# Housing First: A Case Study

## Delivering the Right to Housing for Homeless People

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# Overview

- Challenge: Chronic Homelessness
- Measure: Housing First
- Mapping
- Results
- Conclusions
- Resources

# Challenge

- Chronic homelessness
  - Repeated or sustained homelessness associated with support needs (mental & physical health; addiction).
  - Extremely vulnerable people whose right to housing routinely denied
    - Traditional services (shelters & temporary accommodation) not v effective in ending homelessness
    - Poor health outcomes
    - Sustained & extreme social exclusion
    - Living conditions that violate basic human rights
  - Only Finland has effectively ended chronic homelessness, so challenge for all States

# Housing First

- Housing First in a Nutshell
  - Evidence-based practice to end chronic homelessness
  - Starting point: right to housing
  - 2-part package
    - Rapid/immediate access to permanent housing
    - On-going, flexible, multidisciplinary support to the person

Source: At Home, Canada

Source: Housing First, Finland

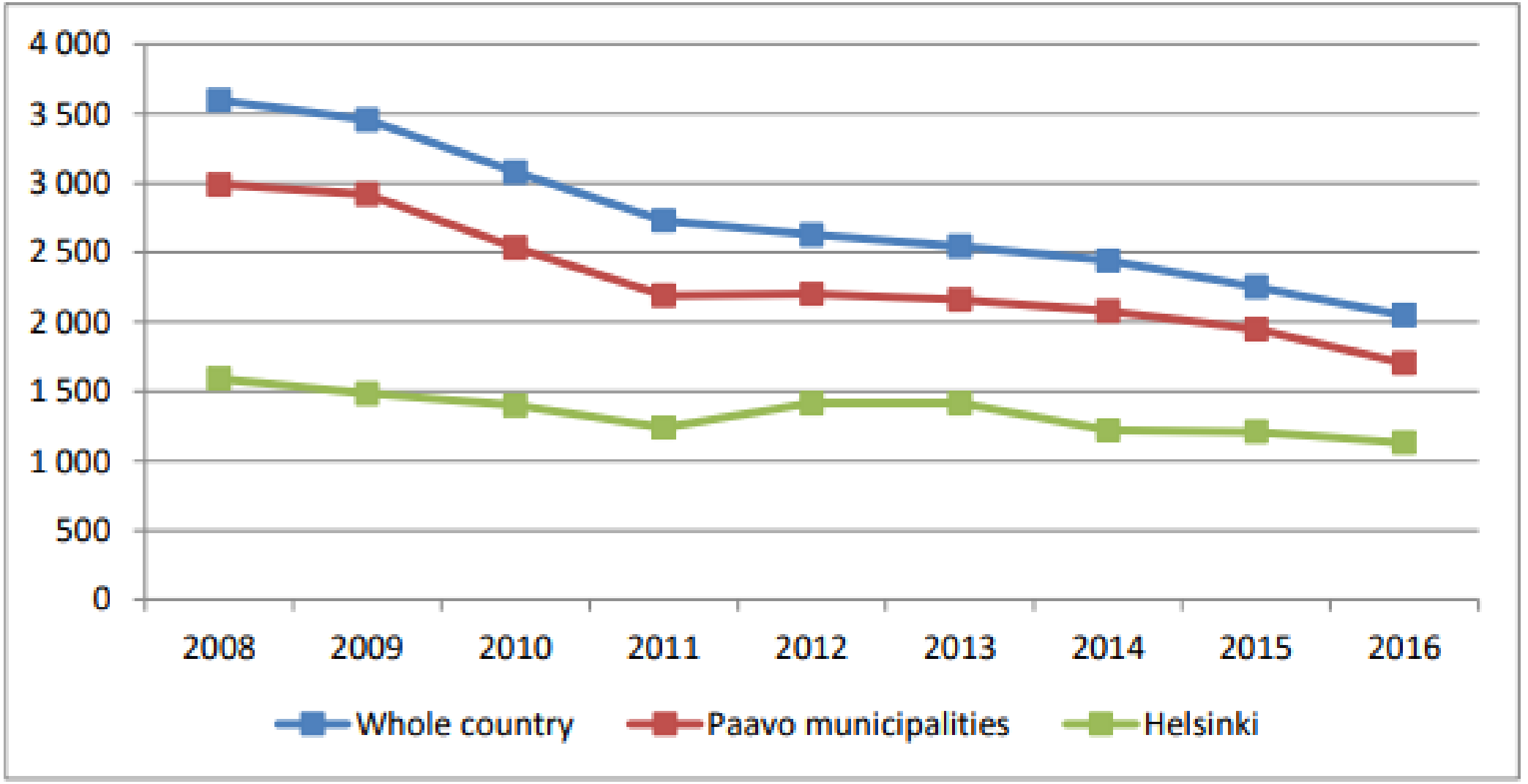
# Mapping

- HF adopted at scale
  - Basis of national policy: Finland, USA, Denmark
  - Experimentation followed by scale-up: Canada & France RCT
- HF introduced
  - Experimentation in view of scale up: Belgium, Spain, Czech Republic
  - Local implementation &/or mobilisation of stakeholders:  Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Austria, Germany, UK, Netherlands…

