



**FINLAND NATIONAL REPORT 2004 FOR THE
EUROPEAN OBSERVATORY ON HOMELESSNESS:
RESEARCH REVIEW 2004**

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1. Granfelt, R. (2003), *Päihteettömien päivien talo Tutkimus Kivitaskuyhteisöstä asukkaiden tulkitsemana*, (A house of non-abusing days, a research on Kivitasku community, interpreted by the inhabitants), Espoon Diakoniasäätiö, Espoon Diakoniasäätiö 2004.

Kivitasku is a housing community for 12 inhabitants, started in August 2001. The community is run by the foundation for the social work of the Lutheran church in the City of Espoo, in the capital region (Espoon Diakoniasäätiö). Kivitasku is a community for young persons who have gone through rehabilitation for drug abusers. Abstinence from intoxicants and the community are the basic ideas of the life of Kivitasku; it has not committed itself on any treatment ideology; however all the inhabitants take part in the 12 steps' programme in NA groups. Most of the inhabitants have abused several kinds of intoxicants, opiates and amphetamine being the drugs most of them have abused.

Kivitasku does not primarily provide housing services for homeless people; it is a part of the continuum of rehabilitation process. The inhabitants proceed along three steps; the first one, Tasku (the Pocket), is a community of intensive support where searching one's own place and role in the community, learning every day skills, starting the rehabilitation in the open care and assessing one's own life situation are in the focuses of the activity. During the second phase the inhabitants concentrate training their skills of independent housing in the other part of the building, Siipi (the Wing). It is, however, possible to get support all the time there, too. The goal of this phase is that the inhabitant learns to take care of him/herself and settles in some education or a working a place. A social network is being built together with the inhabitant; this network will support him/her during the beginning of independent housing. The third phase consists of independent supported housing; the inhabitants keep contact to the community and his/her own social worker helps him/her in problematic situations.

Support by peers is one of the main features of the community. The support provided by the workers is psycho-social support by its nature; it tries to increase the skills of every day life of the inhabitants. It tries as well as to help him/her to work with his/her emotions; the focus of this work is the long run work with one's identity and the crisis work.

The study was made during nine months' period; from September 2002 to June 2003. The study is an ethnographical case study the goal of which is to evaluate the life in the community from the point of view of the inhabitants. The researcher made a follow-up study by making thematic interviews among the inhabitants with two month intervals. The interviews were added by observations and interviews with workers.

All the eleven men and three women who took part in the research thought that they have benefited from the housing period in Kivitasku. The support provided by peers, help in a crisis, regular discussions with the own social worker and the opportunity to concentrate on the training of the every day skills were particularly appreciated.

The Kivitasku community offers support for drug abusers who are willing to start a life without intoxicants and who are committed to the treatment of their problem. The inhabitants have been chosen on the basis that they are capable of benefiting from integrated professional and peer support. The community is not suitable for mentally ill

persons, for persons who are ambivalent in their decision of intoxicant free life as well as for persons with violent behaviour. The person has to feel to be in need of the peer and psychosocial support, the need to get housing is not enough.

- 2. Pitkänen, S, Rissanen, P and Mattila, K (2004), *Ihmisen arvoista asumista, Y-Säätiön ja Asumispalvelusäätiö Aspan tuki- ja palveluasumismallien arviointi, (Housing worth a human being, an evaluation of the support and service models of Y-Foundation and ASPA Housing Services Foundation, reports on funding activities of the Slot Machine Association), Sosiaalikehitys Oy, RAY:n Avustustoiminnan raportteja 13, Helsinki 2004***

The purpose of the research

The Slot Machine Association (RAY) grants financing to the NGOs working with homeless people and other vulnerable groups. RAY also orders and contracts out evaluations of services provided by these organisations. The purpose of this research is to describe the models of service provision of two organisations, Y-Foundation and ASPA Housing Services Foundation and to study the role and the significance of them as service providers for special groups. The strategies of the foundations, the special features of these strategies have been described in the study; the successes as well as problems of activities of foundations have been described and analysed, too.

