



Ympäristöministeriö  
Miljöministeriet  
Ministry of the Environment

# Homelessness Programmes of Finland

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Tuula Tiainen  
Senior Specialist

# Housing First in Finland: Principles and Solutions

« Name on the door » :

a basic human need for privacy, a place of one's own, a home:  
A rental contract of one's own (not second-hand contract or temporary social contract)

Separation of housing and services:

Individually tailored services based on an assessment of needs.

Conventional shelters and dormitory-type hostels are not anymore adequate solutions to homelessness:

Hostels were converted into supported housing units.

# Programmes to reduce long-term homelessness (2008–2015)

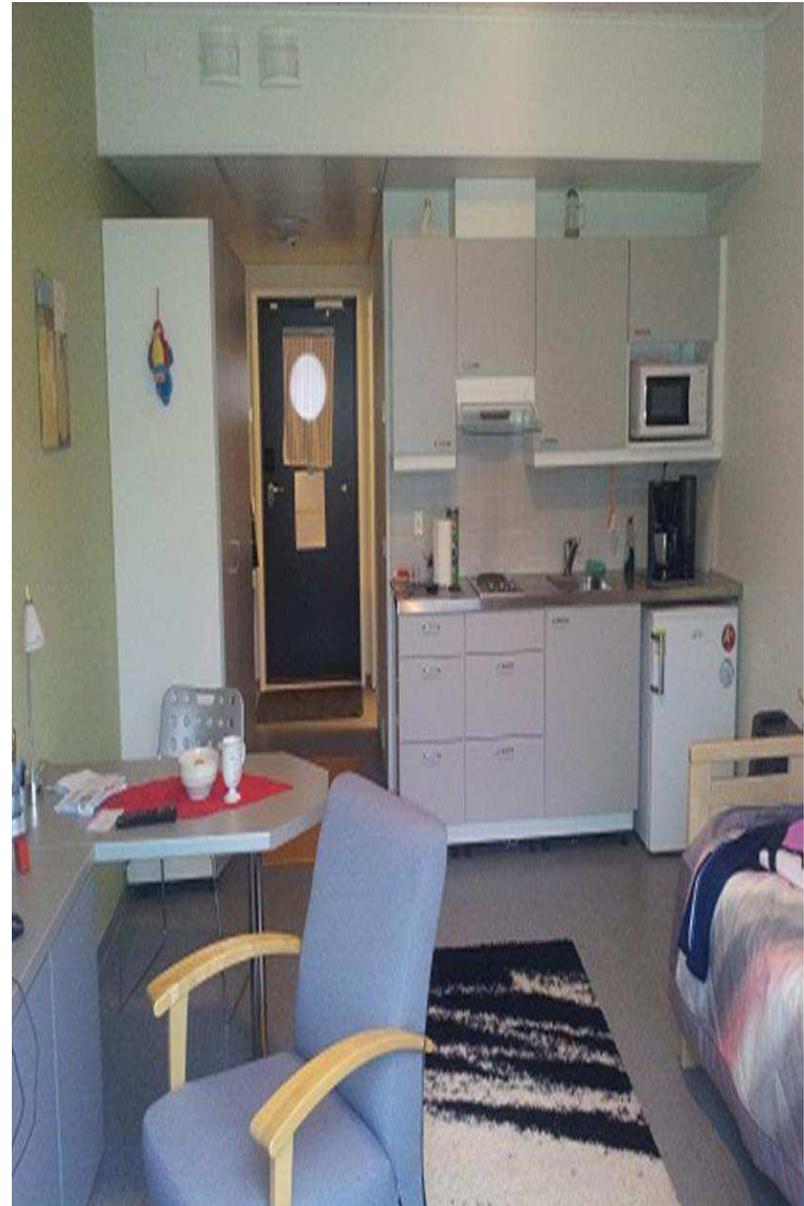
## Background

- The problem of long-term homelessness
- Homeless people, who needed additional support and services

## Governance arrangements

- Programmes were administered by the Ministry of the Environment.
- The implementation involved the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Criminal Sanctions Agency, The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA) and Slot Machine Association (RAY), ten cities (Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Tampere, Turku, Lahti, Jyväskylä, Oulu, Joensuu and Kuopio) and many national and local NGOs.
- Ministry of the Environment appointed the steering group and the coordination group to monitor the progress of the programmes.

