

Abstract

This thesis approaches the question of homelessness in the Czech Republic, focusing specifically on homeless people with dogs who together form an alternative family unit. The purpose of this thesis is to map and present comprehensively viewed information and specifics relating to the group. The thesis aims to inspire the reader to ponder on the discussed issue, that is to be aware that this family unit requires to be approached as a whole, and not as two separate components – a homeless person and a dog.

The first part of the thesis defines the theoretical aspect of the question in discussion, based primarily on academic literature sources, but also on sources from the internet which reflect on the focus of the research. Then follows a practical part where a questionnaire is conducted with homeless people with dogs, where the main research question was what the obstacles are preventing this group from living a fulfilling life. Interviews were also conducted with selected people who have been working with homeless people with dogs for a long time. Using both of these research tools, an overall result was achieved. During the mapping of the current situation, the semi-constructed interview method was applied. The research sample was composed of seven homeless people with dogs, completed by one worker of charitable organisation who help this group of people, and an employee of the Trója dog shelter in Prague.

Further analysis established that most respondents do not view themselves as limited by any obstacles that might prevent them from living a fulfilling life, or they cannot specify any, that is to say they are content with their current situation or they do not know what would improve it. Interviews with individuals from the field demonstrate the problem in discussion, where each of the respondents approaches the family unit based on the perspective of their field and does not take into account the particularities resulting from the cohabitation of two different species.

It is impossible to declare the aim of this thesis as fulfilled immediately after completing it. To achieve that, there must be a growing interest in this alternative family unit in the future, and this thesis must serve as a relevant source of information leading to an easier understanding of this group and possible changes in the social sphere, in the issues of helping and supporting homeless people with dogs.

Key words

Homelessness, homeless person, homeless person with a dog, abandoned animals, socially disadvantaged, poverty