



Y-SÄÄTIÖ

NEA

Securing Housing For Women

Project Manager Leena Lehtonen, Y-Foundation,
Project Worker Anne Ahtola-Poiesz, Association of Mother
and Child Home and Shelter of Turku



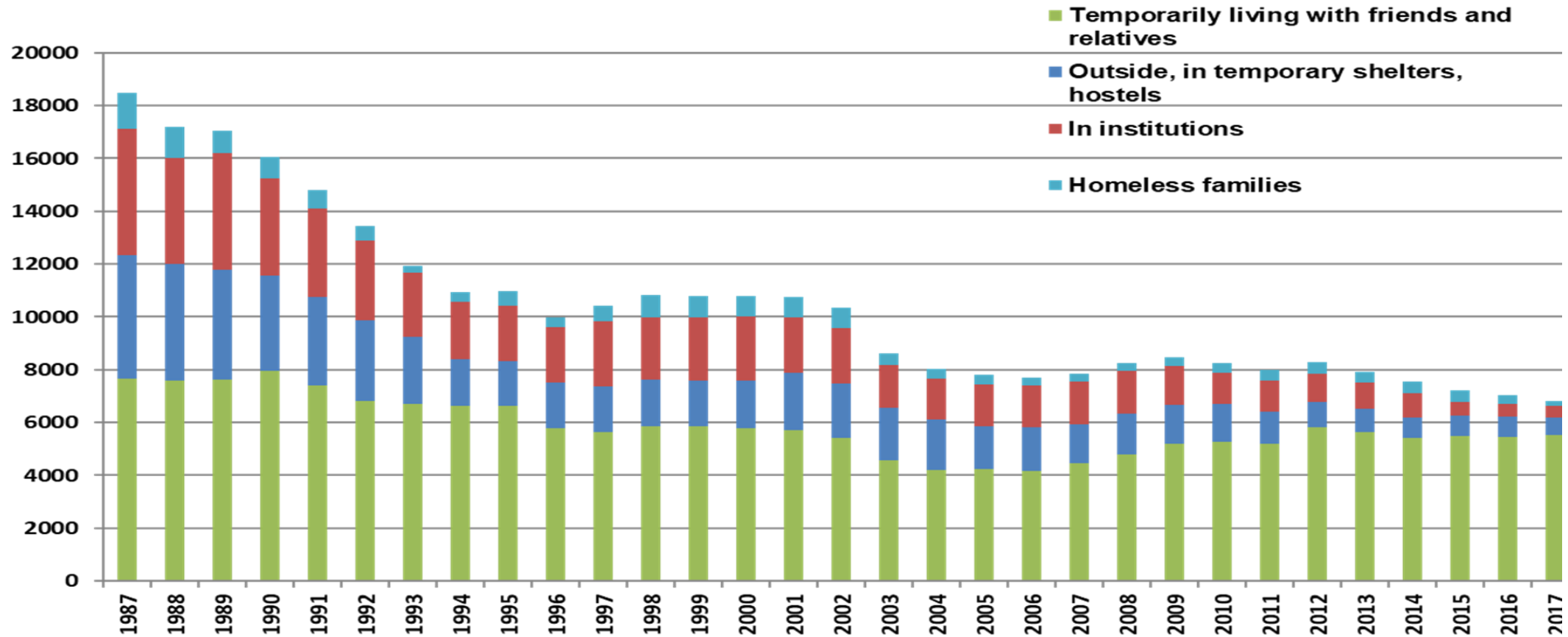
Structure of the Presentation

- Homelessness in Finland
- Women and Families
- NEA-project
- Good Practices
- The Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters
- Housing Advice Services, case Helsinki
- “Nest of strength”

Homelessness in Finland

- In 2018, there were **5 482** homeless people in Finland, over half in the capital area.
- Most of them are living with friends and relatives
- In recent years Finland has been the only EU-country where homelessness has decreased
- Strong national programs 2008-2019 to decrease long-term homelessness and prevent homelessness.
- "Strong" financing, new affordable housing and projects to different target groups.
- Housing First principle
- During the programmes shelters were converted into normal independent apartments with support and housing advice services have prevented hundreds of evictions per year.
- Previously no women specific approaches as such