# Results

- HF ends chronic homelessness
  - Consistently high levels of housing retention
    - Canada: HF service users spent 73% of their time stably housed over two years, compared to 32% of those using conventional services (At Home/Chez Soi)
    - France: 85% HF service users still housed at 24 months
- HF works in a range of housing & welfare contexts

Graph 3. Long-term homelessness in PAAVO municipalities 2008-2016

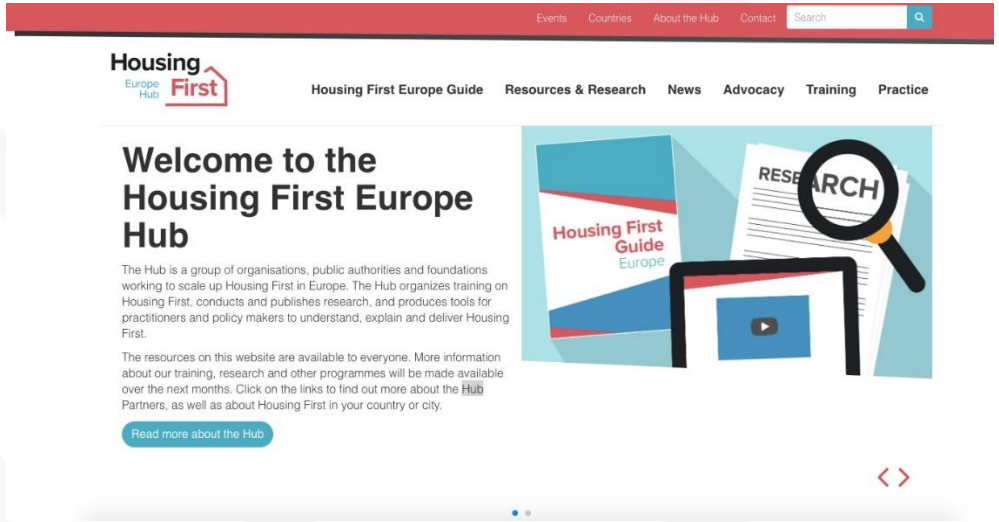
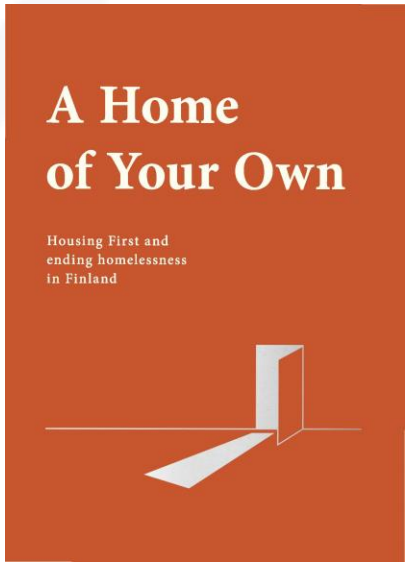


# Results

- Positive social & health impacts
  - HF supports stabilsation & recovery
    - Canada: 68% HF participants “positive life course” compared to 28% in control group
    - France: HF participants reduced by 50% time spent in hospital over 24 months; all had improved access to rights, welfare & primary health services; all had renewed relations with family and friends; 20% in employment or training
  - No evidence that outcomes any worse than traditional services, despite fears
  - HF ends homelessness, doesn’t necessarily make people “healthy, wealthy & wise” (Sam Tsemberis)
- Cost effective
  - Finland: Estimated public savings of approx. €15,000 a year per homeless person housed
  - Canada: $10 invested in HF resulted in average savings of $9.60 for high needs and $3.42 for moderate needs participants

# Conclusions

- HF is a rights-based intervention that ends chronic homelessness
- Permanent housing, complemented by the provision of services allows homeless people to
  - access & sustain housing
  - work towards recovery & inclusion
- HF should be a core element of strategies for the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing for all
- In the context of the 2030 Agenda & New Urban Agenda, States have committed to progressive reduction of homelessness. HF is a concrete step towards this goal
- The question is no longer whether HF works but whether & how it can be scaled up
- FEANTSA & the Housing First Europe Hub committed to supporting the scale-up of Housing First

# Resources

- Housing First Europe Hub
  - Y Foundation & FEANTSA
  - www.housingfirsteurope.eu
- Housing First Europe Guide (EN, ES, SE, CZ, HU, DE, FR)
- A Home of Your Own
  - ysaatio.fi/the-book