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**COMPARING THE BLUE RIBBON  
FOUNDATION GROUP STRATEGY  
AND EFFECTIVENESS WITH THE  
STRATEGY OF INTERNATIONAL  
ACTORS OPERATING ON THE  
HOUSING FIRST PRINCIPLE**

Thesis

Master's Degree Program

International Business Management

2024



**South-Eastern Finland  
University of Applied Sciences**

Degree title	Master of Business Administration
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Thesis title	Comparing the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group strategy and effectiveness with the strategy of international actors operating on the Housing First principle
Commissioned by	Blue Ribbon Foundation Group
Year	2024
Pages	46 pages
Supervisor(s)	Heli Bergström

## ABSTRACT

The objective of the thesis was to find strategies that were considered good for the case organization to benchmark. This thesis examines strategies for addressing homelessness. The aim was to find the strengths of the strategy that could be utilized in future operations of the organization. The thesis provides a combination of tools to analyze the strategies and find the components that can be used to plan future strategies. The results of this thesis provide information to the case organization to complement their strategy work.

The theory of this thesis was based on strategy, benchmarking, and two strategy tools: kernel tool and SWOT analysis. The framework was developed specifically from the point of view of non-profit organizations. Qualitative methods were used to analyze the data in this thesis. Data was collected from the web pages of the organizations. Data was analyzed by using qualitative content analysis.

This thesis shows that it is possible to find good strategies and positive factors to benchmark by combining two different analyzing tools. There were a lot of similarities in the strategies, and the small nuances of the differences still set them apart. While the study didn't examine the case company's strategy in detail, it uncovered similarities with successful strategic practices. The study highlights the importance of aligning strategies with organizational values and mission.

**Keywords:** benchmarking, kernel tool, non-profit organization, strategy, SWOT analysis

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

This thesis aimed to find a strategic component that leads to the best and most effective strategy for a non-profit organization to end homelessness in Finland by benchmarking international actors operating with the Housing First principle. The thesis author has been working in the financial sector for twenty years and was interested in how non-profit organizations could benefit and improve their performance by using business tools in their strategic planning.

The case organization, The Blue Ribbon Foundation, started a new strategic period in 2024, and the Group needed data about other international actors' strategies and effectiveness to support their strategy work. Like the case organization, all actors studied in this thesis operated under the Housing First principle, and it is essential to understand the mechanism of operation of these actors within the principle. Effectiveness is vital in evaluating the performance of Housing First actors, and understanding the criteria for effectiveness in this field is necessary to evaluate their strategies.

Currently, there was no collected data about strategies of the actors working towards ending homelessness that the case organization could use. The theory of this study was mainly about the fundamentals of strategy and strategic analysis and strategic tools used in this thesis to analyze actors to support benchmarking. The theory part gives an understanding of the strategy and its importance to the organization. To understand the purpose of the strategy tools, one needs to understand the basics of the strategic analysis. The end goal of this thesis was to benchmark actors that have been analyzed, and it needed to understand the process of benchmarking.

### **1.1 Background**

Blue Ribbon Foundation Group operates under the Housing First principle. When an organization follows this principle, homeless people who are getting housing are not dependent on other help methods. In comparison, the traditional way deals with all the other problems before accessing housing, such as substance

abuse problems and mental health issues. Multiple domestic and international organizations are also operating by following this principle. (Housing First Europe Hub 2023.)

At the end of 2023 in Finland, there were 3 400 homeless people, and 30% of them were long-term homeless. Twenty-two percent of the homeless people were women. Fifteen percent of the homeless people were young people under 25 years old. The majority of the homeless people were in the big cities, especially in the capital region, the same regions where the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group operates. Homelessness has decreased in Finland; in 2023, it decreased by about 260 persons. Moreover, the number of women and young people has decreased in the last year, but the number of homeless immigrants has increased. (ARA 2024.) Because of the good results in dealing with homelessness, the Prince of Wales, commonly known as Prince William, took inspiration from the Housing First principle. He used Finland as a case study to end homelessness in the UK. (Euronews 2023.)

A strategy helps organizations to define their business and gives them values and purpose. The strategy provides a roadmap for the business, guides towards the destination, and identifies the milestones along the way. (Shawn 2021.) Because the strategy affects every employee of the organization, everyone must be aware of the strategy and these goals and how the goals were chosen (Cote 2020). When the organization is a non-profit organization, the key difference to other businesses is that the non-profit organization is guided by its mission and purpose, and the other businesses are often guided by being better in a competitive environment (Taylor 2016).

By benchmarking strategies of other well-performing organizations, they can identify differences and potentials and optimize their own performance. The essence of benchmarking is knowing what other organizations do in the same field. When the organization has decided which other operators have successful strategies, it can investigate their activities and strategic focuses. (Mehlman 2022.)

## 1.2 Case organization

Blue Ribbon Foundation Group is a Finnish foundation working to end homelessness and help people in vulnerable situations (Blue Ribbon Foundation Group 2023a). The foundation was established in 1957 (Blue Ribbon Foundation Group 2023b). Blue Ribbon Foundation Group uses the Housing First principle and is one of the most significant actors in Finland in this field. The head office of the Group is in Helsinki, and it operates in the West-Uusimaa, Central Uusimaa, and Southwest Finland regions. Actual operations revenues were 19 million euros in 2022. There are over 200 employees in the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group and over 460 volunteer workers. Employees and volunteers meet and help over 4 000 people yearly. (Sininauhasäätiö 2022.)

Blue Ribbon Foundation Group is formed of Blue Ribbon Foundation and Blue Ribbon Ltd., and the foundation wholly owns the limited company. The foundation is a non-profit organization, and the Ltd is a social enterprise. The foundation develops models for dealing with homelessness, and Ltd is the actor providing housing and other services. (Sininauhasäätiö 2023c). The Group provides homes for people experiencing homelessness and gives support and guidance for housing. Blue Ribbon Ltd provides housing and substance abuse services. Group and Ltd work at the grassroots level, creating opportunities for a dignified and equitable life. One of the values behind the Group's operations is that housing is a human right, and home is something that people do not need to earn. (Blue Ribbon Foundation Group 2023a.)

The current vision of Blue Ribbon Foundation Group is to pioneer in the industry and develop new operating models. The ongoing and ending strategy period has three strategic focuses. First, the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group is the supporting agency that helps customers find their place. Second, the Group is investing in the dedicated personnel. Furthermore, the third is the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group, which wants to be a responsible pathfinder, for example, by investing in social influencing. The Group sees that it is important for everyone to

find meaning and significance in their lives, so one of their three values is meaning. Other values are open-mindedness and hope. (Sininauhasäätiö 2024).

The most significant funding of Blue Ribbon Foundation Group comes from the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organizations (STEA) and the European Social Fund. The Group also receives grants from municipalities and organizations and has its own fundraising. Income for the Blue Ribbon Group comes from municipalities for people experiencing homelessness and the addiction services they provide. Blue Ribbon Ltd pays at least 50 % of its profit dividend to Blue Ribbon Foundation Group. In 2022, the balance sheet total of the Group was 39 million euros, and the equity was 10.5 million euros. "Blue Ribbon Ltd.'s balance sheet total was 4.3 million euros, and it made a profit of 762 011 euros. The dividend that was paid from Ltd to the Groups in the year 2022 was 850 000 euros. (Sininauhasäätiö 2022.)