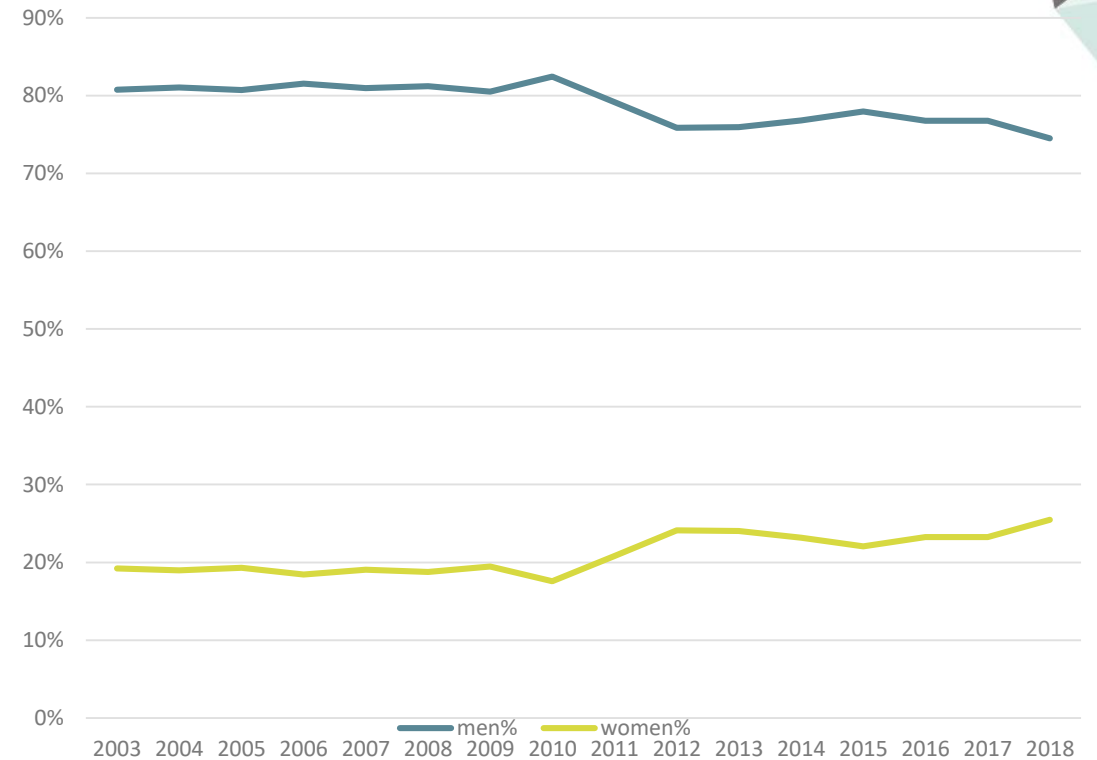
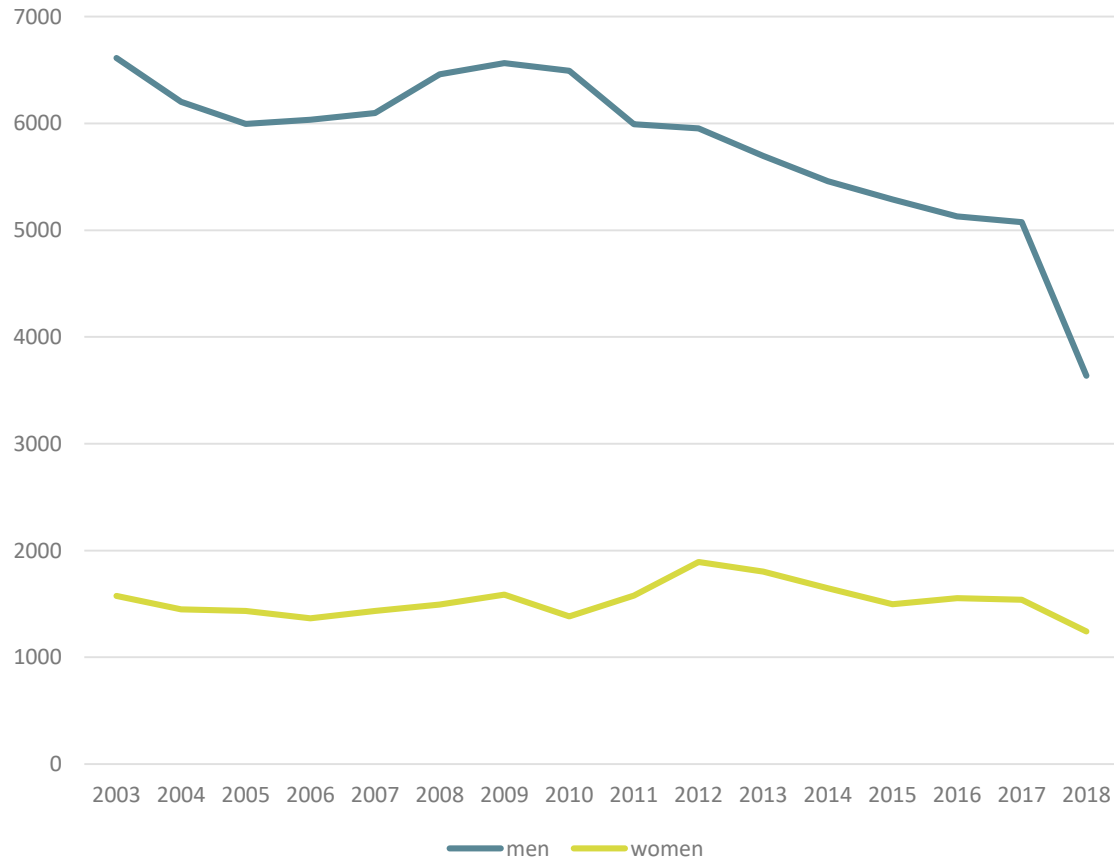
Homelessness in Finland 1987-2017



