



Y-SÄÄTIÖ

The review of the Finnish strategy to end  
long-term homelessness: facts, findings,  
future

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# Paavo 2008 - 2015

- A government programme coordinated by the Ministry of the Environment
- In partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Criminal Sanctions Agency, the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland, RAY (Finland's Slot Machine Association), 11 cities with highest numbers of homeless people, the Church, NGOs and private companies
- Committed partners and multidisciplinary work over administrative and professional boundaries
- A development network
- Research supporting development work

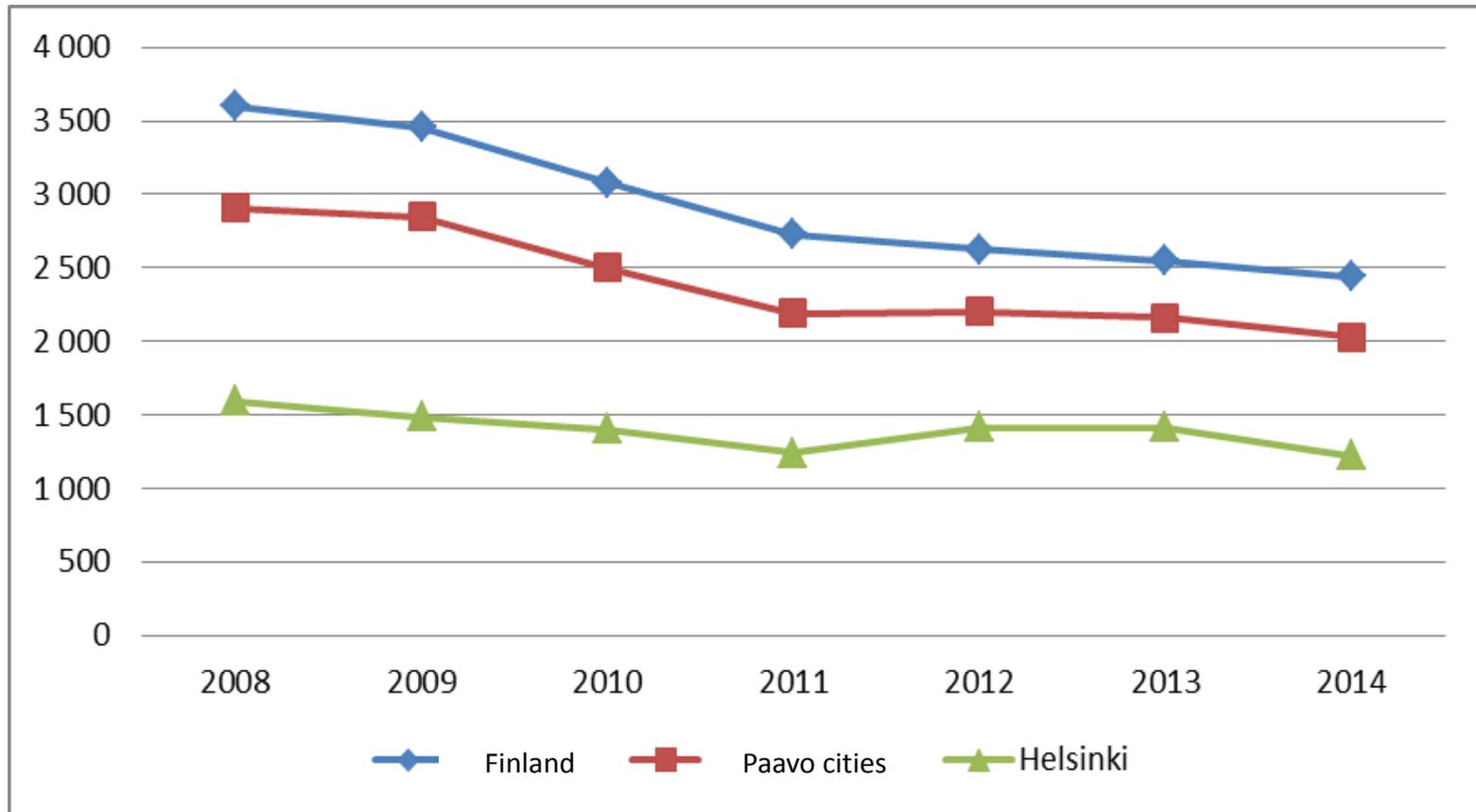
# Measures and results

- Housing:
