





# HOUSING FIRST IN FINLAND

A profound paradigm shift in Finnish homelessness policy from 1990s

- lease-based housing as a right
- from a staircase model to 'the right to your own door'
- conversion of shelters to supported housing units, no demand of sobriety etc.
- individually tailored support services in housing units
- increasing the supply of affordable rental housing
- preventive measures, such as tenant advisory services

A cousin of the US housing first model, which is based on scattered housing

# KEY FACTORS OF SUCCESS

4 strong political commitment in the Government and the Ministry of Environment

4 collaborative effort, requiring strong commitment and tight co-operation from a variety of actors across sectors and levels

- required official +also financial- commitment from municipalities to adopt the new principle and reorganise their services accordingly

4 networked project, entitled *Learning from Experience*, ran alongside the Ministry-led programme. It gathered actors from around the country to share their experiences, difficulties and good practices frequently and in a very open manner. This deepened the ties between homelessness actors across the country

4 participatory and inclusive approach with an aim to gather all relevant expertise and knowledge

# PARTICIPATION WITHIN HOMELESSNESS WORK

Participatory and inclusive approach both in policy design and service provision

- changes in the service culture from being a guard to being a companion, from behind the plei:lass to playing/Participation on the same couch

\$ participatory experience > a means towards a variety of ends cheaper and better functioning services, more legitimate governance as well as empowered, participants

"In practice participatory experience have been invited to

- Ministerial steering groups and committees
- Evaluate existing homelessness services and housing units
- Take part in steering groups of building renovation projects and in service redesign + service co-creation-
- Provide peer support and service counselling for others in similar situations
- Do advocacy work via media or through creative & artistic means

# FUTURE CHALLENGES

Understanding structural reasons behind youth homelessness and women's homelessness, homelessness prevention

Bottom first > model the importance of adequate and well designed support services

Authentic collaboration and true possibilities of having an impact avoid the risk of tokenism and participation for its own sake

Decision making and management use of multiple forms of knowledge and expertise concomitantly