

Bostad Först i Stockholms Stad

Housing First Stockholm

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1 The initiative and its organizers

Bostad Först i Stockholms Stad, “Housing First in Stockholm (HFS)”, is a project led and entirely funded by the Municipality of Stockholm. The project is aimed at developing a local model of “Housing First” (HF) to support homeless people. The idea of the Municipality is to create and spread local knowledge on the HF model, not only implementing the existing one but most of all adapting it to the local context. The long term goals related to the HF project in Stockholm are to reduce homelessness, to improve health and quality of life of homeless and deprived people, and to promote better use of resources.

For these purposes, the project provides homeless people with stable housing. HFS addresses to homeless people who do not qualify for getting an apartment according to the traditional channels, and have comorbidity between substance addiction and mental disease. The only two conditions imposed on the beneficiaries are to respect the Tenant Act and to meet the social workers in charge for their social support at least once per week. The apartments are scattered in the properties of the municipal housing company, Svenska Bostäder, within the city of Stockholm and they are small and cheap one or two room apartments.

The beneficiaries can stay for a trial period subletting the apartment from the social services of the local district, which pays the rent to the housing company. After this trial period, which lasts from nine months up to two years, they are eligible for a direct rental contract, paying a monthly rent.

The project started in February 2010, and the first trial period ended in February 2014. A second edition of the project for 2014-2016, called *Bostad Först i Stockholms Stad 2.0*, was starting up at the time of our fieldwork. This report refers to the first part of the project.

HFS partners are Svenska Bostäder, Stockholms Stadsmission and the University of Lund. Svenska Bostäder (SB) is a municipal housing company owned by the Municipality of Stockholm. Its main role in the project is providing the apartments, but it also has an important role of mediation with the neighbours. Stockholms Stadsmission is an NGO, which is in charge of providing the social support to the clients. The University of Lund was the actor who introduced the Housing First model in Sweden¹. Its tasks are the monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Other actors involved are the municipal unit for homelessness and the social services of the four local districts (Spånga-Tensta, Hässelby-Vällingby, Skarpnäck and Skärholmen). The latter are located in the outer city of Stockholm (Northern and Southern part of the city) and are considered to be among the most disadvantaged ones in Stockholm.

2 Basic information on the (local) context and the emerging problems

HFS targets two main issues: homelessness and the structure of the housing market, with particular reference to the growth of the so-called secondary housing market.

2.1 Homelessness in Sweden and in Stockholm

The total number of homeless people in Sweden is reported to be 30,800. However the definition used by the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare is rather broad and includes four categories:

¹ See section 3.

1. Acute homelessness (4,500 people).
2. Institutional care and category housing (5,600 people).
3. Long-term housing solutions (e.g. the secondary housing market) (13,900 people).
4. Short-term insecure housing solutions (6,800 people). (NBHW, 2011)

The Municipality of Stockholm uses a stricter definition: a homeless person is someone who lacks their own or leased property, is not living in any permanent relationship and relies on temporary accommodation or has no accommodation at all. People living in institutions or shelters who do not have any accommodation arranged in case of discharge and people temporarily living with friends, colleagues or acquaintances for a maximum period of three months are included in this definition (Stockholms Stad, 2014).

Compared to the national definition, Stockholm City's does not include people with long-term but unsafe or inadequate housing. According to these parameters, the situation in Stockholm is described in Table 1.

Table 1. Number and percentage of homeless people in Stockholm by gender 2004-2012.

Year	Male	Proportion (%)	Female	Proportion (%)	Total	Proportion (%)
2012	2.059	72	783	27	2.866	100
2010	2.215	74	767	26	2.982	100
2008	2.272	74	809	26	3.081	100
2006	2.326	72	905	28	3.231	100
2004	2.458	73	898	27	3.363	100

Source: Stockholms Stad, 2012

The last count was made in the night between the 18th and 19th April 2012, and the majority of the homeless people was found in supported or nursing accommodation (34%), training apartments (16%), shelter or emergency accommodation (13%), hosted by friends or relatives (11%). 109 people (4%) were reported sleeping outdoors.

The majority of homeless people in Stockholm (49%) is aged 46-64 and women are usually younger than men (23% of women belong to the range 20-29 compared with 12% of men). 58% of them are reported to have substance abuse problems (38% mainly alcohol-related, 39% mainly drug-related, 19% both). 30% of them are reported to be in contact with psychiatry, but the perception of the social workers of the local districts and of the municipal unit for homelessness is that 58% of them show some kind of mental disease (Källmen et al., 2013). As reported by the interviewees, around 500 people are reported to suffer both from substance addiction and mental disorder. These people comprise the target group of HFS.