  - 2 800 new apartments built / purchased for homeless people
- Services:
  - 350 new professional support workers in housing social work
  - Housing advice services have prevented 200 evictions per year
- Structural reforms:
  - Housing First principle has been established
  - Shelters have been replaced by supported housing units
  - Social rehabilitation processes have been initiated
- Homelessness has decreased:
  - In 2008 - 2014 the number of long-term homeless people has decreased by 1 150 people

# Housing first in finland

- Housing as a basic social right
- Own independent rental apartment either in scattered housing or in a supported housing unit
- Own rental contract (normally for unlimited time)
- Adequate support

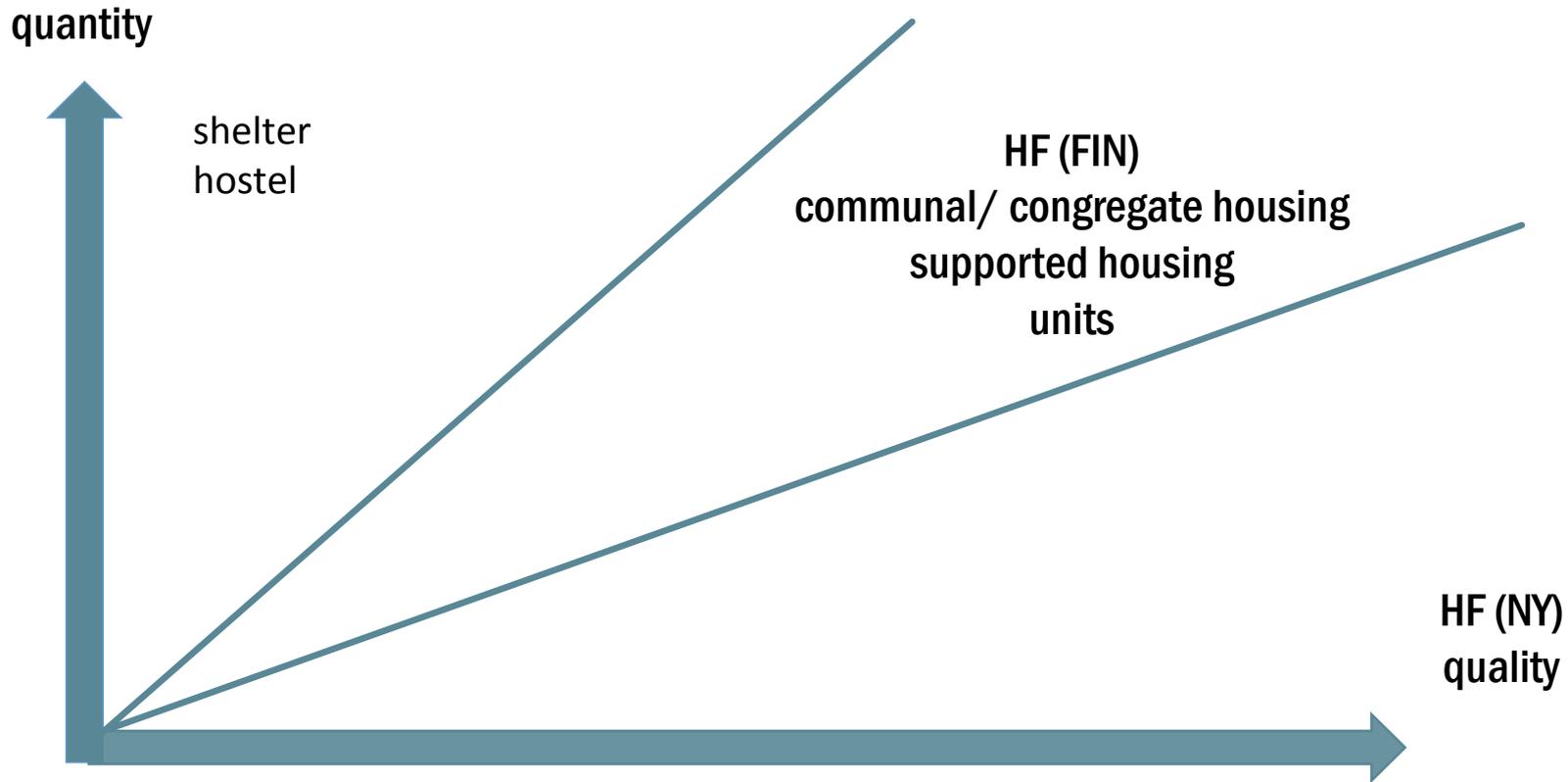
# The development of long-term homelessness