- Letters of intent between State authorities and the ten largest Finnish cities,
- Housing First principals and "earmarked" state funding,
  - Local authorities and NGOs: new housing and services
- All relevant actors in the implementation process of the programme were brought together and formed into an operational network.
- Cross-governmental and cross-sectoral collaboration and learning.
- Public funding for the programmes during eight years (2008 – 2015) was about 213 M€.

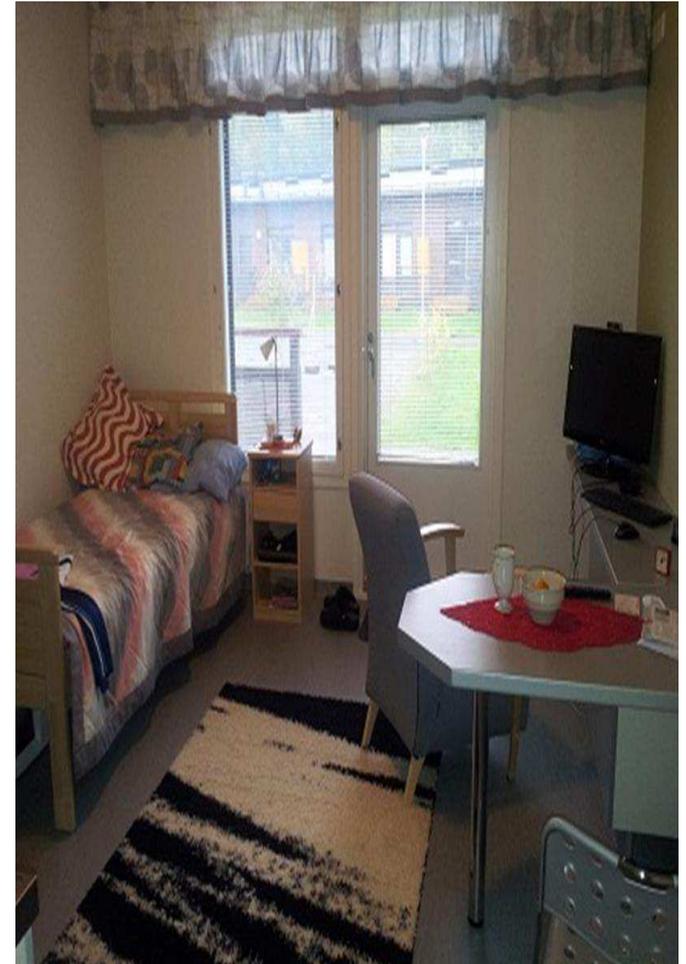


## Main results and experiences

- Housing First has been implemented in all cities working with long-term homelessness.
  - Shelters have been renovated and replaced by supported rental housing.
    - 2007: about 1500 beds,
    - 2019: about 230 beds in shelters
  - Long-term homelessness has decreased (2008–2015) by 1,345 persons (35%).
  - Finland is the only EU country in which homelessness continues to decrease.
  
  - Long-term cross-sectoral and multilevel (national government and actors, local governments, third sector organisations) cooperation and commitment is essential in order to combat homelessness.
  - Housing First principle improves access to housing and quality of housing for the homeless persons.
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## Action Plan for Preventing Homelessness in Finland 2016–2019

- Public funding during the years 2016-2019 was about 78 M€.
- The goal was to ensure that housing is secured whenever the client is met in the service system.
- The target group of the programme included people who have recently become homeless and those who have been homeless for longer periods.
- The development of individual social services supports the transfer to ordinary housing.



# The Evaluation of the Homelessness Programmes

- The three homelessness programmes have corresponded well to the prevailing needs in homelessness work.
  - Different housing options must be available in municipalities, both in ordinary rental housing stock and in special housing units.
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the Housing First model is hampered notably by the lack of support services needed in ordinary housing.
  - We need to provide more affordable housing for homeless.
  - We need to establish the cooperation networks on the local level.
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# The Cooperation Programme to Halve Homelessness 2020–2022

- the key objective is to strengthen the homelessness work of local authorities
    - through the use and development of social services
    - by allocating more affordable housing for people at risk of homelessness
  
  - Ministry of the Environment appointed the steering group to monitor the progress of the programme: the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of finance, the Ministry of justice, the Criminal Sanctions Agency, The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA), The Finnish institute for health and welfare, Kela, Espoo, Helsinki, Hyvinkää, Jyväskylä, Järvenpää, Kuopio, Oulu, Pori, Tampere, Turku, Vantaa and 3 national NGOs.
  
  - Municipalities set up cooperation groups at local level.
- > Homelessness work will be established among the core activities of municipalities.