The evaluation has as its starting points the concepts of homelessness and supported housing. The evaluation is mainly qualitative; it is based on documents and interviews. The workers of foundations as well as inhabitants and their relatives have been interviewed. Also the housing and social welfare authorities of some of municipalities where the foundation have dwellings have been interviewed. Finally, some key persons working with the homelessness issues in the national level of administration and research have been interviewed. Altogether 65 interviews have been made for the research. The study is thematically very large, too.

Both foundations provide housing for vulnerable groups. The foundations have several models of acquiring dwellings and providing support for their inhabitants, they build the model with the municipal authorities in the particular municipality. So, the variety of models which were evaluated in the research was quite large and for this reason a proper comparison was not possible.

The foundations

The foundations have chosen very different strategies for providing supported housing. Of the two, Y-Foundation is bigger and older, founded in 1985. It owned (at the time the research material was collected) 4426 dwellings in 52 municipalities, most of them in ordinary blocks of flats. There are 6000 inhabitants living in those dwellings. 67 % of the persons who moved to the dwellings of Y-Foundation were homeless, 34 % were refugees. Y-Foundation has as its main profile to buy and build dwellings. The original goal of the Foundation was to reduce homelessness and to arrange housing worth a human being for persons who have difficulties with their housing but who can live independently or almost independently. The aim is to acquire dwellings of decent

standard and decent housing security. The municipal authorities choose the inhabitants to the foundation's dwellings. Later, in the mid 1990s, the foundation adopted as its second goal to arrange support to some of the inhabitants; for this purpose the Foundation cooperates with some other organisations. The share of the inhabitants who get special support varies and the numbers are difficult to tell, but it concerns only a small share of foundation's inhabitants.

The other foundation ASPA has been founded in 1995. The policy of providing services for disabled people has been changing in Finland; this fact was the background for founding the ASPA foundation. Especially the changes towards more open care orientated services for mental health patients urged the building of the foundation. At the time of the research the foundation owned 32 units of housing services in different parts of the country, the foundation provided services for altogether 281 persons. Housing and services are separated from each others; a person does not necessarily need to live in the foundation's dwelling in order to get services, as a matter of fact half of the persons lived in their own rental or owner occupied dwellings; however, the housing stock owned by the foundation is increasing. The dwellings are usually situated as a group, either very close to each others or separately quite near each others. ASPA's main profile is the designing of support for the inhabitants.

Some comparisons and results

The supported dwellings of both foundations have been acquired from the ordinary housing markets, the dwellings are situated in good quality housing estates and environment. In this meaning the housing stock of both foundations constitute in a kind of intermediate stock between the mainstream housing market and special accommodation of lower quality.

Both foundations have been founded for the purpose of meeting acute housing needs of groups who generally are considered to be in need of support in their housing. In the case of Y-Foundation, these groups are persons with mental health problems and persons with abuse problems as well as young persons, the share of which is increasing while the need for measures of child welfare are increasing in the society. One large group is refugees.

The main purpose of Y-Foundation is buy dwellings in the ordinary housing stock, to renovate them and in a smaller scale to build new dwellings; thus the housing needs of the client groups are in the focus. Support is arranged by the local agencies if it is needed.

The ASPA Foundation has as its client group persons with mental health problems, mentally handicapped persons and physically disabled persons. The foundation provides services which often are missing in the municipality; it is typical that there is a variety of different solutions by which housing and support are combined to each others. Usually the services and the support are provided by the foundation's own stuff.

Even if the basic models of foundations are different, in neither of them the support is strictly combined to the dwelling; looked from the point of view of the person who is living in the dwelling, these solutions give more individuality and flexibility to the person; the person can continue living in the dwellings of both foundations when the need

for support is diminishing - albeit this is quite a new phenomenon in the dwellings of Y-Foundation and not yet the practise in all municipalities.