The case management of homeless people in Stockholm occurs both at the district administration level and at the municipal level through the unit for homelessness. The four districts involved in the trial project present figures in line with the city's figures.

Table 2. Number of homeless people in the districts of HFS and % of the total homeless population.

	% on the total number of the city	Number
Spånga-Tensta	6	165
Hässelby-Vällingby	7	193
Skarpnack	5	149
Skärholmen	5	136

Source: Stockholms Stad, 2012

The number of homeless people is slightly increasing in Spånga-Tensta and Hässelby-Vällingby, stable in Skärholmen and slightly decreasing in Skarpnäck. The city presents a general decreasing trend, so that these districts have slightly unfavourable data compared with others.

The traditional model of intervention on homelessness in Sweden is the so-called staircase model (also known as “treatment first”). The underpinning logic is that homeless people are expected to qualify for housing after having proved to be ready. For this reason they are placed in shelters and flats where they are supposed to “learn how to live” (Knutagård and Kristiansen, 2013). The Housing First model overturns this logic by proposing an intervention in which housing is considered as a pre-condition in supporting other changes in the client’s life. As a consequence, abstinence from alcohol and drugs is no longer seen as a prerequisite for the client’s progress in the staircase system, but as a goal that can be reached only by starting from a safe and autonomous apartment. Consequently, in the Housing First service, housing and social support are clearly separated (Knutagård and Kristiansen, 2013).

Even within the staircase perspective a housing-led approach has already been adopted in Stockholm: similarly to the Housing First intervention, some of the homeless people are provided with an individual accommodation, the so called “Training Apartment”, but differently; the permanence of residency in the apartment depends on special terms with which they must comply, i.e. abstinence from alcohol and/or drugs, acceptance of a treatment and so on (Knutagård and Kristiansen, 2013). The beneficiaries of HFS are selected within this target group, called “treatment first group”.

The results of the staircase model have been unsatisfactory: less than 10% of all clients are able to take over their own lease within a year (NBHBP, 2012). In comparison, in the trial period of the Housing First project this percentage was 17.1% (6 people from 35)².

2.2 The structure of the housing market in Sweden and in Stockholm

Three major tenure forms are available in the Swedish housing market: owner occupancy, tenant-ownership and rental (public and private). The structure of the housing market in Sweden is reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Structure of the housing market in Sweden, 1990 and 2012.

	1990	2012
Owner-occupancy	40%	42%
Tenant-ownership	15%	23%
Private rental	20%	17,5%
Public rental	25%	17,5%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>

Source: www.boverket.se.

Owner occupancy generally refers to detached single-family housing where owners enjoy full real estate rights. Since the 1970s home ownership has strengthened its position from the most diffused tenure form in Sweden, having benefited from some changes introduced in housing policies.

Tenant-ownership refers to membership of a housing cooperative. Housing cooperatives, a typical tenure type of the Swedish system, are owners of the physical building while members buy the right to live within the space, paying an initial capital investment and a regular rent to the cooperative. Tenant-owned housing generally comprise multi-family apartments, and members are not allowed to sell or sublet their units unless they have the permission of the cooperative.

² See section 4.1.

Rental is the most declining tenure form since the post-war period, from 58% in 1945 down to 35% in 2012. The fall has been particularly dramatic for private rental housing (from 52% to 17.5%), while public rental housing had a fluctuating trend, reaching 25% in 1990 and then decreasing down to 17.5% in 2012 (Christophers, 2013).

These changes have been hastened by the neoliberal reforms of the national housing policies of the 1990s, labelled as “The Grand Restructuring” (Turner and Whitehead, 2002), which had, among others, the consequence of restricting the access to the regular housing market, thus widening the so-called secondary housing market, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The expansion of the secondary housing market in Sweden 2007-2012.

Year	Number of flats
2007	11.000
2009	13.400
2012	14.900

Source: NBHP, 2012

The result is the existence of a dualist rental market: a regular one where tenants enjoy a very strong position and a secondary one where they are in a very weak position. In the secondary market, however, the landlord can get rid of them quite easily and the rents are not controlled as is the case in the regular market, where they are the result of a complicated system of corporatist negotiations between the landlord organisations and the Swedish Union of Tenants, a very powerful actor representing the interests of the tenants.