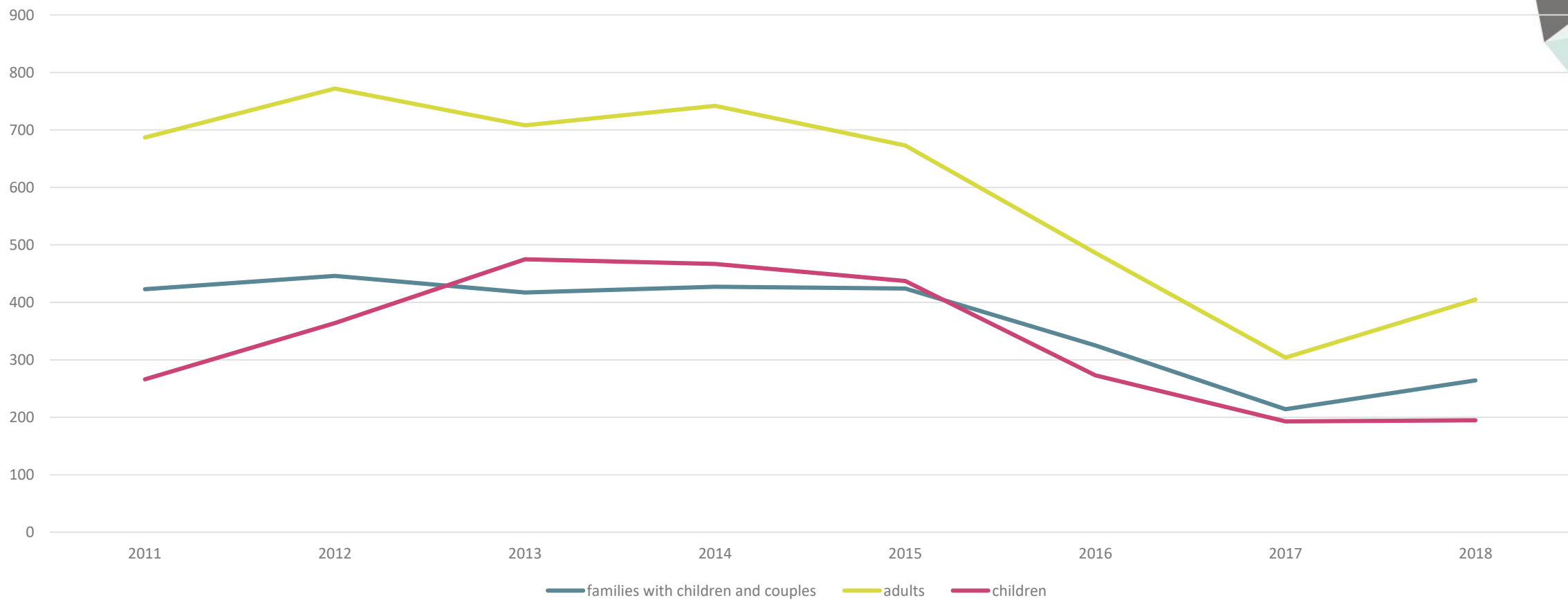
Women and Families

- Women`s homelessness has not decreased as much as overall homelessness (relative proportion of women has increased), now 25% are women.
- Homelessness of women and families even increased in the beginning the 2010`s.
- 2018 was the first time Finland has statistics of homeless families with children; 159. Almost 80% are single parents and most of the families are Finnish.
- Lack of research and knowledge about homelessness of women and families with children.
- Not highlighted as target groups in national programs.

Number of men and women and percentages of homeless people who live alone



Homelessness of families and children



Social welfare

- Strong welfare state and laws ensuring benefits and services.
- Benefits can pay the living and housing; you can pay rent without working.
- Good maternal benefits, until the child is 3 years old.
- Law of Child welfare: requires the municipalities to organise matters of finances and housing so that children are appropriately housed.
- In practice, the housing authorities of the municipality decide who gets housing. Social workers can make statements to support the case of the family.
- Lack of affordable housing (especially in the Helsinki Metropolitan area) and landlords are able to pick and choose their tenants. Debts can be a major reason why families are not chosen as tenants.
- Lack of options of supported housing for families with children.
- Homeless families with children are living either in temporary housing organised with by child protection or adult social work; with friends and families; shelters to victims of domestic abuse or in other type of housing organised with child protection (often with heavy support)
- After homelessness, how do families get new homes?

NEA PROJECT

Securing Housing for Women

AIMS

MAIN GOAL: ENDING WOMEN'S HOMELESSNESS BY SECURING THEIR PATHS TO HOUSING

PROJECT COORDINATION:

Y-FOUNDATION

SUBPROJECTS:

No Fixed Abode, Helsinki Deaconess Institute, The Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters, Turku and Helsinki Mother and Child Home Associations, EJY Association, Blue Ribbon Foundation, A-Clinic Foundation

Multidisciplinary co-creation individual work, groups, communities, meeting places

Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Turku, Tampere city-specific plans

Finnish Foundation for Supporting Ex-offenders, Monika – Multicultural Women's Association, other organisations

REFORMING PROFESSIONALISM (new work methods, women specific work orientation)