The models of both foundations are rather fragmented; however, support and services are in all cases based on same values and principles. The support provided by Y-Foundation is more dependent on local actors and their activity. Both foundations are developing new models of housing services; in this respect the orientation of ASPA foundation is more sharp and conscious of its goals than that of Y-Foundation. The professional skills of the staff and the representatives of owner organisations as well as the transparency of work have nourished the developmental activities of ASPA. The owners of Y-Foundation are cities or building developers, the most of whom are not themselves orientated into support services.

Both foundations are confronted with some problems with the local authorities; the multi-agency working both with the local authorities and NGOs is more complicated in the big cities, especially in the capital region, due to the larger number of actors. ASPA has taken as challenge to find innovative solutions for multi-agency working in the countryside; the multi-agency can be easier there, but at the same clients are spread into a large, in some municipalities in a very large geographical area which makes the solutions more demanding.

ASPA foundation has adopted a special task, too: the foundation makes surveys of the persons and groups in need of special services. Rural municipalities in particular have ordered these surveys from the foundation.

Views of the local authorities

The research project included a rather large survey to the local authorities; a rich material about the housing and the services of special groups were gathered by this method. The survey contained questions that evaluated the service provision of the two foundations, too. In the following some results of this part of survey:

Y-Foundation usually lets the dwellings to the municipalities which in turn sublet them to the inhabitants. This system was usually acknowledged to be good. Some municipal authorities, however, expressed their doubts about the future of model of Y-Foundation as a provider of housing, primarily. The reason for homelessness is more and more other factors than the shortage of housing. The support is more and more needed.

However, the demand for dwellings provided by Y-Foundation has been very clear in the growth centres where homelessness has been concentrated; in minor towns there is social housing well available. The additional value of the housing provision of Y-Foundation, compared to the allocation of social housing, is that the housing needs of the person are in the focus, not his background. Y-Foundation has succeeded in providing housing for persons, who have special difficulties when they try to enter to the mainstream housing market. The foundation has enlarged its activities rapidly; still it has been able to be flexible in the housing provision.

The main partners of the Y-Foundation on the local level are usually housing authorities; in some cases the social welfare authorities may be unaware of the foundation's activities

in the municipality; a low profile of PR-activities is typical for the Y-Foundation. The inhabitants in the foundation's dwellings are usually not counted to any special group; the housing is typically mainstream housing. This main principle of the foundation, however, means in many cases that the inhabitant does not receive the support - and control, either, which he would have needed. Thus; social welfare authorities could have provided more rehabilitation measures, too, according to the criticism expressed by the some social welfare authorities in the survey. As was told earlier, Y-Foundation is developing the support activities for their inhabitants.

As Y-Foundation, the ASPA Foundation, too, has been flexible in its work, according to the municipal authorities. Especially the readiness to react fast to new situations was appreciated. For some clients ASPA provides support several times during a day; in the municipal service provision this is seldom possible. In many cases, however, ASPA's service provision is too separate from the municipal services provision, they live its own life, was the criticism from the local authorities (in Finland it is the municipality which has the main responsibility for social services).

To conclude: Due to the large number of dwellings which Y-Foundation owns and acquires yearly and due to the model where housing and support have been separated from each others, Y-Foundation can effectively respond to the problems of big majority of homeless people, persons who are temporarily staying with relatives and friends due the lack of small rental dwellings with reasonable rent. Especially in the capital region where there are large numbers of clients in need of housing, there has been large need for the dwellings offered by Y- Foundation. The ASPA Foundation, in turn, can respond to the needs of the growing group of homeless people, who need more support. The decrease of the institutional care, shorter periods in hospitals, and the increase of multiple problems among vulnerable groups and the recognition of groups with new kind of care needs are factors to which the foundation offers its alternatives.

According to the survey, the local authorities were mainly satisfied with the co-operation with the both foundations; both of them had a major or minor role as complementary service providers in those municipalities.

Except for the service provision, typical for both of the foundations is that they try to awake discussion and to influence the attitudes and ways of acting in this field, Y-Foundation both internationally and nationally, ASPA nationally.