During the clients’ trial period the HFS sublet the apartment from the local district, living as they were in the secondary market. Afterwards, when they sign a direct contract with SB they become tenants in the regular market, gaining the same strong rights as the other tenants in the same market.

The growth of the secondary housing market is also the result of the transformation of the public housing companies into market actors, which began in the 1990s and concluded in the 2000s. The latter, although still being owned by the municipalities, have to act according to business-like principles and started to adopt market strategies like selling part of their stock (Turner and Whitehead, 2002). 120,920 public dwellings have been sold from 2000 to 2010 in Sweden, whereof 41,990 in Stockholm. Despite public housing in Sweden being provided on a universalistic basis, the public rented dwellings increasingly tend to host mid-low income households (Holmqvist and Magnusson Turner, 2013), since the most attractive part of the public stock has been sold. However, only a residual stock is specifically allocated to socially and economically excluded households, and is managed by the municipal social services. The apartments reserved for HFS are chosen from this residual stock. In Stockholm around 400 apartments are reserved for this purpose (140 by Svenska Bostäder), of which 24 are allocated to HFS. Table 5 shows the proportion between the housing stock reserved for HFS and other significant stocks.

Table 5. HFS housing stock in proportion to other significant stocks.

Stockholm housing stock		452,563	
Municipal housing stock	78,252	% of total stock	17.3%
Svenska Bostäder housing stock	25,425	% of municipal stock	32.5%
Stock reserved for social purposes	400	% of total stock	0.1%
		% of municipal stock	0.5%
SB stock reserved for social purposes	140	% of total social stock	35.0%
Stock reserved for Housing First	24	% of total city stock	0.005%
		% of municipal stock	0.03%
		% of SB stock	0.1%
		% of stock reserved for social purposes	6.0%
		% of SB stock reserved for social purposes	17.1%

Another driver of the growth of the secondary housing market is the length of the waiting lists for obtaining a public rented dwelling. As a consequence of the housing shortage and of the selling of the public stock the queue is turning to a tricky issue, especially in the inner cities. The prime example is Stockholm city, where at the end of 2012 almost 400,000 people were registered in the queue (Boverket, 2013) and the average queuing time to get a public dwelling is 3-5 years in the outer city and 15-20 years in the inner city³. The consequence is that many people, especially young people, are forced to live in sublet apartments found in the secondary housing market.

Finally, the requirements for accessing the regular rental market are becoming more and more demanding. These include proving the absence of previous debts and the possibility to pay three times the requested rent. Because of these barriers mid-low income households are increasingly excluded by the regular market and are often forced to live their entire lives in the secondary market, especially in the bigger cities and in Stockholm more than elsewhere.

In the four districts where HFS is implemented the share of public housing of the total housing stock is higher than the city average; this is one of the reasons why they have been chosen for the trial project. Except for Skarpnäck they also have a much lower share of tenant ownership compared to the average of the city (Table 6).

Table 6. Tenure forms per district (rounded figures).

District	Public Housing (%)	Other tenancy rights (%)	Tenant Ownership (%)
Spånga-Tensta	29	35	35
Hässelby-Vällingby	43	32	25
Skarpnäck	31	18	50
Skärholmen	33	48	20
Stockholm City	18	28	54

Source: SCB/Sweco 2011

³ <http://www.bostad.stockholm.se/statistik>.

3 Genesis of the initiative

The Housing First model was first developed in New York in 1992 by the non-profit organization *Pathways to Housing*. From that moment on its popularity has constantly been growing and the model is now implemented in many European cities, thanks to its cost effectiveness - particularly appreciated by policy makers.

The spread and growth of Housing First in Sweden can be considered as research driven, since it was first promoted by the University of Lund in 2009. The initial milestone was the national conference on Housing First promoted by the University on the 6th November, 2009. The Department of Social Work at the University of Lund also offered support to the municipalities interested in setting up Housing First services in terms of: networking with other projects, mutual learning, creation of indicators and evaluation criteria. Two municipalities, Stockholm and Helsingborg, immediately decided to start up a Housing First project in 2010, followed by Malmö and Karlstad in 2012. Three municipalities (Sollentuna, Uppsala and Örebro) are in the process of setting up a project. All of these projects were intended as pilot projects and small-scale services: none of the municipalities abandoned the traditional staircase model (Knutagård and Kristiansen, 2013).