The new strategy period of Blue Ribbon Foundation Groups started in 2024, and they have been creating their new strategy during autumn 2023 (Sininauhasäätiö 2023). The new strategy of the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group is based on a wide range of research data and scenario work. By implementing the best possible strategy, the Group has ensured the continuity and success of its operations. (Sininauhasäätiö 2023d). With the help of this thesis, the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group will gain access to information about the strategy of international actors and the effectiveness of the Housing First principle.

### **1.3 Housing first principle**

Traditionally, services for people experiencing homelessness require that they are first "housing ready" before they can have stable housing. When the actor provides services under the Housing First principle, housing is provided as soon as possible without the requirement to abstain from drugs and alcohol. People who get housing have a higher level of control over the support and treatment that they receive. (Housing First Europe Hub 2023.) The Housing First principle sees housing as a starting point, not the end goal. One of the fundamental principles is that the service users should be listened to, and their opinions



should be respected. In the Housing First principle, it is seen that housing is a human right, and housing should not depend on the treatment that the person receives or does not receive, but the service they get is recovery-oriented. (Housing First Europe Hub 2016.) Countries in Europe that operate in Housing First principles are Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK (Housing First Europe Hub 2019).

Various studies show that the Housing First principle has high success rates in improving the lives of homeless people with high support needs. It has been reported that more than 90 percent of the people who get housing with the Housing First principle are still in their housing after 12 months. Finland has the 10th lowest homelessness rate in Europe, and it has managed to decrease homelessness by 75 % in the last 30 years. (Housing First Europe Hub 2016.) One of the main reasons for this result is using the Housing First principle. Finland is the only country in the European Union that has declined its homeless numbers. (Greater Change 2022.)

The principle was developed by Doctor Sam Tsemberis in New York, and the model has proven to be successful in ending homelessness in the USA, Canada, and European countries. The Housing First principle used in Europe varies slightly from the original model; this thesis discusses the European model. Research has shown that the Housing First principle has been successful and ended long-term homelessness more effectively than traditional services. American results have encouraged European actors to implement Housing First projects, and positive results have been reported all over Europe. Over the years, the Housing First principle has become essential in Europe, and in some cases, it has been integrated into comprehensive homelessness strategies. (Housing First Europe Hub 2016.)

Feantsa is an organization that seeks solutions to end homelessness in Europe (Feantsa 2022). They have over 130 member organizations from 29 countries.

Housing First Hub is a joint venture of actors that aims to end European homelessness. Feantsa is part of the Housing First Hub along with multiple other actors. Hub aims to develop and promote the Housing First principle. (Y-Foundation 2017.)

#### **1.4 Effectiveness in the field of Housing First actors**

Effectiveness is defined in the Cambridge dictionary (2023c) as the quality of success in achieving what is wanted. In Housing First services, the effectiveness is evaluated by what is achieved. It includes the progress the Housing First service provider is making in terms of delivering the outcomes. It is essential to understand how the service is designed and how it operates. It is necessary to understand how the Housing First service is targeted. After that, it needs to explore the outcomes that Housing First service is supposed to achieve. When evaluating the effectiveness of homelessness services, examining the outcomes and exploring how the people who use Housing First services see them is vital. (Housing First Hub 2023b.)

There are several dimensions of the effectiveness of the Housing First services. One is how the service promotes housing sustainment and lasting exits from homelessness. Another aspect is how the service enhances the health and well-being of the Housing First service users. The third dimension is how the service improves the social integration of the Housing First service users. Furthermore, the fourth and last is the cost-effectiveness of the Housing First service. (Housing First Hub 2023b.)

In 2022, Blue Ribbon Foundation succeeded in improving its actions by opening new day centers and investing in new apartments. They have improved their rehabilitative paths, strengthened the competence of personnel, and started systematic quality work, among other actions. An example of the effectiveness of the work of the Blue Ribbon Foundation is that more than 50% of the people from the housing service units of those who moved out moved to a more independent or suitable service format. On a societal level, the effectiveness of the work of the case organization is that it decreases crimes and marginalization and improves

the quality of life of people in vulnerable situations. Blue Ribbon Foundation also effectively influences its stakeholders, such as other organizations, people, and organizations with societal influence and financiers, neighborhoods, educational institutions, and the media. (Sininauhasäätiö 2022.)

### **1.5 Research aim, research questions, and delimitations**

The research scope was to evaluate the strategies of the international Housing First principle actors and find effective ones. The most effective strategies are those that Blue Ribbon Foundation Group can benchmark and utilize this information in their own strategy work. To understand the elements of a good strategy, it was vital to understand the theoretical background of strategy and selected strategy tools. This thesis analyzed the strategies of the different international Housing First actors. It also aimed to find good and effective strategies from international actors operating with the Housing First principle. The goal was to find good strategies that the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group could benchmark on their strategic work.

The research had one main research question and three sub-questions:

- What kind of strategies are good and effective for Housing First principle actors?
  - What good strategies can be found using the combination of Rumelt's theory of good strategy: kernel and SWOT?
  - Which of these strategies can be benchmarked to the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group strategy?
  - How could those affect their operations?

This thesis did not analyze the strategy of the case organization Blue Ribbon Foundation Group. The international actors who were analyzed and benchmarked are from Europe and members of Feantsa. In this thesis, it is noteworthy that these European actors do not include actors from Finland. The aim was not to analyze all the European Housing First principle actors and selected actors operating with the Housing First principle.

This thesis analyzed only the strategy material of the chosen actors, including their mission and vision, not other material such as financial reports or other financial indicators. The target was not to do competitor analysis by finding ways to compete with other organizations. Furthermore, the aim was not to find weaknesses or flaws in the strategies of other actors but to find good and effective strategies that the case organization can benchmark. The author of this thesis and the case company have selected the relevant actors together.

## **1.6 Research methods**

Generally, research methods are divided into quantitative and qualitative. In this thesis, qualitative research was used as a research method because research aimed to find the qualities of the most effective strategies, which are in written form. Qualitative research is not just one way of doing research; it consists of multiple approaches and research traditions with different hypotheses of the best way to do the analysis. Because culture and society are multifunctional and multi-level, it is impossible to reach all these aspects in one study. There is always a limited point of view in research, and there is always an optional interpretation of reality. Research is a discussion of the analyzed data, ways of analyzing it, and different ways to interpret it. In qualitative research, there is no need to separate them from their context, but on the contrary, they are interpreted as part of the context. Qualitative research is characterized by its utilization of materials that remain uninfluenced by the researcher. Qualitative research focuses on action; research is not trying to paint still pictures; it is trying to show that the meanings of things are results of activities. Part of qualitative research is that researchers must tolerate that research objects are not quickly and straightforwardly presentable and analyzed. (Vuori 2021a.)

One characteristic of qualitative research is that it favors qualitative material. Those materials can be, for example, texts, discussions, and interviews. Sometimes numeric materials, like statistics, can be part of the interns, but those are interpreted qualitatively. In qualitative research, materials are not edited in numeric form, even if counting the things can help the research. (Juhila 2021.)

Qualitative research breaks down individual cases, and the hypothesis is made of the individual cases, which are tested later with a larger data group. Written sources can be research objects, not just sources of information. Written documents attract sources of research because they are used in multiple functions in organizations. Leaders of organizations make large amounts of decisions based on written documents and data. Written sources in qualitative research include statistics and reports. Sometimes, written sources are the only way to understand the details of a complex matter; the processes of the organization are complex and cannot be understood without written materials. (Koskinen et al. 2005.)

