

# Defining an end to homelessness

## "The Finnish story" 5.6.2017 Chicago Sanna Tiivola



Suloisessa  
Suomessa  
"Kodin verlaa v.09  
Päällä maan"

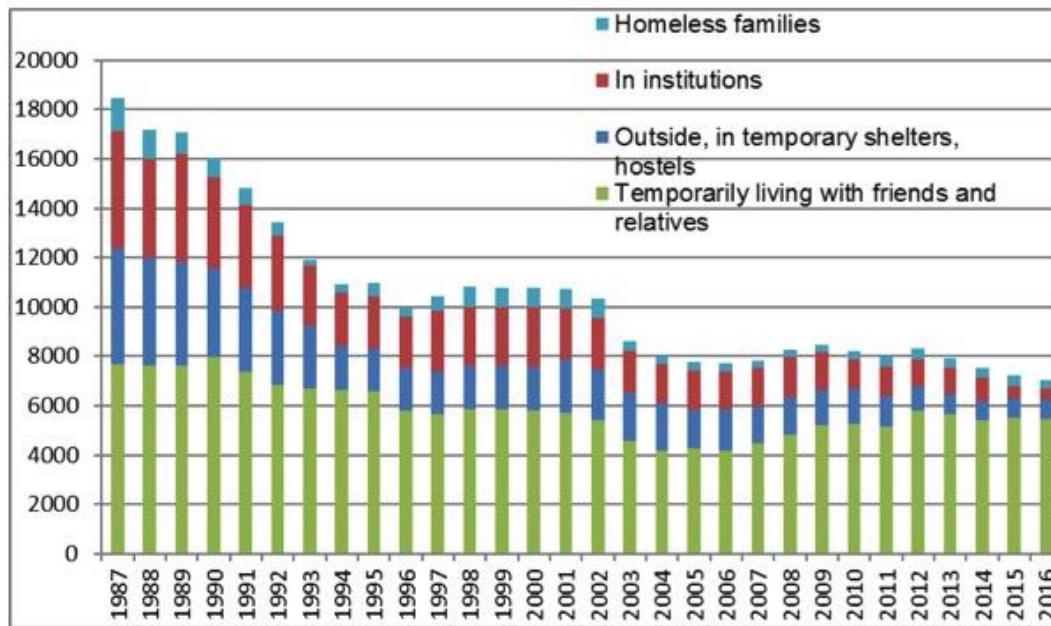
# Finnish story in a nutshell

- In recent years Finland has been the only European country where homelessness has decreased (2000 over 10 000 /2016: 6650 single homeless persons )
- Wide definition of homelessness 80 % living temporarily with friends and relatives
- From 2008 to 2015 long-term homelessness has decreased with 1345 persons (35%)
- Housing retention rate 82% (only 18 % returned back homelessness)
- In Finland affordable social housing 15% of the housing stock (free market rental 15%)

# Statistics

ara

Number of homeless 1987-2016 in Finland



4.6.2017

The housing market survey 2016 prepared by ARA – The  
Housing Finance and Development Centre on Finland



# Background

- Homeless people wanted to get rid of shelters already in 1986
- Original idea from New York "Pathways to housing" transformed "Housing First Finland"
- Housing minister Jan Vapaavuori of Prime minister Matti Vanhanen `s government set up a group of four wise men who created bases for the program called "*PAAVO*" *Finnish governments program to reduce and eliminate long-term homelessness.*

# Housing First Finland

- Housing as a basic social right
- Housing in normal surroundings
- Own independent rental apartment either in scattered housing or in a supported housing unit
- Own rental contract (unlimited time)
- Separation of housing and services
- Adequate support:
  - \* Intensive support 5 support workers/10 inhabitants in service housing
  - \* Support in scattered housing 1/10

# Housing first Finland -ethical and economical arguments

*Housing first treats formerly homeless people as normal citizens rather than as clients or patients*

- Housing is a basic human and social right
- A civilized state takes care of its most vulnerable inhabitants
- A study conducted by the Technical University of Tampere shows that housing with intensified support halves the use of social and health services compared to service-use during homelessness
- This equates to 14 000 euros of saving per person /year

# Paavo programs 2008-2015



# PAAVO Programs 2008-2015

- A government programme coordinated by the Ministry of the Environment in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Criminal Sanction Agency, The Housing Finance and Development Centre fo Finland, Slot Machine Association (STEA), 11 cities with highest numbers of Homeless people, the Church, NGOs and private companies
- Program was implemented by letters of intent concluded between state authorities and 11 largest cities in Finland

# “Paavo”



# Targets

- To halve long-term homelessness 2008-2011 and end it by 2015- a quantitative target set for creating 2500 new dwellings, supported housing or "care places" (1500 in capital area Helsinki) in 11 cities
- Conversion of all shelters and dormitory-type hostels into supported housing units
- Reinforcing Housing First-approach as a mainstream organizing principle for housing and support services for homeless people
- More effective measures to prevent homelessness

# Target group

- Long- term homeless people were defined:  
"A group of homeless people whose homelessness is classed as prolonged or chronic, or threatens to be that way because conventional housing solutions fail with this group+ inadequate supply of solutions which meet individual needs"