Housing First Stockholm was built on the principles promoted by researchers of the University of Lund, who tried to define a “Swedish way” to Housing First, starting from the following original principles:

1. Housing as a basic human right.
2. Respect, warmth and compassion for all clients.
3. A commitment to working with clients for as long as they need.
4. Scattered-site housing, independent apartments.
5. Separation of housing and services.
6. Consumer choice and self-determination.
7. A recovery orientation.
8. Harm reduction. (Tsemberis, 2010, p. 18)

A major difference with respect to the original model is that in the Swedish case direct contracts between the landlords and tenants are promoted in order to challenge the system of secondary housing market, although only subsequent to a trial period. The intention is to avoid situations where the beneficiaries live in an apartment without needing support anymore, but are still not allowed to take over the contract (Knutagård and Kristiansen, 2013).

The decisive input that made Stockholm the first municipality to accept the challenge launched by the University of Lund, came from the political side: the City Council, on the recommendation of its Commission on Social Affairs, decided to test the HF model in the City of Stockholm and asked the Research & Development Unit of the Social Affairs Division to design and start a trial project. The R&D Unit is tasked with developing new and old services for the City of Stockholm connecting research and practise. It was quite natural, therefore, for the design of the project to have been assigned to this Unit.

The project was designed closely following the original model of *Pathways to Housing*, as interpreted by the researchers in Lund. The selected target group was homeless people presenting comorbidity between substance addiction and mental illness. As in the original model, the social support has been designed to be provided separately from housing and is aimed at sustaining housing stability independent of other treatment-related goals.

The most challenging part in the phase of design was to identify and procure the apartments. The apartments managed by the municipal housing companies, particularly the ones reserved for social purposes, were the easiest solution. Three of the four housing companies owned by the municipality were asked to take part in the project by making available a small stock of their apartments, but only Svenska Bostäder accepted. SB is traditionally the more socially oriented housing company in the city.

I actually think we want to be seen as a large housing company with a large social responsibility. Ok, we are a large housing company, we work very hard to have highly satisfied customers but we also take the social responsibility, a little bit like that, it was good for the big picture of SB from outside. (Representative of Svenska Bostäder)

Once the matter of apartments was resolved, the process of selection of the first tenants could begin⁴ and the project could start. The phase of the design was sped up by the upcoming local elections, since politicians wanted the project to be launched before that date.

The first discussions about HF happened in February [2010, editor's note], there were the elections in September, and the politicians said the first clients should move into their apartments before, after summer, so that it was not that clear but you know, you have to move in very quickly so we basically didn't do a lot of designing before we started. (HFS Project Manager)

As a result, the real design of the project was made during its implementation, in a learning-by-doing process, also because there were still no examples of HF in Sweden, except for the research-driven inputs given by the University of Lund.

The first three years were very open, and it was basically trying HF. We were not used to work with this model, so we couldn't just take it and put in the Swedish context, and work like they do in New York, so basically the first three years were all about designing the project. All of the actors, the districts, Stadsmission, they were basically very much part of developing the services and designing the whole project, I think now we're more going into an implementation phase. (...) In 2010 I didn't see a way of making this happen, without taking this way of making, bringing the actors into this process. (HFS Project Manager)

The first part of the project ended in February 2014 and the second edition is being designed for the period 2014-2016.

4 The activities and organization

As already explained, HFS is a trial project for testing the implementation of the Housing First model to deal with homelessness in Stockholm. Homeless people are offered a trial period from 9 to 24 months, during which they sublet an apartment from the social services, similar to the system within the secondary housing market. After the trial period, tenants may secure a lease of their own and enter the regular housing market in doing so. The primary goal is to support tenants in maintaining housing stability. The main feature of the project is that housing is provided without any condition apart from respecting the Tenant Act, as required by all the other tenants. External social support is provided, but it is considered as a separate service from housing. Tenants are not expected to stop using drugs and alcohol or to meet any other requirement to maintain occupancy.

4.1 HFS target group

The HFS target group is homeless people presenting comorbidity between substance addiction and mental disease. Only people considered in the category of acute homelessness are included, while the Housing First project in Helsingborg, for example, considers all the categories identified by the National Board of Health and Welfare⁵.

⁴ See section 4.1.

⁵ See section 2.1.