It is possible to attain information about people, society, and culture from documents such as text and pictures. Documents can be found in archives, internet sources, private people, and office holders, and they can be divided into personal and institutional documents as well as public and non-public documents. These documents can be in paper form and digital form. Institutional documents are created in everyday work in institutions. Some of these documents are public, and some are not. Primarily, these documents are not created for research purposes, and how this may affect the research should be considered. (Alastalo & Vuori 2021.)

The general ethical principle says that research needs to respect human dignity, privacy, self-determination, and other rights of subjects. It is also important not to cause any harm, risk, or damage to any human, organization, or other research object. (Vuori 2021a.) In this thesis, the aim was to concentrate on the positive aspects of the strategy of the different actors, so the risk was low to create harm to the organizations. There were no interviews or other personal contacts with the research material, so there was no need to ask for permits for those research methods.

## 1.7 Framework and limitations of the study

The framework for this was designed to provide broad insight into the research question. The study was done to show that the case organization had the best information to decide what strategic elements to utilize in their strategic work. It was necessary to grasp the fundamentals of evaluation criteria to comprehend what constitutes a good and effective strategy in the case organization's field of work. The framework was built on a theory of a strategy, especially about the qualities of a good strategy. To get deeper into the research, the theory part also investigates the strategic analysis and the processes and tools that were used in this research. The framework of this research is presented in Figure 1.

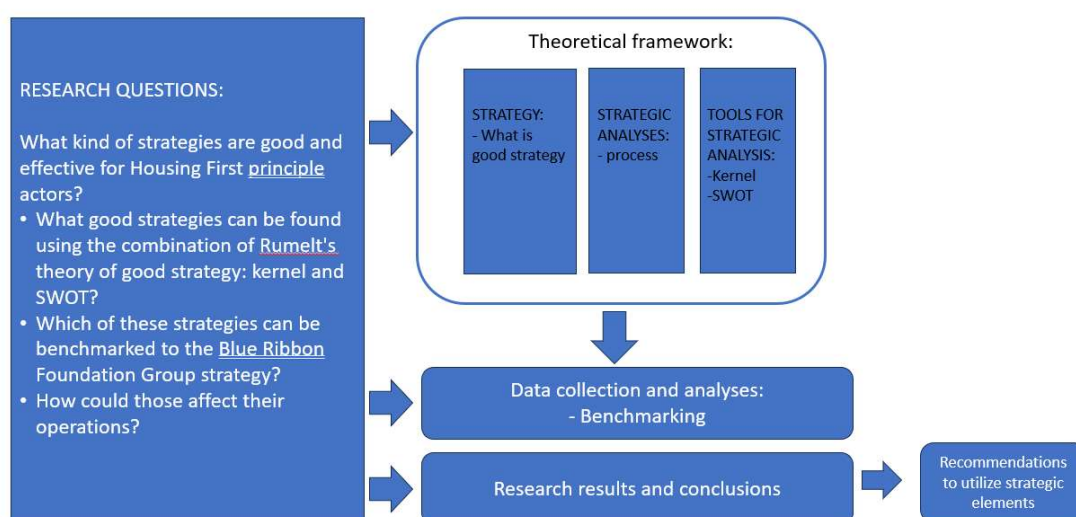


Figure 1. The framework of this research.

To address the research question in this thesis, qualitative research methods were employed, with a specific focus on data analysis. The Housing First actors selected for benchmarking were chosen in collaboration with the author and the case organization. After the selection, actors' strategies were analyzed first with the "kernel" tool to evaluate if those were good and effective. Strategies considered to be effective were further examined with a SWOT analysis from the perspective of the Blue Ribbon Foundation. This SWOT analysis aimed to assess how implementing these recommended strategic elements into the case company's operations would impact its overall performance. After the analysis of

these strategies, recommendations were made to the case organization regarding which strategic elements to utilize in their operations.

## **2 STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC ANALYSIS**

This chapter discusses the most important theoretical issues of frameworks of this thesis in terms of strategy and its research. First, there is a discussion of the strategy. After that, the benchmarking process is presented. At the end of this chapter, the methods used in this thesis are presented: Rumelt's theory of good strategy: kernel and SWOT analysis.

### **2.1 Strategy**

Cambridge Dictionary (2023a) defines strategy as how a business or organization plans its actions for the defined period to achieve what it wants. According to Glegg et al. (2020, 2), strategy is half knowledge and capabilities and the other half of the power to accomplish goals. A good strategy must be coherent and have coordinating actions, policies, and resources (Rumelt 2011, 11). Rumelt (2011, 77) states that a good strategy is built on functional knowledge about what works and what does not, and the most essential functional knowledge is available to its own organization. A new strategy is always a hypothesis; implementing it is an experiment (Rumelt 2011, 77). Strategy is conscious and goal-oriented decision-making in the constantly changing environment. The general belief is that if an organization is good at evaluating its position in its surroundings, it is better to make and implement good decisions. (Vuorinen & Huikkola 2023, 14-16.)

Strategy is not a new way of doing things; it stems from the need to defend from enemies, and the first strategy findings are from China 400-200 BC (Horwath 2020). The term strategy is derived indirectly from the Greek word *strategos*, which means general. Word strategy came to be used first in Europe in the nineteenth century in military affairs (Clegg et al. 2020). Before Alfred Chandler's book *Strategy and Structure* in 1962, there was no term strategy in business, and

it was called just long-range planning. Chandlers' books were the first time the term strategy was used in business vocabulary. (Kamensky 2014, 14-15.) Michael Porter's theory about strategy strongly influences today's business strategy (Gordon 2023). In the 21st century, new challenges have shaped strategic thinking, and digital technologies have massive impacts on many industries (Grant 2018, 13).

Organizations need a strategy to assist effective management by improving decision-making, facilitating coordination, and focusing organizations on pursuing long-term goals (Grant 2018, 15). Strategy is needed when the organization wants to move from the present block into the future where it wants to be. Part of the creating strategy is to see the big picture; it helps to shape the actions for current conditions. Part of this strategy process is to find advantages that make the organization meaningful. It is important to see how strategy helps success in the long term, not just in a quarter. Because the world and situations are changing and other organizations are developing their strategies, organizations need strategic planning, even if their goal is just to keep their current position. (McKeown 2020.) There is a paradox in strategy: when the future is like the past, it is easy to go with the plan, but if the future is unexpected, it is not easy to go as planned (Clegg et al. 2020, 2).

The strategy itself is not doing anything; it needs people behind it to implement the strategic choices of an organization (Kilpinen 2022, 18). An essential part of the managerial duties is to implement the strategy. When strategy creates personal meaning and feelings for the employees, it is more likely to be part of everyday duties. (Kilpinen 2022, 92.) A good strategy gives direction and meaning, creates an identity of an organization, and gives consistency to employers. One perspective is that the secret of the success of the organization is its resources, such as competence and organizational culture. (Vuorinen & Huikkola 2023, 14, 29.)

Every organization has been established for some tasks; they are trained to fill some need or change the world by using specific resources in their activities.



