



Y-SÄÄTIÖ

**Housing First in Finland  
Helsinki 8.2.2018**

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# What we wanted to do and achieve

- To halve long-term homelessness by 2011 and end it by 2015
- 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
- Quantitative targets:
- 2500 new dwellings, supported housing units or care places in 10 (2008-2011)/11(2012-2015) major cities  
(Targets of the National PAAVO-Programme 2008-15)

# What have we done

- Housing:
  - Over 3500 new apartments built / purchased for homeless people
- Services:
  - 300 new professional support workers in housing social work
  - Housing advice services have prevented 200 evictions per year
- Housing First principle (as we understand it) has been established
- Shelters/hostels have been replaced by supported housing units

# Supported housing units 2008-2015

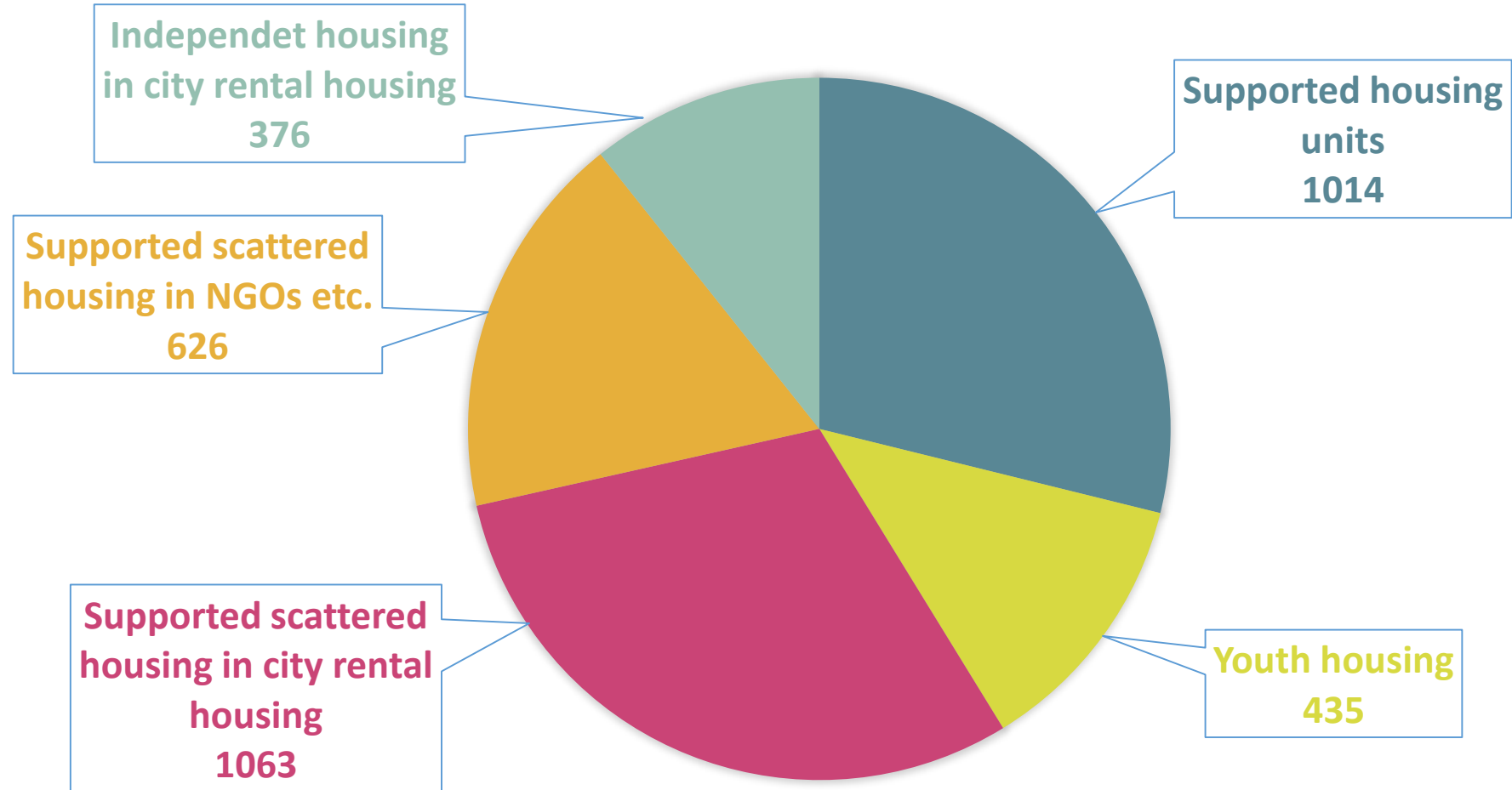


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# What have we done: Housing first in Finland

- Housing as a basic human and social right
- Housing in normal surroundings/permanent homes
- Own independent rental apartment either in scattered housing or in a supported housing unit
- Own rental contract (normally for unlimited time)
- Adequate support if needed and wanted
- Autonomy/ unconditionality
- Normality

# COMPLETED APARTMENTS AND APARTMENTS ALLOTTED TO USE IN THE PAAVO PROGRAM 2008-2015



# Housing options for Homeless persons in Helsinki

Year	Supported housing	Independent rental apartments	Hostels and shelters
1985	127	65	2 121
2008	552	2 033	558
2016	1 309	2 433	52

# What have we achieved

- Homelessness has decreased:
  - In recent years Finland has been the only European country where homelessness has decreased
  - 2016: 6650 single homeless persons, 325 families
  - Wide definition of homelessness: 80% living temporarily with friends and relatives
  - 1554 women
  - 1399 young people (under 25 y)
  - 1803 immigrants
  - From 2008 to 2016: long-term homelessness has decreased with 1589 persons (35%)



# What made it possible

Political commitment nationally and locally (no new legislation)

Financial commitments at the same time

Wide partnership: state authorities, local authorities, NGOs

Written agreements and contracts between state and cities

Professionals with motivation and commitment

Pragmatic approach: concrete, measurable goals

The importance of critical mass to change mindsetting

# What next

Focus on prevention (AUNE-Programme 2016-19)

Proposed goal for 2019-2023: To halve existing homelessness, need for 5000 flats

Thge production of social housing from 20% to 30% in new housing areas

Zero tolerance to women's homelessness

New ways to combine housing and job opportunities

Housing First Europe HUB: learning from others

# Something to think about

Acquiring scattered housing flats takes time

Hostel/shelter is more an obstacle than a solution to end rough sleeping

Caution needed with cost saving arguments

Ending homelessness is not possible without new affordable housing

Housing First alone is not the solution

What's needed:

Alternative housing solutions

Flexible support and services

# Something to think about

There is already enough scientific evidence that Housing First is the best existing paradigm to end homelessness

Do we need more pilot projects and experiments?

Most Housing First projects are too small

Transition funding needed to change the system, an incentive for service providers

Work should be started where the problem is biggest not where it is easiest

# A Home of Your Own

- A handbook published by the Y-Foundation on the Finnish Housing First principle.
- Download for free: [\*\*ysaatio.fi/the-book\*\*](https://ysaatio.fi/the-book)