# Target group

- Definition of long-term homelessness: person who has been homeless for over 1 year or recurrently homeless within two years and has serious health and social problems
- The program foreseen that shelters and residential homes for long term housing of homeless people will be gradually abandoned in favour of residential units which allow for independent, subsidized and supervised living

# Shelter renovation- why?

- 2008: 600 bed places on hostels and shelters
- 2016 : Service centre with 52 bed places for emergency use
- Living in a hostel is always a temporary solution
- No privacy and very limited professional help in your problems
- Hostels sustain a culture of irresponsibility
- Renovation of hostels has increased public safety

# Resources

- \* 2007 ("Diligents"-group) in Helsinki set by a debuty Mayor (Social and Health sector)
- PAAVO 1 (2008-2011) Total funding appr.170 M€ including financing from state authorities and cities
- \* PAAVO 2 (2011-2015)
- 22M € investment grants from the Housing Finance and Development fund of Finland (ARA) for construction of new housing units and renovation (max 50 %)

# Resources

- 10 M € grants for salary costs of support workers from the Ministry of Social Welfare and health (max 50 %)
- 32,3 M € grants for bying scattered housing from the the private market from the Slot Machine Association (RAY now STEA)
- 18,6 M € grants for development projects RAY
- Own funding from the project cities (50 % of personnel costs)
- **Government total budget 201,1 m €**

# Partners

- Letters of intent , formal contracts  
Ministries/Cities
- Committed partners and multidisciplinary work  
over administrative and professional boundaries
- Sub-projects for preventing youth homelessness  
and homelessness of ex-prisoners
- A development network
- Research supporting development work

# Participation of homeless people

- Own Keys - project also included in letters of intent - in 4 cities 4 people who had experience in homelessness were hired to be part of each cities steering group for it ' s own homeless program ; planning the services together with municipalities)
- Expert of homelessness in national steering group

# Practical examples

**Planning Group : men from HF-pilot House of  
Fellows, homeless man, architect, Y-  
foundation, builders etc..**

**Concept competition 2011**



# “Nothing for us without us”



# Success –why?

- All the most important stakeholders were within the program
- Implementation plans were made and they were structured well
- The enthusiasm of municipalities who were responsible of the program.
- Homeless people where involved in planning and implementing
- The overall funding and the funding model of the programme was sufficient
- Quantitative targets met and exceeded
- Adequate data available
- Defining long-term homelessness

# Success

- The reduction programme changed the structure of services for the homeless
- The “Housing First” principle has been shown to work

The concreteness of the letter of intent increased the credibility of the programme

The path to housing for newly released prisoners was made more effective

- The programme has trialled public tendering approaches for new type of services

# Success

- The commitment of the parties with power and resources  
The co-operation of two ministries crucial; minister of housing and minister of social and welfare – using the power
- Reasonable mutual understanding of the methods used to achieve results (refers to real people and organisations taking responsibility in the right place at the same time)
- Commitment that lasted past the government term (Finnish programme included in the long-term plan by Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen)- ensuring its annual investments and operating funding

# Success..

- The employment of support staff "KASTE" ensured sufficient support  
*First time the state participated in funding support personnel related to national projects among homeless people*
- The effect of the programme shows in the streetscape
- Investment made in environmental work
- Development of housing social work started
- Implementation of the conversation programme for dormitory accomodation confirmed- "mindset change"
- *Investment in prevention*
  - ARA grants: 14 new housing advisors employed in the cities
  - Eviction prevention insructions had been drawn up in all cities
  - A new type of service chain has been produced to prevent homelessness among young people

# Success and measures

- **Housing:**
- Over 3500 new apartment built/purchased for homeless people
- Independent housing in city rental housing 376/Supported housing units 1014/Supported scattered housing in NGO's tec 626/ Supported scattered housing in city rental housing 1063/Youth Housing 435
- **Services:**  
300 new professional support workers in housing social work
- Housing advice services have prevented 200 evictions per year

# Arguments

- The target was not totally received – in 2016 still 2050 long-term homeless people according to statistics
- Housing units/scattered housing?
- Housing last/Housing first/Bottle first?
- The House of Fellows first pilot- 20 dead/ 4 people moved scattered housing 2007-2017- way out limited all though approach was needs-based
- Housing units (concrete housing) reminded shelters- staff's time goes to solve the conflicts not for the support
- Finnish strategy to end long-term homelessness is not legislative based. Risk that it depends too much on good will.

# Evaluation

- Two international reviews made
- Peer Review ;The Finnish National Programme to reduce long-term homelessness (*European Commission DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities*)
- The Finnish Homeless Strategy- An International Review (Nicholas Plesce, Dennis Culhane, Riitta Granfelt, Marcus Knutagård)
- *Reports of the ministry of the environment 3en/2015*
- [www.asuntoensin.fi](http://www.asuntoensin.fi)

Thank You!  
[Sanna.tiivola@vvary.fi](mailto:Sanna.tiivola@vvary.fi) +358504079702  
Twitter:@Stiivola FB: Sanna Tiivola