With strategy, every organization can improve its actions, regardless of whether or not it is competing with other organizations. Strategy is the tool for organizations to target their actions according to the needs of customers. It can be said that the fact that there is no element of competition element in the field of work of an organization can affect the content of the strategy, but it does not make the strategy unnecessary. (Kamensky 2014, 17.) In non-profit organizations, the strategy does not aim to gain profit; it seeks elements that are not measured in money; usually, it is some form of effectiveness (Vuorinen & Huikkola 2023, 15). It is easy to create a strategy and make it look effective, but it might not be realizable, and it shows in the phase of execution (Vuorinen & Huikkola 2023, 345). A strategy is a tool for management and prioritization that is meant to be used every day; the value of the strategy is measured in implementation, not in its definition of it (Sutinen & Haapakorva 2021).

The ability to focus on the essentials is a fundamental element of strategic work (Kamensky 2014, 41). Similarly, a vital element of the strategic work is prioritization. The ability to focus on strategic work requires making decisions between different options and saying no to some options (Kamensky 2014, 41). Strategies are incomplete before implementation (Angwin et al. 2020, 435). One of the essential phases of the strategy process is implementing it; for example, it can require organizing, motivating employees, monitoring, and training (Vuorinen & Huikkola 2023, 42).

## **2.2 Strategic analysis**

Kamensky (2014, Chapter VI: Analyysit – Strategisen johtamisen kivijalka) argues that analysis is the backbone of strategic management. Most organizations analyze their environment, other actors, and capabilities. The most used tools for strategic analysis are SWOT analysis and benchmarking. Usually, larger organizations use more than one tool, most likely three to eight. Most organizations do not use strategic tools as those are theoretically presented; they use those in their own way, the way that best serves that organization and the current situation. (Vuorinen & Huikkola 2023, 311.)

According to Kamensky (2014, Chapter VI: Analyysit – Strategisen johtamisen kivijalka), analysis improves the strategy work in three ways. Firstly, it creates the foundation for developing, implementing, and renewing the strategies. Secondly, it improves the knowledge of the prevailing situation of the organization and its operating environment. Lastly, it develops personal strategic knowledge by improving analysis skills and encourages willingness and courage to do strategic work. Analyzing work also creates prerequisites for management ability for the emergence of a strategic vision. (Kamensky 2014, Chapter VI: Analyysit – Strategisen johtamisen kivijalka.)

When the organization does systematic analysis, it improves its knowledge of the organization itself and also its environment. The challenge of the strategy analyzing work is creating a big-picture vision. The analysis is divided into two categories: internal and external; for example, external analysis can evaluate the actors in the same field. When doing the analysis, it is important to consider what has been studied and why. (Kamensky 2014, Chapter VI: Analyysit – Strategisen johtamisen kivijalka.)

Regardless of the nature of the analysis and its methodology, it is essential to draw conclusions and formulate actionable proposals to ensure their effective impact on plans and actions. Some critics of the analysis work state that it does not necessarily lead to anything, but the problem is the analysis process, not the analysis itself. It is not enough to do the analyses; there must be a plan to utilize the information the analysis gives. Organizations need to make decisions based on action plans and the future needs of the organization. As important as the analysis and decision-making is also the supervision of the implementation of the plan, and those things are not necessarily consecutive functions; they can be nested and interactive. (Kamensky 2014, Chapter VI: Analyysit – Strategisen johtamisen kivijalka.)

### **2.3 Benchmarking**

Organizations use benchmarking to compare their performance to others (Fallon 2023). There are typically two benchmarking categories: internal and external.

Internal benchmarking compares the performance of the other parts of the organization, and external benchmarking compares the performance of other organizations. (Marr 2020.) This thesis has been conducted by leveraging external benchmarking, and the theory was constructed from that perspective.

According to Fallon (2023), the goal of benchmarking is continuous improvement. Compared to the organization's performance to others, it can help to collect ideas that the organization can adopt. By benchmarking, the organization can improve its actions, understand what is working and what is not, adopt and improve practices, and reduce costs by increasing efficiency. (Fallon 2023.) Hence, benchmarking is not just for improvement for the sake of changes; it is about creating value (Lankford 2002).

According to Lankford (2002), some critics say that benchmarking is copying, and users are not developing their own ideas. The idea of benchmarking is not copying the ideas, even though it sometimes can be an easy trap to fall. Copycatting leads to fewer innovations and creativity, and managers must remember that benchmarking is not an excuse to stop being creative. This thesis did not aim to copy the strategic component to the case organization strategy. The aim was to evaluate how those suitable components would affect the actions of the organization. The outcome of this thesis was a set of recommendations provided to the case organization regarding strategies that are effective and suitable for implementation within their strategy. (Lankford 2002.)

There are three main types of benchmarking: process, performance, and strategic benchmarking. When benchmarking focuses on day-to-day activities, it is a process benchmarking, and these activities are at the lower level of the organization. Focus on performance benchmarking, which specifically evaluates competitors' products and services. Strategic benchmarking focuses on long-term results, and these activities are at a managerial level. It focuses on how the organization competes and how the organization is using the strategies for success. (Lankford 2002). This thesis focuses on strategic benchmarking, which

aims to understand the strategies that underpin successful organizations (Marr 2020).

The benchmarking process starts by identifying the needs for benchmarking. After that, it is necessary to collect and analyze the relevant data. When the data is analyzed, it needs to lead to an action plan. The plan should include actionable steps that the organization can take to reach its goals. It is also essential to monitor the progress of the benchmarking process to see if the goals are achieved or, if not, it is necessary to make some adjustments to the plan. (Fallon 2023.) Blue Ribbon Foundation has identified the need for information on the strategies of the international Housing First actors. This thesis supplied the data and analyzed it. The collected data was analyzed with Rumelt's theory of good strategy and SWOT analysis. Recommendations based on that analysis were provided to the case organization for the development of future action plans in response to the analysis results.

#### **2.4 Rumelt's theory of good strategy: kernel**

According to Rumelt (2011, 77), a good strategy is coherent actions with arguments, effective thoughts, and activities. He calls this theory a kernel. Cambridge Dictionary (2023b) says that kernel means some vital part of something that is not always easy to find. Rumelt (2011, 77) says there is more than just a kernel in good strategy, but if it is absent, there is a severe problem. The kernel is not based on any concept of advantage, differences of mission or vision, or strategies split into corporate, business, or product levels. The theory of kernel is straightforward, and it is easy to evaluate a strategy with it. (Rumelt 2011, 77.) Rumelt (2011, 85) argues that a good strategy is not just about what you are trying to do; furthermore it explains why and how you are doing it.

Because this theory does not concentrate on evaluating the aspects of making a profit or competitive advantage by comparing financial numbers, it is an excellent tool for assessing the strategies of non-profit organizations. Rumelt's theory is not necessarily a scientific method, but it gives effective guidelines for recognizing the good elements of the strategies without complexity. The kernel tool is purely

evaluating the core aspects of the strategy. Most of the tools to analyze the strategy and other actors concentrate on the "competitor," but in this operating environment, there is no competitor; there is a common social challenge that all actors try to solve in different ways. Using this strategic tool in this thesis makes it possible to concentrate on the good qualities of the strategies, not just find the weak points of the other international Housing First principle actors.

The kernel has three elements: a diagnosis, a guiding policy, and coherent actions (Rumelt 2011, 77). Diagnosis defines and explains the nature of the challenge, and it simplifies the critical situation. The guiding policy presents the approach to overcome the obstacle identified in the diagnosis. The last point of coherent actions explains the coordinated steps to accomplishing the guiding policy. This approach emphasizes the core of the strategy and leaves out the vision, goals, and objectives that Rumelt sees as a supporting player. (Rumelt 2011, 77.)