All the participants have both substance abuse and mental disabilities, since we refer to the original model developed by Tsemberis in New York that was designed to help that group of people. In order to make a good evaluation of our project we decided to work with the same group. I know that in other EU countries they work with single mothers and other target groups, not so much troubled clients as we have in Stockholm. (HFS Method Developer)

A major difference between the original Housing First model and HFS is that the former is especially addressed towards people outside the welfare system, while the latter usually works with people with a very long history in the social services and with bad results from previous experiences in the traditional welfare system.

We can't provide them with passive shelter, they keep looping at the bottom of the staircase and they never move up, because of the addiction problems, because of mental health issues, because of a lot different issues, and we don't really know how to give them adequate housing. So they are our target group. (HFS Project Manager)

Access to HFS is mainly regulated by the social workers of the local districts. They select people from the same target group of the treatment first model, presenting the characteristics required by HF: comorbidity, acute and prolonged homelessness. They conduct motivational interviews to identify the potentialities and limits of the candidates. When a new apartment is available, the selected candidate attends a meeting with representatives of the Stockholm Municipality, the local district, Svenska Bostäder and Stadsmission. During the meeting, SB describes the rules that the candidate is required to follow in the apartment and the contract between the housing company and the local district is signed.

We give rules to be a customer at SB and we read them together. Most of these people haven't had home for about 10 or 15 years, so there is a lot of discussion. The most important thing to me is to give them the signal that we really want this project to succeed, we want them to succeed in being HF tenants. (Representative of Svenska Bostäder)

Once they are selected, the new tenants meet their SB caretaker, who is a property manager having the operational control of the area where the apartment is placed, e.g. a compound. The caretakers play a very important role, since they are the closest supporters for the tenants.

And then they meet the caretaker because this person is very important for them, because if there's any problem they will meet this person, so it's very important for me that the new tenants and the caretakers shake hands and say hello to each other. (Representative of Svenska Bostäder)

35 beneficiaries have been involved in the project in the period 2010-2014. Table 7 shows the results of their respective housing pathways.

Table 7. Number and situation of HFS beneficiaries 2010-2014.

Situation	Number	Share
Sublet contract	16	45.7%
In the "pipeline"	3	8.6%
Direct contract	6	17.1%
Interrupted contract	7	20.0%
Died	3	8.6%
Total	35	100,00%

Source: our elaboration from interviews and document analysis

The main result of the trial project has been the entrance in the regular housing market of six people, 17.1% of the tenants. The number grows to nine (25.7%) if we also consider the three people in the “pipeline”, that is, the phase of evaluation after the trial period. It must be considered as a good result in relation to the target group’s characteristics (acute homelessness, drug/alcohol addiction and mental disease) and the much less satisfying results given by the traditional staircase model, where less than 10% achieves housing stability (NBHBP, 2012).

Contracts are interrupted when SB receives complaints by the neighbours about disturbances created by the client. The situation is evaluated accordingly and a decision is taken by SB, although the opinion of the municipality and of Stadsmission is also considered. The power of SB is quite strong: since it is the only municipal housing company that agreed to participate in the project, the municipality handles it with care and avoids opposing its decisions. In some cases a halfway solution can be found and the tenant may be suspended only for a limited time and asked to spend a period (two weeks or one month) in a shelter managed by Stadsmission, considering it as a short treatment period.

The motivations for the interruption of the contracts are mainly related to the disturbances created by friends of the tenants. This emerged as a major issue in the project: five contracts out of seven were interrupted mainly for this reason and problems have emerged also in other situations. Friends of the HFS beneficiaries often live on the streets and try to profit from the new situation, thus creating mess and disturbances in the whole neighbourhood:

We had to stop the contract of this guy, it was so clear that he did all that he could to prevent his friends from visiting him, but it didn’t work, they came in, and they went into the stairwell, they settled smoking in the stairs, someone used the elevator as a toilet... So, we had to stop this contract, but we said, ok, you live in the north-west of Stockholm, so we give you another chance to live in the south-west of Stockholm, so he had another chance, but the same thing happened in three months, and now we have to stop even that contract. This guy was really sorry, he said “I was too weak, when it was cold outside and I have an apartment, my friends didn’t have any and I could not prevent them to come in”, so they come in, and the other people said, “this doesn’t work any longer, you have to take him away”, so we did it, I felt sorry for that guy, because if it only was for him I think it would have made it, but he had friends and he was too weak in front of them. (Representative of Svenska Bostäder)

Two other contracts have been interrupted for reasons related to the personal behaviour of the tenant: damages, disturbances, wrong use of the waste collection area, and actions not in line with the Tenant Act.