# Ecosystem of Homelessness

- Dimensions: time/costs
- When you add something it has intentional or unintentional effects on the other parts of the system
- HF with shelter/hostel system is still a staircase model
- To make a paradigm shift you need to accomplish a sufficient amount of critical mass within a concrete limited time period, after that psychology takes care of the rest

# Dimensions of homelessness policy



# International review of the Finnish Strategy

- An international evaluation of the Paavo-programme was carried out in 2014
- Research group:
- Nicholas Pleace, chair, university of York
- Dennis Culhane, University of pennsylvania
- Marcus knutagård, university of lund
- Riitta granfelt, university of tampere
- The final report is available:  
[https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/153258/YMra\\_3en\\_2015.pdf?sequence=5](https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/153258/YMra_3en_2015.pdf?sequence=5).
- Also other background material of the Programme: [www.housingfirst.fi](http://www.housingfirst.fi).

# Main findings

- Substantial success in reducing long-term homelessness
- The most individually, socially and economically damaging form of homelessness has been reduced
- This has not been accomplished on the same scale elsewhere
- Finland is perhaps the best example of a truly coordinated National homelessness strategy
- Bringing together homelessness NGOs, Y-Foundation, municipal and central government
- Use of communal/congregate models of HF has been the subject of debate, but the effectiveness of the strategy is also evident

# Main findings

Response has also been comprehensive, alongside the focus on long-term homelessness:

- Development of preventative services and successes in homelessness prevention
- Specialist services for particular groups, e.g. young people and former offenders
- A range of supported housing services alongside housing first

# Recommendations

- Increasing affordable housing supply is key to reducing and preventing homelessness
- Partnership working with social housing providers is crucial
- Models such as local letting agencies from the UK can enhance access to private rented housing
- Prevention needs to identify people at risk of long-term and recurrent homelessness
- Services like critical time intervention and housing first can be used to prevent long-term homelessness among high need and vulnerable groups of people
- Indebtness can also be a route into homelessness and can be counteracted

# recommendations

- There is scope to explore using lower intensity models of support to both prevent and reduce homelessness
- Housing is not enough to solve homelessness
- Have to think about social integration, an emotionally rewarding personal life, work, education, training or something positive to give structure to life
- There is scope to improve the evidence base on services effectiveness and cost effectiveness

# Next programme: aune 2016-2020

- Main target: 500 homeless persons less each year
- Strengthening prevention and tackling recurrent homelessness
- Measures:
  - 3 500 flats for homelessness work (new and acquired from the existing housing stock)
  - Increasing housing advice
  - Including housing as part of the Finnish youth guarantee
  - Establishing low-threshold service points for young people at risk of homelessness
  - Supporting former homeless persons into work
  - Piloting Flexible assertive community treatment in four cities

# Next programme: aune 2016-2020

- Strengthening the role of experts by experience in work on homelessness
- Development work and national coordination
- Systematic data collection, evaluation and research
- Budget estimate: 79 m€ of which 55 m€ for building and buying flats
- 24 m€ for personnel costs and development work
- Possible use of ESF: on work rehabilitation and employment projects

# Critical points in a national strategy

- Mutual trust between different actors
- Accountability: concrete quantitative goals and written agreements
- Commitment: ethical commitment of key individuals