theory and practice; supported social housing, and the interconnected issues of housing and employment. The first block was opened by [Martin Lux](#), a housing expert of the Czech academy of Science, followed by a social worker who presented Romodrom's experience, and a private landlord, who has been cooperating with the Agency. Habitat Warsaw's HomeLab coordinator Agnieszka Glusinska also presented the Polish experience.

The Czech HomeLab project was presented to the audience, followed by the short overview of two Hungarian pilots, and their close cooperation with local municipalities. A representative of Slaný municipality presented the perspective of local authorities.

Adam Fialík, representing the NGO [IQ Roma servis](#) presented their Housing First project (called Rapid Rehousing) in Brno. Finally, a block covered employment related issues, with the panel representing Slovak HomeLab colleagues, the Czech Dobrá práce v obci (Good job in Municipality) project, and Josef Baláž, head of the social enterprise SP Černý Most. Contributors discussed approaches to employing socially excluded persons.

The key conclusions outlined on the Czech workshop were (1) the severe **lack of social housing**; (2) the need for a **guarantee fund** for vulnerable tenants; and (3) the **need for larger and varied housing support programmes**, for different vulnerable groups – as exemplified by the various target groups of the four HomeLab pilots.