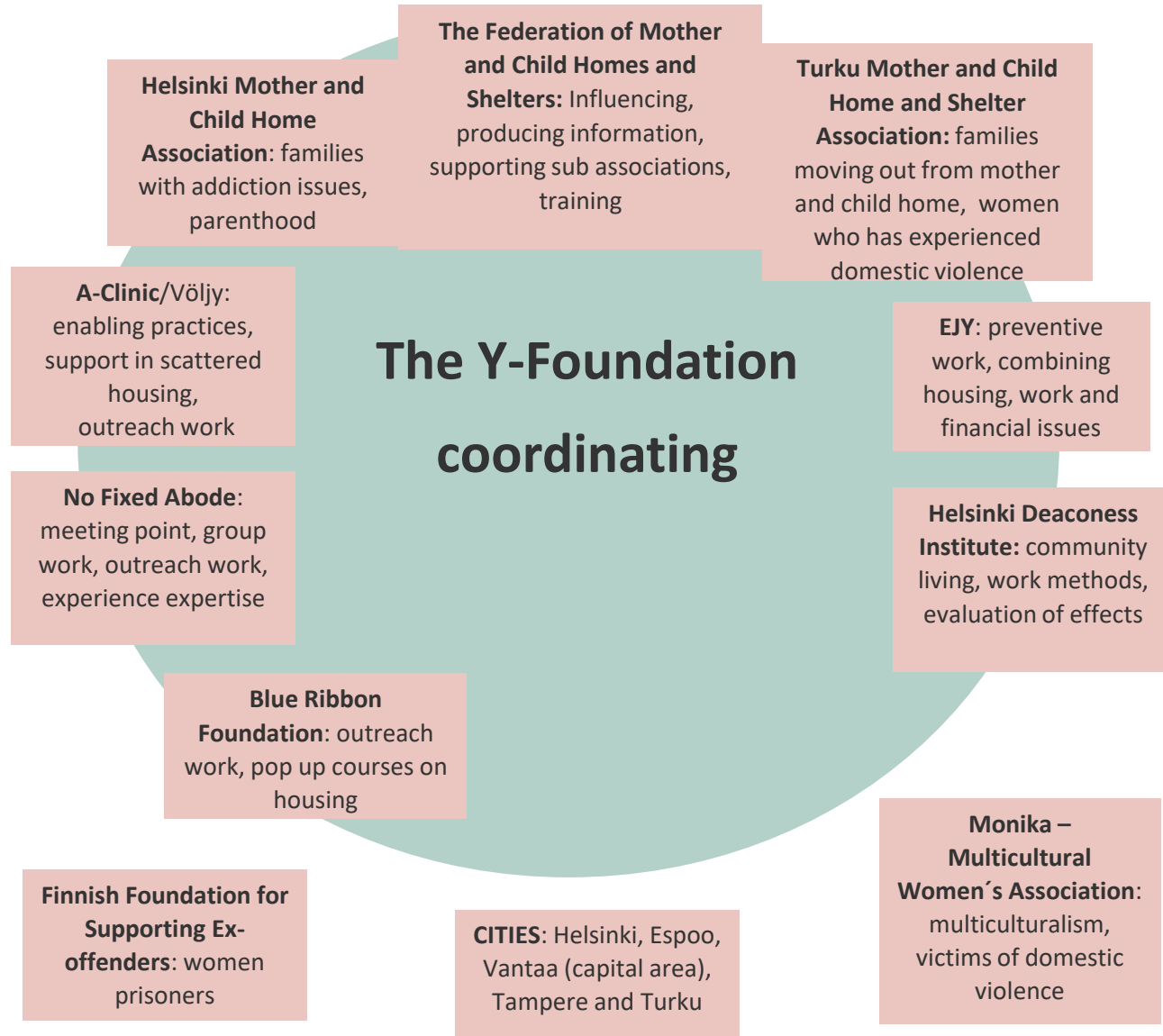
STRENGTHENING EXPERTISE OF EXPERIENCE

RAISING AWARENESS OF PHENOMENON (producing information and evaluation of effects)

SECURING LIVING IN OWN HOME

INCREASING SCATTERED HOUSING SOLUTIONS

SUB PROJECTS



The Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters

- A national child welfare organisation. Particularly concerned with helping families in need and with the prevention of problems. Non-governmental organisation, NGO.
- 31 member organisations, 700 employees, 1600 volunteers.
- More than 12 000 people, approximately 4 000 of whom are children, use the associations' services every year.

