Housing First

Finnish experience

6.11.2018 / Timo Mutalahti / Y-Foundation, Finland

Prague / Good Practice in Social Housing Conference
Who are we?
We work so that everyone can have a home.

More than 6,500 apartments for specific target groups

More than 10,150 state-subsidised rental apartments

THE 4TH LARGEST LESSOR IN FINLAND

EXPERT IN HOMELESSNESS WORK

More than 6,500 apartments for specific target groups

More than 10,150 state-subsidised rental apartments

SPECIAL HOUSING

AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING

INFLUENCE

Research
Development
Education
Communications

Housing support
Services
Tenant involvement
Support networks

Tenant orientation

Solution orientation

Genuine charity

Y-SÄÄTIÖ
Ruoritie supported housing unit, Kotka
• Build in 2016
• Y-Foundation and local social psychiatric association called Kakspy
• 29 apartments for people suffering from mental illness
Financing

- STEA (Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations)
  - 50% grant for purchasing flats from general housing market for long-term homeless
- Housing Finance and Development Centre ARA
  - investment grants (max. 50%) and low-rent loans for building new rental housing stock for special groups
- Loans from banks and other financial institutions
Väinölä supported housing unit, Espoo

- Y-Foundation/Salvation Army
- 35 apartments
- Personnel 11
A home is a basic right.
Basic rights refer to the rights defined in the Constitution of Finland.

Art. 19: The public authorities are obligated to promote everyone’s right to housing and to support the opportunity to arrange their own housing.

The right to housing is recognised also in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
What is homelessness in Finland?
THERE ARE

7,112

HOMELESS PEOPLE:

6,615 LIVE ALONE AND 497 HAVE FAMILIES.

Source: ARA 2018. The figures include people who were homeless on 15 November 2017. The figures only include people who are homeless in the statistics (for instance, in social services or queueing for a rental apartment). Some homelessness cannot be seen in the statistics.
214

FAMILIES IN FINLAND WITHOUT A HOME.

Source: Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA) 2018. The figures include people who were homeless on 15 November 2017. The figures only include people who are homeless in the statistics (for instance, in social services or queueing for a rental apartment). Some homelessness cannot be seen in the statistics.
There are homeless people in 113 municipalities, most of which are in the Helsinki metropolitan area and Turku.

More than half of Finland’s homeless people are in Helsinki (3,760).

Source: Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA) 2018. The figures include people who were homeless on 15 November 2017. The figures only include people who are homeless in the statistics (for instance, in social services or queueing for a rental apartment). Some homelessness cannot be seen in the statistics.
HOMELESSNESS AMONG THE YOUTH INCREASED BY 186 PERSONS.

OF THEM, 100 PEOPLE WERE IN HELSINKI AND 37 IN TURKU.

Source: Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA) 2018. The figures include people who were homeless on 15 November 2017. The figures only include people who are homeless in the statistics (for instance, in social services or queueing for a rental apartment). Some homelessness cannot be seen in the statistics.
MOST HOMELESS PEOPLE ARE SINGLE AND LIVE TEMPORARILY WITH FRIENDS OR RELATIVES (5,528 PEOPLE, RELATIVELY 84%).

Source: Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA) 2018. The figures include people who were homeless on 15 November 2017. The figures only include people who are homeless in the statistics (for instance, in social services or queueing for a rental apartment). Some homelessness cannot be seen in the statistics.
Homelessness can be reduced with consistent work.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008–2011</td>
<td>PAAVO 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Implementing the Housing First principle: providing homes with own leases and appropriate housing support instead of night shelters. In all, PAAVO 1 produced 2,143 apartments.</td>
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<td>2012–2015</td>
<td>PAAVO 2</td>
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<td>3,523 apartments for the homeless. Professionals and experts by expertise were hired in homelessness work.</td>
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<td>2016–2019</td>
<td>AUNE</td>
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<td>The initiative focuses on preventing homelessness and specific target groups. Expertise by experience has become a stable part of homelessness work.</td>
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<td>2020</td>
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<td>Y-Foundation promotes a new initiative or towards permanent work for as long as homelessness will be eliminated?</td>
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The reasons behind homelessness are both structural and individual.
STRUCTURAL

**Economy:** poverty, unemployment, operations of the housing market, social security, immigration, incurring a debt and consumption credits.