When the tenant uses the apartment, he or she must ensure that the people living in the neighbourhood are not subjected to disturbances to such a degree that it may be injurious to health or to their home environment. Tenant must therefore, in its use of the apartment, observe all that is necessary to preserve the health, order and good condition within and outside the house. [...] Tenant must keep close control that these duties are carried out also by those under his or her responsibility. (Tenant Act, art. 9)

Table 8 shows the description of the HF target population in Stockholm and Helsingborg, as reported by the comparative research of Källmen *et al.* (2013).

Table 8. Health, psychological and social characteristics of the beneficiaries of HF in Stockholm and Helsingborg.

	Frequency	%
Physical Health		
Hepatitis-C	9	37.5
HIV	2	8.3
Mental Health		
Had contact with psychiatric professionals	5	20.8
Experienced depression	8	33.3
Experienced anxiety	10	41.7
Problems with concentration / memory	10	41.7
Hallucinations	4	16.7
Difficult to control aggressive impulses	4	16.7
Had suicidal thoughts	7	29.2
Attempted suicide	4	16.7
Experienced psychological abuse	6	25.0
Been physically abused	7	29.2
Victims of sexual assault	1	4.2
Family and Social		
Living alone	12	50.0
Having kids	11	45.8
Children under 18 years	5	20.8
Education		
Not finished Primary School	1	4.2
Primary education	12	50.0
Secondary education	3	12.5
Livelihood		
Pension	1	4.2
Unemployment benefit	9	37.5
Social benefit	13	54.2
Illegal activities	3	12.5

Source: Källmen et al., 2013

4.2 Housing provision in HFS

As already explained, the apartments for HFS are provided by the partner organisation Svenska Bostäder, using the social stock they made available to the Stockholm Municipality⁶. For the first trial period the contract is signed between SB and the social services of the local district which sublets the apartments to the clients. Paying the rent regularly and respecting the Tenant Act are the only two conditions placed on clients in maintaining the apartment.

⁶ See section 2.2.

In contrast to other HF initiatives in Sweden, HFS does not entail a mandatory trial period of two years. The participants may gain a direct rental contract after nine months. This was a source of conflict and negotiation with the University of Lund, which had a pure HF intervention in mind, in which no trial period was foreseen. Stockholm Municipality (and other Swedish municipalities) contested this approach, knowing that no housing company would have supplied apartments for HF tenants without the inclusion of a trial period.

After the trial period, if there are no problems or complaints, the contract is transferred directly to the client. In that case, SB sets two new conditions: the tenants should be able to handle their financial affairs and should not have previous debts with SB. In the latter instance, SB does not usually require the whole repayment, but the willingness to pay off the debt at least on a symbolic basis:

As an example, I handled this guy, he has a wonderful apartment, he has made friends with his neighbours and he's quite a social guy. He has of course a lot of problems and we discuss: "ok, it's time for you to sign the contract for this apartment" and he's very happy about it. But when we look, he has a debt to us, about 3,000 euros. So we say "ok, you have to start to pay off this debt to SB and you have to pay off not so much, perhaps 10 euro a month, you have to show that you pay every month to SB" and I say: "we will meet in August to write a contract". If I said "ok you will have your first contract when you'll pay off all of your debts", it's impossible, but you have to show you're ready to do this. (Representative of Svenska Bostäder)

The apartments are scattered-site independent housing as in the original approach, although they are mainly concentrated in some areas of the suburbs (northern and southern areas of Stockholm) because of two reasons. Firstly, in those areas rents are relatively inexpensive and SB does not reserve valuable apartments; secondly the apartments must meet some characteristics regarding the size and the number of rooms, which are mainly met in these areas.

A big problem for me is that the apartments must have one room and a kitchen, they have to be small apartments, they have to be quiet, the rent shouldn't be so high, so you can't find all of the apartments in all of our districts. Many districts don't have these apartments, so others have to take a lot of tenants. The center of Stockholm is one district, but we cannot leave the apartments there: it is very attractive, if you have to buy an apartment you have to pay perhaps 500,000 euros, you cannot just give it to a person who is out of the queue. Then other districts have just big apartments, so it's almost just one part of Stockholm where there are apartments for this project, which is the north-west, not 100% are there but it's about 75%. (Representative of Svenska Bostäder)

24 apartments have hitherto been reserved for HFS. 20 more apartments are going to be introduced in 2014/2015 and 20 more in 2015/2016, so that there will be 64 apartments available for the project in 2016.