NEA subproject's aims are:

- >providing information on women and families experiencing homelessness and how it is being prevented in Finland
- >influencing and raising awareness of the phenomenon
- >supporting member organizations and training member organization's employees

The Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters

- A survey for the employees of the member organisations in February 2019: *What kind of challenges have you encountered in your work in relation to homelessness (or danger of becoming homeless) of women and children?* 98 responses
- The results highlighted issues such as problems with finances and debts; violence or danger of violence, substances, divorce or relationship breakdown and mental health problems.
- Barriers for getting housing: 1. problems with finances and debts 2. language barriers and cultural differences, attitudes towards immigrants and Finnish romans 3. substance abuse.
- Most of the respondents (70%) recognised women specific elements in their work. Specific needs of women were related to motherhood and children, e.g. finding suitable housing solution to share with children. Women were regarded to be in worse physical condition and in worse financial situation than men.
- Shared knowledge and understanding of the needs of special groups were highlighted as positive impact when working together with housing providers and agencies.
- Need for training on trauma and its' impact on housing retention, information about homelessness of women and families and training on how to advice about finances and debts.

Association of Mother and Child Home and Shelter of Turku

- The association's areas of expertise include intensive infant work, divorce consult, crisis- and violence work.
- The NEA subproject is mainly focused on women who move away from Mother and Child Home and Shelter.

Mother and Child Home

- Mother and Child Home is for families with babies that require individual and strong support in managing their everyday lives and the interaction between the baby and parents and in parents caring for their baby.
- Duration of customer period 3-12 month
- Individual work and community meetings, early interaction, parenthood, mastering everyday skills
- The trauma aspect is strongly involved in the work
- Independent living is supported also by home training

Association of Mother and Child Home and Shelter of Turku

Shelter

- The shelter offers 24/7 advice and support to victims of domestic violence.
- Short-term refuge in situations when staying at home is frightening or dangerous because of violence or the threat of violence.
- Duration of customer period from 1 day to 2 months.
- In addition to crisis and violence work, customers are supported in the search for an apartment, especially from the perspective for a safe housing.

MARAC- Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference

- The method is developed in UK 2003, in Finland since 2010
- The police, shelters, social services and health care services and other professionals in municipality cooperate to help victims of intimate partner violence.
- A tool for assessing the risk of repeat of violence into a relationship
- A security plan will be drawn up for the victim of violence or for the victim who is threatened with it.
- Examples of security plan measures:
 - Victims and their children are arranged a place in a shelter
 - Victims are provided opportunities for discussion and peer support
 - Victims are helped with financial issues, for example with finding a new home
 - A restraining order is filed against the offender
 - The events are reported to the police

MARAC- Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference

- Multi professional work brings the professional a new perspective on how professionals from different fields of work and authorities can help victims of violence.
- Working reduces the workload as duplication of work is reduced and the exchange of information between professionals and authorities is easier.
- Work also provides direct feedback on whether the victim of violence has received the help and support they need.
- The method is efficient - experiences gained in the piloting towns show that the spiral of recurring violence was cut in about 80 per cent of the cases.
- Experience from Turku:
-attendance of the housing advisor to the working group has been a good thing, getting a safe home has become easier.

NEA & Association of Mother and Child Home and Shelter of Turku

NEA subproject's aims are:

- To strengthen the client's skills of housing and dealing with finances
-> more emphasis on how to deal with money and finances-->question to Mother and Child Home and Shelter for the beginning of the rehabilitation period, training for workers and regular theme in community meetings.
- To find new partners and co-operation models
-> network participant across the sectors, actors in housing from different organizations, municipality and church as well as actors who work with women -> aim is to promote the women specificity, draw attention to risks of falling out of the services, for example when child is taken into care, divorce/separation.
-> strengthen the connections with landlords and clients' abilities to apply for housing

Association of Mother and Child Home of Oulunkylä, Helsinki

- Specialising in substance abuse treatment for pregnant women and families with babies.
- Aim is to secure child's development and to support early interaction and good parenthood.
- Rehabilitation periods average 6-12 month
- Clients through child protection either by choice or by order (child taken into care or rehabilitation). Clients must be free from substances and without withdrawal symptoms.
- The work is done by using methods of communal or individual rehabilitation. The work entails a strong trauma aspect.