The diagnosis part of the kernel classifies the situation, links the facts to patterns, and suggests where more attention and focus are needed. The diagnosis could help ease the complexity of the situation, simplify it, and help find the essence of the crucial aspects. A good diagnosis explains the situation and defines actions; for example, a diagnosis can indicate that an organization needs to search for new growth platforms. A good strategy seems to be based on a diagnosis that promises leverage over outcomes. (Rumelt 2011, 79-81.)

When the diagnosis highlights the obstacles to overcome, the guiding policy gives the overall approach to how to achieve this. Rumelt calls this part guiding because it does not provide exact actions on what to do, and it does not have goals and vision. The guiding policy defines methods to handle the situation, and for example, it can be said that the organization needs to find ways to exploit its large scale as an advantage. Good guiding policies are finding sources of advantages, and it is noteworthy that not all the advantages are competitive. Good strategy creates advantages by magnifying the effects of resources and action in non-profit organizations. Without guiding policy organizations, actions

can be inconsistent and incoherent. A guiding policy helps to focus efforts in the right direction. (Rumelt 2011, 84-87.)

Strategy is about actions, and the kernel of the strategy needs to contain actions. The coherent action part of the kernel is not a complete list of all activities, but it needs to bring clarity to the plan, and it helps the organization focus its energy. The organization will focus on the draft of the list of priorities in the organization's strategy. In the kernel of the strategy, all the actions should be coherent, meaning that the resourced deployment, policies, and maneuvers should be consistent and coordinated. Leverage and advantage are to be found in coordinated action. Good strategy lies in specializing in the right activities and imposing only the essential amount of coordination. (Rumelt 2011, 87-94.)

Rumelt (2011, 32) argues that the bad strategy is not just the absence of the good strategy; it arises from misconceptions and dysfunctional leadership. Rumelt's theory says that bad strategy contains empty words, failures to face challenges, mistaking goals for strategy, and bad strategic objectives. Identifying bad strategies will help improve capabilities to create strategies. (Rumelt 2011, 32.)

Rumelt uses the term fluff when he is talking about bad strategy. One explanation in Urban Dictionary (2015) for fluff is that it is unnecessary nonsense and pointless. Fluff is just some gibberish words that try to be strategic concepts by creating an illusion of high-level thinking (Rumelt 2011, 32). Bad strategy fails to define challenges, and it is impossible to improve strategy if it is not known what the challenges are. In bad strategies, it can be mistaken to define goals; some bad strategies are just statements of desires without plans to overcome problems. Bad objectives are impracticable, and those fail to address the critical issue. (Rumelt 2011, 32.)

## **2.5 SWOT analysis**

SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis is a tool that organizations use to develop strategic planning. SWOT analysis makes it

possible to evaluate internal, external, current, and future potential. Analyses need to be focused on the real-life context, and the analysis results should be used as a guide. SWOT analysis identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; with it, it is possible to get new ideas and fresh perspectives. Using internal and external data for analysis makes the strategies more likely to succeed. Even if the SWOT was developed to analyze businesses, it is also often used in non-profit organizations nowadays. (Kenton 2023.) Among the management, the SWOT analysis is widely used in many other research fields (Vuorinen & Huikkola 2023, 97).

SWOT analysis has four components, which are incomplete if some of those components are missing. Strengths identify what separates an organization from other organizations. Weaknesses describe the elements that do not allow the organization to perform optimally and that must be improved. Opportunities describe the external elements that could help the organization improve if they were implemented. Lastly, threats are elements that could potentially cause harm to the organization. Four components are presented in the SWOT analysis in square segmented into four quadrants, each dedicated to one element of SWOT. (Kenton 2023.)

If the base work for SWOT analysis is not done, the analysis can be superficial. A list of things is not enough; the goal of the SWOT analysis should always be to make strategic decisions and action plans based on the analysis. (Vuorinen & Huikkola 2023, 103.) SWOT analyses should raise a few central themes. If too many issues or essential details have been rolled out, it might end up with some weak platitudes and foregone conclusions (Vuorinen & Huikkola 2023, 98). SWOT analysis is recommended to be compared with other strategic analyzing tools because it is an analysis that summarizes the analyzed things (Vuorinen & Huikkola 2023, 103).

Even if the SWOT analysis does not solve the big questions of the company, it has several benefits. One of the examples of these benefits is that SWOT analysis makes it easy to make complex matters more manageable. Sometimes,

organizations can dive into internal matters in decision-making, and the SWOT analysis also brings external factors into consideration. One benefit is that it can be used for almost every existing business question, and it can also be used for specific segments. (Kenton 2023.) Criticism towards SWOT is that it only identifies issues without specific solutions (Winter 2015). This thesis used SWOT analyses to examine issues that have been analyzed and selected before as a solution for better effectiveness. The purpose of the tool in this context was not to find new ideas but to test how existing ideas and strategies would impact the operations of the case organization. Using the SWOT analysis in this manner was valuable in determining which strategic elements could be effective within the specific context.

SWOT analyses have been developed into a more versatile edition with eight fields, and it is called the TOWS matrix. With the TOWS matrix, it is possible to discover how weaknesses and strengths are taken into account in relation to threats and opportunities. Even when utilizing the TOWS analysis, beginning with the initial SWOT analysis is essential. After completing the SWOT analysis, the next step involves making decisions and crafting an action plan in four more areas. (Vuorinen & Huikkola 2023, 99.) With TOWS, an organization can identify things that need to change and help implement the SWOT analysis findings (Wallbridge 2022).

In the TOWS matrix, there are four categories: strength/opportunity (SO), strength/threat (ST), weakness/opportunity (WO), and weakness/threat (WT). First, SO aims to utilize internal strengths to optimize the external opportunities of an organization. Second, the ST aims to maximize the strengths of the organization and, at the same time, minimize threats with these strengths. Third is WO, which attempts to minimize weaknesses and maximize opportunities. Fourth and last is WT, which aims to minimize weaknesses and threats. (Chowdhury 2023.)

SWOT analysis is not just a tool to analyze the current situation; organizations can use SWOT analysis to evaluate some future scenarios (Vuorinen & Huikkola



2023, 98). With the TOWS matrix, an organization can assemble the pieces, identify what needs to be changed, and plan to move forward (Wallbridge 2022). Doing the TOWS matrix in this thesis would have meant that the case organization and its strengths and weaknesses needed to be analyzed, too. Because the aim of this thesis was not to analyze the case organization, the TOWS matrix was not included in this thesis. However, it is recommended that the case organization use the TOWS matrix in the future if they decide to implement the recommended strategic elements. This thesis used SWOT analyses to evaluate future scenarios of the strategic elements to recommend Blue Ribbon Foundation to utilize in its strategy work. The study was done by combining the Rumelts good strategy theory and SWOT analysis.

### **3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSES**

This chapter describes the research process, diving into data collection and following analysis. It analyses the gathered data, aiming to uncover insights to justify the chosen research methodologies. Through examination, it seeks to validate the efficacy and suitability of the selected research methods.

#### **3.1 Research process**

The first phase of this research was data collection. After the data was collected, it was analyzed in two phases. First, the strategies of international actors were analyzed. The aim was to find those strategic components that were good and effective. To further develop the analysis, a SWOT analysis was done to establish the potential impact of implementing these strategic components on the operations of the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group.