4.3 Social support in HFS

The social support is provided by the partner organisation Stadsmission based on the approach of the intensive case management: a professional is assigned to each tenant. The case manager visits them periodically (usually once a week) and coordinates staff available on call 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

As implied by the HF model, social support is entirely separated from housing. The case managers do not propose social plans or projects, but monitor the experience with the goal of maintaining housing stability. In this sense, an important part of their support is focused on the skills and behaviours needed to meet the requirements of the Tenant Act, so as not to run into complaints for improper actions, neglect of the apartment and of the relationship with the neighbourhood, in terms of people and spaces.

The social support can go beyond this basic task only if it is requested by the tenant, e.g. in relation to mental health issues or drug and/or alcohol-related problems.

The quality of social support emerged as a crucial aspect in the trial project. A reflection process has started on the need for highly skilled teams, on the interaction with health care services, on the assessment and follow-up of needs and risks, and on the need for interdisciplinarity (knowledge of social assistance, psychology, psychiatry, and finance).

4.4 Organisation of HFS

HFS is led by a Steering Committee composed of high representatives of the Stockholm Municipality, Svenska Bostäder and Stadsmission (heads of departments or units). Its role is to supervise the implementation of the project and discuss the strategic lines. The methodological and practical issues are managed by an operative working group, led by the Method Developer.

The Method Developer has the mandate to supervise on the methodological implementation of the HF model, trying to continuously revise the intervention (and the model itself) in order to make it more efficient. Her role is also to develop internal procedures and provide administrative support. It turned out to be a pivotal role, since she also gained some competences by the project manager during the implementation phase.

Except for a small amount of money for dissemination, the project has no dedicated budget. The costs are included in the ordinary budget of the social services for homelessness. Rents for the tenants are paid for by the local districts using the same funds earmarked for accommodating homeless people in shelters or training apartments.

Stadsmission receives a compensation for its social support, while SB receives remuneration for the apartments, although it is required to pay possible damages made by the tenants.

We really want this project to succeed because if it doesn't work, it will be quite a problem for us too. It costs us quite a lot of money to get rid of the tenant and we have to upgrade or we have to do something in the apartment that costs a lot of money if there's a problem. Even if we get a new tenant in quite a few days, this apartment will be out of rent for some days, so the best for us is that it works from day one. (Representative of Svenska Bostäder)

4.5 Results and perspectives

An evaluative research study about Housing First projects in Stockholm and Helsingborg was conducted in 2013 (Källmen *et al.*) comparing the achievements of the beneficiaries in different areas (housing, security, medical problems, employment, social relationships, psychological problems, drug and alcohol addiction, crime) of two groups: clients of HF and clients of Treatment First. HF projects present better results as far as housing stability is concerned, and similar results in the other areas either after six months or two years.

However, this is believed to be a short period for an evaluation:

To really assess the success of this HF project, you need to look after five or ten years, and see: are the people still living in their flat? It doesn't say so much that six people have the contract. Are they still having it next year? So, it's too early to really say anything. What you can say is that the clients are generally very satisfied with the support, with the project, but it's nearly impossible to say whether they have decreased their substance abuse or mental illness. (Method Developer of HFS)

In February 2014, the first trial project ended and Stockholm Municipality decided to carry on with a second three-year project introducing some changes that mainly regard:

- The number of available apartments, which is going to increase from 24 to 44 in 2014/2015 and to 64 in 2015/2016.
- The network: a psychiatrist from the provincial health care system and two nurses from the substance addiction service will support the teams in dealing with the mental health problems and with the health-related aspects of substance abuse.
- The introduction of trial actions in the field of employment: the Municipality of Stockholm gave an assignment to the Method Developer to plan support activities regarding the employment for the HF tenants, assessing needs and possibilities. This is considered as a possible strategy to go beyond housing and sustain a more general recovery process:

Something very important would be an opportunity for some kind of employment on a daily basis. So if one day you feel you haven't been drinking for 3 or 4 days, you're ok, and you start to think about "what do other people do? I want a job as well". A one day job, it could be cleaning, moving furniture, picking apples. It's fine to have a flat, but often you get so bored, you start screaming, and what can they do? Who would employ them? Nobody. They have a sort of stigma. (Social worker of local district)

- The improvement of the quality of the social support, which should include professionals in these areas: social work, substance abuse therapy, psychiatry, active labour market policies, housing care, crime prevention, finance.
- The enhancement of the clients' empowerment and participation, through tenant meetings and operative groups.
- The enhancement of the service to housing companies through regular contacts with the caretakers.