3. Raitakari, S (2003), *Nuorten tukiasuminen – Paikka elämänhallinnan ja marginaalin rajalla. Omakolo-projektin taustaolettamukset, käytännöt ja asiakkuus, Nuorten ystävät ry.* (Supported housing of young people, a site on the border of life management and the marginal), Nuorten Ystävät ry, Multiprint Oy 2003

The following text is the abstract of the report:

This research report summarises the conclusions and interpretations made over the course of external assessment of a supported housing programme for adolescents. The research was a collaborative project of Nuorten Ystävät (The Friends of the Young Association), and the University of Tampere Department of Social Policy and

Social Work, and it was funded by RAY (The Finnish Slot Machine Association). Although it was an external assessor who performed the assessment, the research report makes use of dialogic discussion. The research approach draws on the idea of reflexive development of work. The objective of the assessment was to try to find out what sort of phenomena and conditions a supported housing project for adolescents involves and what outcomes could possibly follow from them. Above all, the report is an account of the custom and work practices of a supported housing project for adolescents. Life in supported housing was analysed through five themes that seemed central in the practices of the project from the very beginning.

The report found five different models for implementing supported housing services for adolescents. The housing project in question represented one of these, combining child protection housing, funding by RAY and provision of social services, which were assigned (externalised) to full-time professionals.

The report contained the idea of a spiral analysis. First, we tried to form an overall picture of the matter, then we localised the project's institutional practices and finally examined the meanings of money and housing closer. We advanced from the general towards a more detailed interpretation of data excerpts. The data comprised interviews with adolescents (9), records of the Omakolo project and case files from the time of the project. The numerous data collection and field trips also had an essential role in this.

When the practices of the project were examined, we tried to find out to what extent they were based on a method. A clearly structured service process had been generated for this housing project. Method-based work practices and follow-up were accomplished first of all by developing collaboration and meeting practices. Secondly, systematic documentation and collection of data were considered important, and thirdly, the project sought to find the kind of staff best suitable for supported housing. The externalising model required attention to be paid to well-functioning collaboration arrangements and communication. The use of methods was resorted to ensure that the services were reliable and marketable; it seemed that it was important to convince the referring quarter about the activities of the housing project.

One of the themes that was examined and analysed was the "money talk" within the housing project. The theme was approached from three different angles. First, the externalising model of the project as a condition for supported housing was observed, considering whether and how it regulated its activities. Second, an attempt was made to locate the ways in which the project sought to "teach" the adolescents how to use money. Third, some of the ways in which the adolescents talked about money were brought out. The analysis revealed that the "money talk" had many levels and in many ways it structured the period these adolescents lived in supported housing. Their time there and their life management was a multi-layered money matter.

In this supported housing project, the focus of our interest was neither the housing nor the ending of homelessness, but *living* in supported housing. In addition to improving the circumstances of the adolescents, the apartment provided us with a "window" to the adolescents' everyday life. A young person could move to supported housing from absolute homelessness, from streets and staying nights at their friends' homes.

However, in many cases supported housing became part of a housing path, containing the young person's nuclear family and various institutions. Being on the move was one thing characteristic to these housing paths. Supported housing was just one "intermediary phase" on the way from the ideal childhood home to one's own home. When talking about their future, the adolescents underlined the value of the ordinary.

With the project, these young people shared a vision of an ordinary everyday life, but their talk about the future was more faltering than that of the professionals. Perhaps they knew that anything can happen in life and that there are limits to what can be accomplished by planning. The value of the ordinary becomes emphasised on the edge of the margin and life management; there, the ordinary is not self-evident, but it can be pursued. Young people have their lives ahead of them and supported housing should be evaluated from the viewpoint of how well it will carry these young people in the future. We did not have an opportunity to conduct a follow-up study within the scope of this study, which is why the question whether the adolescents of the Omakolo project will eventually find a permanent place of their own will thus remain unanswered. Without dispute, the project demonstrated well that it was needed and that it found its place within the local service system. Nevertheless, in terms of the future, the supported housing programme alone will not be sufficient to solve the problems with adolescents and housing problems. To be able to find a permanent place and a sense to their lives, these young people will need more from us, the people working in the field. In addition to project work, the well-being of the adolescents requires wider approaches.