Holding Tight Treatment System

- System includes six mother and child homes and seven open care units across Finland. The treatment system combines child welfare services with drug rehabilitation programmes.
- Rehabilitation reduces the amount of children who are taken into care and gives babies a chance to live with their parents.
- 2/3 of mothers in mother and child homes and 3/4 in open care units rehabilitate so well that their children do not need to be taken into care.
- Mothers thought that the rehabilitation enabled them to change their lives and increased their sense of safety.
- A sufficiently long treatment period produces results and it can break the chain of marginalization that can run in families.

NEA & Association of Mother and Child Home of Oulunkylä

The work practices of securing housing and everyday life skills are supported by, e.g.

- daytime rhythm
- food and cleaning breaks in areas of responsibility
- taking care of one's own room
- support for financial affairs and home search
- home training
- networking
- intoxicating and how to avoid the company of friends who are substance abusers

NEA subproject's aims are:

- To clarify economic and housing issues
 - > tools and skills for employees
- To strengthen co-operation with authorities and housing paths
 - > sufficient support network for customer
 - > utilizing the competence of other actor

More information <https://ensijaturvakotienliitto.fi/en>

Housing Advice

- Housing advice is preventative housing social work
- Within social work or in rental housing companies
- Funding from rental housing companies, municipality and ARA (Housing Finance and Development Centre)
- Important part of prevention of homelessness. Widely spread, currently being further developed, e.g. for new target groups and to better include financial matters.
- Impact of the activity has been proved