The author used the "kernel" strategy tool and SWOT analyses. First, the strategies of the selected organization were analyzed with the kernel tool. As good strategies were found and selected for the deeper analysis of Blue Ribbon Foundation, those strategies were analyzed with SWOT analysis. When the SWOT analysis was done, the focus was to analyze those chosen strategy statements from the perspective of the Blue Ribbon Foundation. With the SWOT

analyses, it could be seen what opportunities and strengths the case organization could attain and what threats and weaknesses it could confront. After that, the Blue Ribbon Foundation could decide what elements of the strategies they wanted to utilize in their strategy work.

### **3.2 Data collection**

Data for this thesis was collected from open sources on the Internet. The open sources were the websites of international actors and umbrella organizations of homelessness, like the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (Feantsa), Housing First European Hub, and the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group. Feantsa and Housing First European Hub had information about the European actors who work with homelessness and the statistics of homelessness.

Public documents that were used in this thesis were created by several organizations. These documents are from the Internet. Alastalo & Vuori (2021) wrote that even if the documents are public and can be found on the web pages of the organizations, it can sometimes be hard to locate the proper document, and it requires contacting the organization. Sometimes, there can be some updates on websites, and some of the documents can be unreachable, so it is vital to save the documents. When doing a thesis with documents, it should be considered if it is possible to use these documents as research material because sometimes, accessing the documents might need a permit. Institutions have public documents, which are free to use as research material, and those are available on the Internet or upon request. (Alastalo & Vuori 2021.)

Because the data was from open sources, there was no need to take further actions regarding data protection or hide the data. Organizations publish strategic materials on the Internet for all stakeholders. Because of that, all the data needed for this thesis about the strategies were found on the Internet.

Feantsa has statistics about the number of homeless people in different countries. Some countries did not have the latest information about the statistics

of homelessness. The latest statistics are from the year 2020. Finland had these latest statistics. To ensure the best research result for this thesis, only actors from countries with information of the same year as Finland were analyzed. There were 13 countries that Feantsa had made a country profile of the statistics of the year 2020 besides Finland. Those countries were Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Lithuania, The Czech Republic, Sweden, Denmark, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Germany and Hungary. All countries with numbers older than 2020 were excluded from this research. (Feantsa 2020.)

Countries with the latest numbers of homelessness had 40 member organizations of Feantsa. Of these 40 organizations, eight member organizations operated in the Housing First principle. These organizations were from Austria, Slovenia, Sweden, Denmark, The Netherlands, and Germany. Austria had four organizations that operated under the Housing First principle.

### **3.3 Data analysis**

Data analysis is a multiphase process; it starts with getting to know the material and building an overall picture of the material to prepare for the actual analyses. Analyses are not just organizing the information; it is exploratory and experimental reading. It is the reader's responsibility to find information on the research problem. The analysis process requires thinking, writing, and rewriting for the researcher to be able to describe in their own words what is in the data. (Günther et al. 2021.)

Qualitative content analysis can be used to analyze the written data, focusing on the topics discussed in the data. The aim is to find variations utilizing an internal comparison of the material. The goal of the qualitative content analysis is to create a clear and verbal vision of the research phenomena. This is just one step of analyzing the data; after that, it should be done conclusions that give data more research interest. (Vuori 2021b.)

First, the websites of the organizations were analyzed by reading and finding the relevant information. In the first phase there were eight potential strategies of

organizations to analyze. Some organizations did not clearly state their strategy on their websites. Those actors who did not have clear strategies were removed from the analysis. Most of the websites were not in English, so different translation tools, such as Google Translator, were used. A total of five organizations' strategies were analyzed in more detail. All these five strategies analyzed with the kernel tool were analyzed with SWOT analyses from the perspective of the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group. The comparison of the information was done with the kernel tool, and the conclusions of the data to answer the research questions were done by using the SWOT analysis.

#### **4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

In this section, the analyses of international actors are presented. This section summarizes all the strategic material that was analyzed. The basics of the strategies are presented, and those strategies were analyzed by using the “kernel” method. After the strategies were analyzed with the kernel, those were analyzed with SWOT analysis from the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group's point of view.

##### **4.1 Strategies analyzed by using the kernel tool**

First and foremost, the data was examined utilizing the Rumelt kernel tool. Within this sub-chapter, the fundamental strategies of selected actors are outlined and categorized into distinct components of the kernel. Table 1 illustrates these findings comprehensively.

Table 1. Findings by using the Kernel tool

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Diagnosis</b>	<b>Guiding policy</b>	<b>Coherent actions</b>
BAWO	Help relieve housing facilities in Austria and reduce the shortage of housing.	Innovating new ways to cooperate with non-profit housing developers to build affordable living for	Projects that combine different actors to increase the amount of

		people in difficult situations.	affordable housing.
Kralji ulice	Preventive actions towards homelessness together with individuals and families.	The small steps principle is used to set achievable goals.	Develop flexible family-oriented models for everyday life.
Sveriges Stadsmission	Active measures are needed to reduce and prevent homelessness.	To be an active executor of the actions to meet people's needs.	To challenge opinion leaders, point out shortcomings of the society, and influence decision-makers to change.
Hjem til Alle	Need for quick access to housing and support.	Cooperating with different actors and the importance of political support.	A systematic approach to the acquisition of housing.
EBET	Works in principles of diaconal work in the field of work to end homelessness.	Collaborates with other organizations to promote the participation and assistance of people experiencing homelessness.	Shares information and publishes reports on homelessness to make it known to the public.

Bawo operates in Austria, aiming to help relieve housing facilities in Austria and reduce the shortage of housing. One way they have accomplished this is by

innovating new ways to cooperate with non-profit housing developers to build affordable living for people in difficult situations. (BAWO 2024.) Bawo implemented the Housing First project, "Zuhause Ankommen" in 2021-2023. The project promoted collaboration between general public utility building associations and the project, advocated for the mediation of homes, and engaged in joint communication.

Slovenian organization Kralji ulices aims to bring together individuals and experts dealing with homelessness and its phenomena (Kralji ulice 2024a). To meet changing needs, Kralji ulice has placed efforts in recent years on preventive action, working with vulnerable individuals and families to prevent homelessness and deepen social exclusion. The organization operates on the principle of small steps; it helps to set achievable goals. They have developed new models together with the families with great respect to the families' unique situation to design flexible support in everyday life in family-oriented approaches. (Kralji ulice 2024b.)

Swedish organization Sveriges Stadsmissioner analyzed that the necessary actions have not yet been taken in Sweden despite of the identified problem and political discussion. According to the Sveriges Stadsmissioner, despite the government's homelessness strategy, there is a need for active measures to reduce and prevent homelessness. More concrete actions and decisions are needed to reduce and control homelessness. (Sveriges Stadsmission 2024a.) The task related to society is to challenge and supplement; Sveriges Stadsmissioner's role is to challenge and supplement society. It promotes the role of the executor when planning activities that meet people's needs. The task of challenge includes being an opinion leader, pointing out shortcomings of the society, and influencing decision-makers to change. (Sveriges Stadsmission 2024b.)

Hjem til Alle is a Danish alliance focusing on ending youth homelessness (Hjem til Alle 2024a). Alliance emphasizes quick access to housing and the support they need. There is a need for widespread commitment and cooperation between

different actors to solve homelessness in Denmark. Alliance emphasizes the importance of political and leadership support for implementing actions to end homelessness. To solve youth homelessness, Hjem til Alle points out the need for a systematic approach to the acquisition of housing. (Hjem til Alle 2024b.)