4. Ronkainen, J and Vaitinen, V (2002), *Tukikodista tuettuun asumiseen. Raportti Tampereen A-Kilta ry:n avotyö- ja tukitoiminta-projektista Tampereella vuosina 1999-2002, (From a support home to a supported dwelling. A report on a project of open care and support activity conducted by Tampere A Guild in Tampere in 1999-2002), Tampereen A-Kilta ry, 22.3.2002*¹

The *A Guild Association* in Tampere started a project on open care and supported housing. The project was a three years' project financed by The Slot Machine Association. After the project the support activities have been continued by the finances received by the City of Tampere.

The A Guild of Tampere, founded in the 1960s, is a member of the Association of A Guilds. According to the www-page of the association "the aim of A Guild activity is a way of life free from intoxicants. A sober life implies a better life. All our activity is intoxicant-free". The association started in Turku in 1962, when people with intoxicant problems wanted to influence their own recovery and at the same time support others who were struggling with the same problems by sharing their own experience of recovery. Thus A Guild activity is primarily based on support offered by equals.

The A Guild in Tampere works on similar basis as all the A Guilds in the country. The guild provides different kinds of services for substance abusers, peer group activities, day centres for activities and supported homes. The A Guild has, along with years, become a

¹ http://216.239.59.104/search?q=cache:uVvhFWtJ34J:www.tampereena-kilta.fi/Avon_loppuraportti_

service provider, which complements the municipal service provision for substance abusers.

The purpose of the project

The A Guild of Tampere owns and runs a number of small support homes for substance abusers, altogether for 32 persons. In some of them there is staff present daily, in some of them only when needed.

The reason for starting the project was: After managing well in a support home, many clients did not succeed as well after moving to an independent dwelling. The support provided by the community in the support home was not present any more and the freedom from the regulations of the support home often turned out to lead to a crisis due to increased substance abuse. The return back to the support home frustrated both the clients and the staff. Moving to an independent dwelling means that the social relations that they had had at the support home diminished significantly. Substance abusers do not, either, know their rights and obligations as citizens and inhabitants. The societal situation has changed, too; the working options for substance abusers are very few nowadays. Thus the motivational factors to change one's life are very few.

Needs for after-care services were thus evident. The aim of the project was to develop a model for after-care services and to carry out these goals in practice.

The structure and the working methods of the project

A social worker from A Guild was employed as the project leader. He has had the responsibility of the support provided. He has had some short term employed co-workers to work with him.

In the beginning of the project it was counted that voluntary support workers would be an important resource for the project. These persons themselves have experiences of the substance abuse problems but now can manage their lives. However, it turned out, that it was not easy to find voluntary support workers, during the first year 15 persons were trained for being a support worker; of these eight persons had clients to support. In later years the number of support workers was around ten.

Third crucial element of the project was the network of the Guild with the local social welfare authorities and housing authorities, with the A-clinics etc. Thus the project is clearly an element in the context of the municipal social and health care.

The clients, the inhabitants had many problems (over-indebtedness, problems in human relations, missing education, health problems, fines, homelessness, unemployment and debt related to unpaid substance abuses). Thus the aim of the project was to make the quality of their lives better. No ideals were set. Recovering and rehabilitation were crucial concepts in the project. Homelessness is the worst hindrance for rehabilitation of a person. One of the main goals of the project was that the support provided by the project would back up the person to start his/her independent living in a dwelling and to prevent him to slide back into the old situation. In other words, the inhabitant was helped to keep the dwelling by interfering in his matters in an early phase.

The working method was based on a solution-orientated approach. The person himself sets the goals; the means for approaching these goals are found together. Concrete and rapid help is the best that a client can get. The purpose is to help a person over an acute situation.

The clients and the support

The clients of the project consisted of all the persons who were living in the support homes of the guild, 124 persons in three years time, of which 106 were men and 18 women. Altogether 93 clients moved from the support homes to supported dwellings during the project.