Housing Advice Services in Helsinki

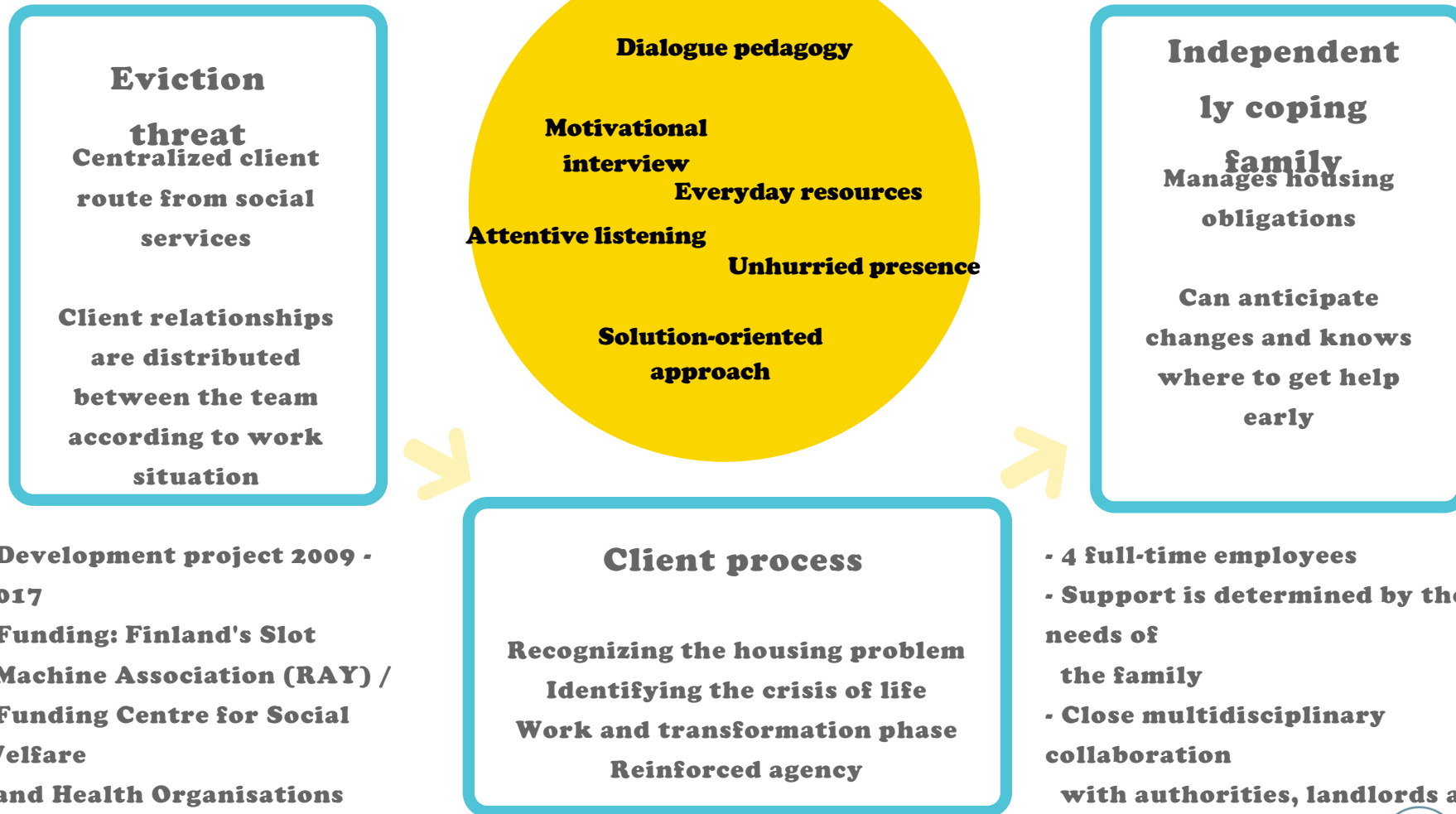
- The City of Helsinki employs 16 housing advisors and a psychiatric nurse.
- Statistics from 2018: over 11 000 contacts, most often by the clients themselves, reasons being rent arrears or problems in paying rent.
- In these cases the service helps to make a re-payment plan, strong network and referral to other necessary services.
- Results: the need for evictions and crisis accommodation decreases, increase in welfare, financial benefits.

Families, housing advice services and "housing guardians"

- The stats of housing advice services indicate that there are many families with children using the service - important impact on securing the housing of families with children.
- "Housing Guardians":
- Voluntary work, where well integrated immigrants share their experiences to support successful housing. Paid employee is a role model for others.
- Language skills in Finnish, Somali and Arabic.
- Strongly developed together with the immigration community.
- A special need to work with families with children has risen.
- Housing matters are combined with matters of integration and support for family life.
- Strengths include mother specificity and woman specificity - giving support, working as a peer and expert on integration - teaching, advice and role model, building bridges/bidirectional integration - participation and integration as member of the society as well as increasing the social cohesion of suburbs.

NEST OF STRENGTH:

operating model for combining homelessness work and family work



- Development project 2009 - 2017
- Funding: Finland's Slot Machine Association (RAY) / Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA)

- City of Espoo: financial support
EJY.RY / WWW.EJY.FI

- 4 full-time employees
- Support is determined by the needs of the family
- Close multidisciplinary collaboration with authorities, landlords and other partners

OUTCOMES

433

Client families with 973
underage children

164

Evictions prevented

87

Number of homeless or evicted
families that were assisted in finding
a rental apartment

80%

Amount of client families who
reported having received help for
their housing problem

80%

Amount of successful tenancies with families
that were given housing through a
partnership with TA Companies

€ 612.840 - 3.329.300*

Estimated net savings from prevented
evictions per year**

Calculated amounts vary according to the basis of the cost (from temporary housing for families to long-term costs of homelessness, exclusion and custodial care for children); the actual savings lie somewhere within the range.

*Source: Ministry of the Environment, Reports 23 | 2013

**At the 2013 cost level



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