**Institutional reasons:** insufficient services and the lack of coordination, living in an institution and being discharged from an institution.

INDIVIDUAL

**Relationships:** family status, the end of a relationships (death, divorce), situations in a relationship (violent partner or parents).

**Individual reasons:** health, education, financial situation, addictions (alcohol, drugs, gambling).
Y-Foundations suggests in Finland:
THREE WAYS OF ELIMINATING HOMELESSNESS

1. Nationwide work
2. Affordable housing
3. Permanent housing
1. Nationwide work: Housing First

- In all, **5,000** more affordable apartments must be built by 2022.
- In order to build these apartments, **EUR 110 million** are required for the construction investments. The authority to grant subsidised loans must be at minimum **EUR 500 million** during the initiative period.
- **EUR 30 million** for housing social work.
- Municipalities and counties must be committed to homelessness work with letters of intent.
- **EUR 3 million** for homelessness research and updating statistics.
Why is HF important?

• An apartment alone is not enough, many people also need support in everyday life.
• Work to eliminate homelessness must cross the boundaries of political parties and government terms.
• The Finnish Housing First work has been studied to be efficient and functional, including in international comparisons.
• It is important to make the homelessness phenomenon visible so that people know more about the effects of homelessness work.
• It’s also important to have reliable statistics.
2. Affordable housing

- The share of the construction of state-subsidised ARA apartments must be increased to 30 per cent in new areas.
- Preventing residential segregation must be included in a wider state-level programme to prevent inequality.
- From a state-level perspective, mobility and traffic must be affected with infrastructure projects (sustainable coordination of housing and mobility) so that housing is located in easily accessible locations.
- Municipalities must be committed to the project with shared agreements (such as agreements including planning, construction, traffic infrastructure).
Why is Affordable housing important?

- People with low income spend more than **50%** of their income on housing and food. Housing takes up a greater share of income for more people than before.
- Ensuring the continuity of housing is a central point: you won’t lose your affordable apartment even if your situation in life changes.
- The rent of an affordable apartment is clearly lower than the market prices. At maximum, a quarter of a person’s available income can be used on housing.
3. Ensuring the continuity of housing

- Direct support must be directed at housing counselling.
- The state encourages the municipalities to increase housing counselling and tenant activities.
Why is Continuity important?

• Counselling improves financial and social well-being. Quick intervention in housing issues prevents evictions and saves money.
• In 2017, housing counselling prevented 1,490 evictions in Helsinki. In cities with a homelessness programme, housing counsellors prevented in all 2,196 evictions in 2016 and up to 2,871 evictions in 2017. (Karppinen 2018).
• The savings accumulated by one housing counsellor in a year is EUR 43,000–85,000. (Kostiainen & Laakso 2010)
• One move costs EUR 3,000 to the lessor, an eviction can cost up to EUR 10,000.
• A functional tenant community supports the well-being of tenants.
Eliminating homelessness is worth it.
Eliminating homelessness is worth it

**EUR 15,000 34%**

**CASE HÄRMÄLÄ:** Housing unit with intensified support created annual cost savings of EUR 15,000 for one person when compared to the homelessness period. The savings came from the reduced use of housing, substance abuse and hospital services.

**THE HOUSING FIRST UNIT:** Overall costs were reduced significantly especially for mental health rehabilitees. The overall costs of the residents of the unit accumulated from housing costs, the use of social and health care services and police services decreased by 34 per cent, or approximately EUR 10,300, per one person in a year.
Affordable housing is the key

The Crisis in Affordable Housing Is a Problem for Cities Everywhere

Housing crisis can’t be solved by tinkering with planning laws – build more social housing instead

Housing crisis: 15,000 new Manchester homes and not a single one 'affordable'

Fury as housing associations redevelop and sell affordable homes
Finnish homelessness work is appreciated
Aurora House, Helsinki
- Helsinki Diaconese Institute Care Ltd
- 125 apartments, 72 with supported housing and 53 with service housing
- Personnel 38,5
Homelessness can be eliminated with consistent nationwide work.
Housing First
since 1985.