The average age of the clients was 44,5 years. This project showed the trends as the data of other service provides does; the share of homeless persons over 55 years is diminishing. Of all the clients, nearly 50 persons needed much support; long-term support, several periods of treatment, support meetings every week. Some of these clients had double diagnosis, mental health diagnosis along with substance abuse problems.

Half of the clients who started in the project during the first year (some 50 persons) did not need support the following year; on the other hand the other half needed support the following year, too. 12 persons were supported all the three years.

Regular *visits* to the clients' homes were in the beginning the working method; later it was noticed that this is not necessary; it was thought that the use of these visits is not worth the resources which are needed for them. The clients may take the visits as control, too. Thus, the persons were visited when there became problems. (Naturally one of reasons was that the only full-time worker did not have time for these visits.) Phone calls and other contacts with the client replaced the visits. However, during the third year, the clients were visited, again, more frequently; the project had more resources for that. The client often asked the workers to "drop in" more often.

Supervision of the interests of the client: Counselling in practical matters and intervening rapidly in cases of rent arrears were of great importance. The client did not have skills to handle official matters and to fill applications. Rents can be left unpaid due to missing skills or due to a period of drinking. The client could have got the money for the rent from municipal social office but due to heavy substance abuse they have not been able to order a time to the social worker. The workers have helped the clients to get schedules of gradual repayment arranged. In some cases a person who takes care of the financial matters of the person is officially appointed.

To ensure that the person does not need to go to prison due to the debt is important as a supervision of the interests of the client - if there is other ways of solving the matter. The effects of even a short-term prison period can be fatal for the person's substance abuse problems.

One task of the supervision of interests of the client is to guide and help him to get substance abuse treatment, in good time.

The *mental support* provided by the support workers, both professional and voluntary is perceived as "a spirit of the A Guild". A powerful element is the shared problem from which everyone is trying to get rid of or have already got rid of. Of crucial importance is the trust; if the client has the trust in the worker, this makes it possible to talk about delicate matters, too. Some other clients trust in the voluntary peer worker: "I pour my sorrows on him".

During the project it became obvious that it is necessary to write a *rehabilitation plan* for every client. The plan has to be individually drawn for every person, so that the client can commit himself to follow it.

Voluntary support workers

The leader of the project, the open care social worker was the organiser of the network of voluntary support workers and his role was to arrange support workers for clients who wished to have one. As one of the primary goals in the project was to increase the support activities, to get more voluntary support workers for the project and for A Guild.

Some persons started, however, the courses on too flimsy grounds; they did not understand that this is more than a hobby. Some persons refused to take a support relationship after realising which kind of responsibilities it involves.

Work counselling for the voluntary support workers was arranged from the beginning of the project, every third week. The counselling was giving in a group; however, many support workers said that they would need individual counselling, too.

The work was challenging and hard, occasionally too hard. In acute situations the voluntary workers, who are not therapists, cannot do anything else but to guide the person to get treatment. The task of the voluntary worker should more be to prevent the person from ending up into these situations; the substance abuser is supported during the sober periods. The learning of the project was that the work with voluntary support worker is a long run work and the strength of the voluntary persons, their ability to go on, has to pay a special attention.

The effects of the project

It is very difficult to measure how well the independent living of the clients has been succeeded. However, numbers tell something: 67 persons of 109 persons who moved to an independent dwelling succeeded well. 20 persons of these 67 get support continuously. Of the rest, 47, it is supposed that some of them will need support within a couple of years, again.

The interviews within the clients revealed that the opinions of the clients differed a lot; some of them thought that the support was crucial in their lives; some of them said that it was not so much of use. (It has to be remembered that a typical Finnish man does not very easily speak about feelings.)

The project workers estimated that 19 persons out of the 109 clients would have needed substance abuse treatment in case they would not have had this kind of support. The

average day in a treatment unite was counted to cost 53,82 €. The period in the treatment is usually a year. Thus the costs of these 19 persons in a treatment unite would have been 373 242 €. (The report does not tell how much the support project for these persons cost at the same time, but it is only a fragment of that cost.). Except for these costs, the services of the police, of the social welfare services were not needed as much as in case of these people being homeless.

Other literature

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