In Germany, the Evangelical Federal Association for the Insurance for the Insurance and Participation e.V. V. (EBET) works in principles of diaconal work, and they act as a church representative in the field of work to end homelessness. EBET shares information and publishes reports on homelessness to make it known to the public. The organization collaborates with other organizations to promote the participation and assistance of people experiencing homelessness. (EBET 2024.)

## **4.2 SWOT analysis**

This section comprises a SWOT analysis of the insights derived from the kernel tool. The analysis was approached from the perspective of the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group. It involved examining the feasibility and implications of implementing these findings into the operational framework of the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group.

The strength of the BAWO strategy is its innovative approach to cooperation with different actors that combine their knowledge to find solutions to the shortage of housing. Blue Ribbon Foundation Group can find innovative and versatile views on housing for homeless people by cooperating with new, undiscovered actors. This weakness is that implementing innovative housing strategies might require significant financial resources. For the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group to discover new cooperation actors, someone in the organization must take time to find these actors. Furthermore, developing those new approaches could require financial resources. Because the traditional approaches to housing might be deeply rooted in Finland, it can make the implementation difficult when finding financing for these solutions. Cooperation with public partners and private actors might open opportunities for more resources and expertise to support housing projects. Utilizing innovative technology in construction and design can lead to cost-

effective and efficient housing solutions. In this case, the threats for Blue Ribbon Foundation Group can be financial uncertainty and political changes that can jeopardize the financing of the housing projects. SWOT analysis of the BAWOs kernel analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. SWOT analysis of the BAWO strategy

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
To find innovative and versatile solutions for housing.	Strong traditions resistance to change. Requires financial resources.
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Finding partnerships that can lead to finding more resources and expertise. By using technology in construction and design it can lead to cost-effectiveness.	Financial uncertainty and political changes can jeopardize housing project financing.

Kralji ulices' strategy is to find solutions to homelessness in small steps from the viewpoint of individuals and families. Looking at this approach from the perspective of the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group, strength in a community-based approach can be found; collaboration with individuals and families strengthens the community and promotes better results. Operating with small-step principles can help set achievable and realistic goals. In addition, developing flexible family-oriented models can promote better well-being. The way of operating the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group is already very individual-oriented, so an excellent foundation exists to support this kind of thinking. The weakness of this approach is that implementing new family-centered ways requires resources, special skills, and, very likely, some funding.

Another weakness is that it can be hard to maintain a long-term commitment and motivation when using a small-step approach, which can reduce effectiveness. Furthermore, the change will happen slowly, and long-term results can be



challenging to monitor. Opportunities in this approach include finding new ways and practices to prevent homelessness. The Blue Ribbon Foundation Group has a strong culture of preventing homelessness, so they have an excellent base to find new ways to be in front of industry trends and set new standards or practices. Collaboration with families can strengthen the communities and promote better well-being and safety nets. The threat of this approach is resistance in the community and families. In Finland, a prevalent culture of self-reliance exists, which may lead to resistance towards external assistance or interventions. SWOT analysis of the Kralji ulices kernel analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. SWOT analysis of the Kralji ulices strategy

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<p>Collaboration with individuals and families strengthens the community and promotes better results.</p> <p>Small-step principles can help set achievable and realistic goals.</p> <p>Developing flexible family-oriented models can promote better well-being.</p>	<p>New family-centered ways require resources, special skills, and funding.</p> <p>Maintaining long-term commitment and motivation can be hard when using a small-step approach.</p>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<p>Finding new ways and practices to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>Strengthen the communities and promote better well-being and safety nets.</p>	<p>Resistance in the community and families.</p> <p>A prevalent culture of self-reliance which may lead to resistance.</p>

The strength of the strategy of Sweriges Stadsmission is that challenging and highlighting shortcomings of society can raise awareness about homelessness. By addressing needs directly, the organization is fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility in homelessness matters. The Blue Ribbon Foundation Group

holds a prominent position within the landscape of work preventing homelessness in Finland, commanding attention and respect from stakeholders. Its voice carries weight, garnering attentive ears whenever it addresses pertinent issues within the field. A weakness can be a lack of resources, cohesion, and leading of coordination among stakeholders. It would require taking leadership to promote issues on the matter of raising awareness about homelessness. Opportunities can be found in collaborative partnerships with other organizations and governments that could help to attain resources and expertise to enhance the effectiveness of the work toward ending homelessness. There is also a strength in communication and public relationships here, such as dismantling stigma. With the strong position of the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group, there would be an excellent base to find cooperation. The weakness of this strategy is the lack of support from political leaders, and negative public perceptions or misconceptions about homelessness may undermine efforts. SWOT analysis of the Sweriges Stadsmission's kernel analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. SWOT analysis of the Sweriges Stadsmission's strategy

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Challenging and highlighting the shortcomings of society can raise awareness about homelessness. Use of communication and public relationship here, for example, dismantling stigma.	Lack of resources, cohesion, and support of political leaders.
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Collaborative partnerships with other organizations and governments could help to gain resources and expertise to enhance the effectiveness of the work toward ending homelessness.	The lack of support from political leaders and negative public perceptions or misconceptions about homelessness may undermine efforts.

The strength of the strategy of Hjem til Alles is that it allows different actors to pool resources to adopt a systematic approach to housing purchase. This kind of cooperation can help the Blue Foundation Group find more housing and gain more effectiveness in their work. The weakness of this strategy is that if the plan lacks specific details on how to access housing, it can lead to unspecific implementation. Furthermore, the systematic approach may overlook individuals' diverse needs and circumstances, necessitating flexibility and customization. Hence, there is an opportunity to find data-driven solutions to streamline housing allocation processes. In this strategy, there is room for the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group to develop flexible housing models to fulfill the different needs of different groups of people. The threat is that bureaucratic obstacles or administrative barriers are delaying the implementation of housing initiatives despite the recognized urgency. Also, if the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group does not have enough investment to maintain data solutions in the future, investing in technology is not worth it in the long run. SWOT analysis of the Hjem til Alles kernel analysis is presented in Table 5.

Table 5 SWOT analysis of the Hjem til Alle strategy

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Allowing different actors to pool resources to adopt a systematic approach to housing acquisition.	Lacks specific details on how to access housing.
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Find data-driven solutions to streamline housing allocation processes.	Bureaucratic obstacles or administrative barriers are delaying the implementation of housing initiatives despite the recognized urgency.  Lack of investment to maintain data solutions in the future; investing in technology is not worth it in the long run.

The strength of the strategy of EBET is transparency, which is achieved by sharing information and publishing reports, raising public awareness, educating communities, and potentially mobilizing support for addressing homelessness. As mentioned earlier, The Blue Ribbon Foundation Group has a strong voice in this field, and they have the credibility to take a stand on raising public awareness. This weakness of the strategy is that spreading information alone may not necessarily translate into visible actions or solutions without corresponding support and strategies to implement. Opportunity is the possibility of leveraging media and digital platforms to elaborate the reach and impact of information-sharing efforts, engaging broader audiences in support and action. Being a solid actor in this field of work, The Blue Ribbon Foundation is a known name in the media, so they can use their strong position to raise awareness. Threats are competition for limited resources or attention within the non-profit sector, which may challenge sustaining collaborative efforts or maintaining visibility. Also, external factors such as funding changeability or public perceptions may influence the prioritization and support for homelessness initiatives. SWOT analysis of the EBET's kernel analysis is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. SWOT analysis of the EBET's strategy.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Transparency through sharing information and publishing reports, raising public awareness, educating communities, and potentially mobilizing support for addressing homelessness.	Spreading information alone may not necessarily translate into tangible actions or solutions without corresponding advocacy or implementation strategies.
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Leveraging media and digital platforms to amplify the reach and impact of information-sharing efforts, engaging broader	Competition for limited resources or attention within the non-profit sector may challenge sustaining. Funding changeability or public perceptions may influence the

audiences in advocacy and action.	prioritization and support for homelessness initiatives, collaborative efforts, or maintaining visibility.
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## 5 CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 Key results and findings

The analysis of these findings reveals some insights regarding the efficacy and suitability of the strategies employed by international actors in addressing homelessness. Those findings were analyzed based on the SWOT analysis from the perspective of the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group. Based on the SWOT analysis, proposals were made for future development work.

Key findings of the BAWO strategy were that it aimed to relieve the shortage of housing by using innovative cooperations with non-profit housing developers. Their strategy emphasized collaborative projects to increase the availability of housing. Slovenian Kralji ulice focused on preventing actions against homelessness by using a small-step approach. They also developed family-oriented models to address individual and family needs effectively. The Sveriges Stadsmission was taking active measures to reduce homelessness by emphasizing the role of societal shortcomings and influencing decision-makers. Their strategy aimed to foster ownership and social responsibility. Danish actor Hjem til Alle prioritized quick access to housing by highlighting the importance of political support and systematic approaches to housing purchases. Their strategy was focused heavily on collaborations. The strategy of EBET's strategy relied heavily on emphasizing transparency and collaboration.

Typical factors for strategies that were analyzed were focused on collaborations and cooperation. All actors recognized the importance of collaboration. Whether it was partnering with non-profit housing developers (BAWO), having small-step approaches (Kralji ulice), challenging social shortcomings (Sveriges Stadsmission), prioritizing political support (Hjem til Alle), or highlighting

transparency and collaboration (EBET), collaborations seemed to be the central theme in all those actors' strategies.

Innovations were shared in all the strategies that were analyzed in this thesis. All these organizations also wanted to point out that they are committed to innovations in preventing homelessness. All actors had different viewpoints on it. BAWO was doing it by cooperating with housing developers, Kralji ulice by developing family-oriented models, and Sveriges Stadsmission was doing it by challenging societal norms. Hjem til Alle was showing its commitment by prioritizing quick access to housing and EBET by emphasizing transparency.

Advocacy and influencing the decision-makers were also critical elements in this field of work, and it showed in all the strategies. Sveriges Stadsmission was fostering ownership and social responsibility. Hjem til Alle was prioritizing political support, and EBET was working to raise awareness. All these organizations seek to influence stakeholders to address homelessness effectively.

Even though these strategies have a lot in common, some differences could be found. All these organizations operate in different countries, and the variable socio-political landscapes and cultural contexts of these countries likely shape the organizations' strategies differently. Collaboration was a common theme in the findings. There were some specific approaches to the strategies of each organization. BAWO focused on collaborating with housing developers, and Kralji ulice highlighted family-oriented models. Hjem til Alle was seeking political support and systematic approaches.

Doing innovation was common in these strategies, but the allocation of resources and implementation could differ. BAWO seemed to focus on securing the financial resources for housing projects, Kralji list might prioritize community engagement, Sveriges Stadsmission might invest in awareness campaigns, Hjem til Alle might focus on political lobbying, and EBET probably might emphasize transparency and information spreading.

The analysis highlighted diverse approaches of international actors to addressing homelessness, from innovative collaborations and preventive actions to advocacy and transparency. By leveraging their strengths and emphasizing collaboration and systemic change, these organizations aimed to create sustainable solutions that address the underlying causes of homelessness and promote community stability and well-being.

The strategies of the BAWO, Kralji ulice, Sveriges Stadsmission, Hjem til Alle, and EBET demonstrated strengths in fostering collaboration, promoting preventive measures, raising awareness, and leveraging partnerships to address homelessness effectively. Common weaknesses across all the strategies included resource constraints, resistance to change, and the need for specialized skills and funding. Also, maintaining long-term commitment and motivation presented a challenge, especially in implementing incremental approaches. Opportunities in these strategies were found in collaboration with diverse stakeholders, leveraging technology and data-driven solutions. Opportunities could also be found in engaging a broader audience through different media platforms to enhance the effectiveness of strategies and comprehensively address homelessness. Threats like financial uncertainty, bureaucratic obstacles, and competition for resources within the non-profit sector might delay the implementation and sustainability of initiatives aimed at ending homelessness. There may also be negative public perceptions and political changes that can threaten the efforts and prioritizations of homelessness initiatives.

Finding strategic points with the kernel tool and SWOT analysis was possible. Diving deeper into the strategies was possible when analyzing strategies with these two strategic tools together. If only one tool had been used, the analysis would have been too superficial. However, using these two tools and changing the perspective gave more insight into the strategies.

## **5.2 Managerial implications**

These strategies had many similarities; at first, they all seemed very alike. However, some nuances differentiated the strategies. From the author's

perspective, all these actors could have been more open in their viewpoints. They all discussed cooperation, transparency, and influence, but their websites did not have much information about their work, what they had done, and what they had planned. When comparing the information and transparency, the Blue Ribbon Foundation shares information much more than the international acts, even though they all emphasize that. Even though The Blue Ribbon Foundation Group has vital transparency in its operations, they need to remember that all these actors find information sharing and transparency significant and need to remain on their path and remember information sharing in future projects.

In the future, the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group can invest in cooperation with different actors. Those partnerships can lead to finding more resources and expertise. Those new partnerships can also help to find new ways to prevent homelessness and enhance effectiveness. New partnerships can include, for example, some new media and digital platforms to reach a broader audience or contact persons for fundraising. Those can be interdisciplinary cooperations that help to find new perspectives in the actions.

They could investigate actors outside their field of work to partner with and find new innovations. The future visions of the organization future vision could be utilizing technology and data-driven solutions in their operations and influencing work. Cooperation with different actors and data-driven solutions can be one way to investigate if something could differentiate them from other actors and lead them to be trendsetters. Furthermore, using technology in some parts of their operations can be cost-effective. Developing data-driven solutions can help to utilize transparency and openness in information. For example, the neighborhoods, staff, authorities, and customers can use some community applications; that kind of technology can strengthen the community and promote better well-being and safety nets.

### **5.3 Reliability discussion and future development**

When looking at the international actors analyzed in this thesis, we could find relatively limited actors that it could analyze. There were assumptions about the



information that could be found on the websites of the international actors based on the information that the case organization Blue Ribbon Foundation Group provides on their website. From multiple actors operating in Europe, it could only find five actors that provided information that could be used in this thesis. In the end, these actors provided the information that could be used as data for this thesis. In addition, the assumption was that the international actors would have their websites in English, like the case organization. Most of them had not, which made the information-seeking harder, and maybe some of the issues were lost in translation.

Overall, the author of this thesis thinks that the interdisciplinary these and other collaborations could be good for the Blue Ribbon Foundation Group in the future. Combining knowledge from the social science field and another field could benefit and give the case organization new perspectives. The result of this thesis made it clear that the case organization is on the right path and much more open and informative about its actions than the other international actors. If the operations were only looked at in the eyes of the social sector, these strategic points of view would not necessarily have been found. If this kind of research were to be done in the future, it would be suggested that the research be done with more actors or information to analyze.

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