5 The innovative dimension of the initiative

Drawing on social innovation literature the innovative dimension of Housing First Stockholm is analysed using three basic dimensions (Gerometta *et al.* 2005; Moulaert *et al.* 2005a,b; Oosterlynck *et al.*, 2013): a) the satisfaction of basic social needs (content dimension), in this case the need for housing stability; b) the transformation of social relations (process dimension) in this case the relations among different actors (public administration and third sector organisations), including the beneficiaries; c) the empowerment and socio-political mobilisation (linking the process and content dimension), in this case related to the possibility for beneficiaries to take control of their own lives.

5.1 Content dimension

HFS addresses a basic social need not effectively tackled neither by the traditional welfare state nor by market actors for its target population: housing stability. The clients of HFS cannot comply with the requirements for accessing the regular housing market, and at the same time have always rejected the traditional approaches of the social services (the staircase model). In the latter paradigm housing stability has always been considered as the ultimate step of the intervention, while HFS considers it as a prerequisite to achieve other goals.

This kind of approach also allows reaching a target population hardly included in the institutional welfare services: people with drug and/or alcohol addiction and mental health issues, together with acute homelessness and prolonged unemployment.

One of the women who is now into the project doesn't want to live anywhere else. She doesn't want to stay out of drugs, so she would sleep on the street. Thus it is much better if we can provide somewhere to live and then start to work with her. I think that is one of the big achievements of the project, since to reach these people you need to put them somewhere, otherwise they're not in the condition to trust you and listen to you. (Social worker of the local district)

HFS is the only possible access to the regular housing market for this group of people. The absence of debts and the capacity to pay the rent, by proving that your income is three times higher than the rent, are two barriers for this group of people, so that subletting the apartment from the local districts is the only way to have access to the regular market.

5.2 Process dimension

The collaboration between the Municipality of Stockholm, Svenska Bostäder and Stadsmission provides us with an interesting case of horizontal governance that also includes non-profit actors. The procedure is not so unusual in the field of homelessness: Stadsmission is the main reference in the city for social support to homeless people and is a rather powerful actor within the social service provision in Stockholm. In this regard, the process dimension of HFS does not present particularly innovative procedures. However, an important change occurring in 2014 with the beginning of the second edition of the project pertains to the involvement of the substance addiction service and, especially, of the provincial healthcare system. This collaboration can be considered very innovative in this context since health and social services do not have a strong tradition of collaboration⁷.

Another valuable aspect is the addition of the method developer, a rather innovative professional figure to the structure. It supports the development of the project through the special task of monitoring the implementation of the HF method in the specific context of Stockholm, and to identify the main strengths and weaknesses and to propose new solutions. This happens both at the managerial and at the operative level and is having substantial results: the establishment of a collaboration with the provincial healthcare system, mandated to explore the possibility of intersection with the active labour services and mediation with the housing company.

Housing stability also gives the clients the opportunity to rebuild a social network, starting from family relations, which can sustain them in many aspects of life.

Many of our clients have lost contacts with their families, quite a few have children that they haven't seen for 10, 15 years. Usually it is the first thing they think about when we say "this is your flat: maybe I have somewhere to invite my 19 years old son that I haven't seen since he was a baby". And some of them have actually connected. (Social worker of the local district)

5.3 Empowerment dimension

HFS' goal is housing stability, so that clients are able to achieve a condition of growing autonomy in the management of their lives. The degree of this achievement depends on specific cases and conditions. The interviewees report that probably most of the clients will need permanent social support; nevertheless, housing stability remains a precondition for empowerment and autonomy in many fields.

I think that if you have your own door to close, you can rely on yourself. If you live in shelters, you share a room with four or five people, who maybe steal things, and you can't keep a thing

⁷ See section 7, challenge #2.

in. Here you have your own apartment and you decide by yourself who you let in, and that must be a difference compared with what you have had before, since ten years, twenty years for some of them. (Social worker of Stadsmission)

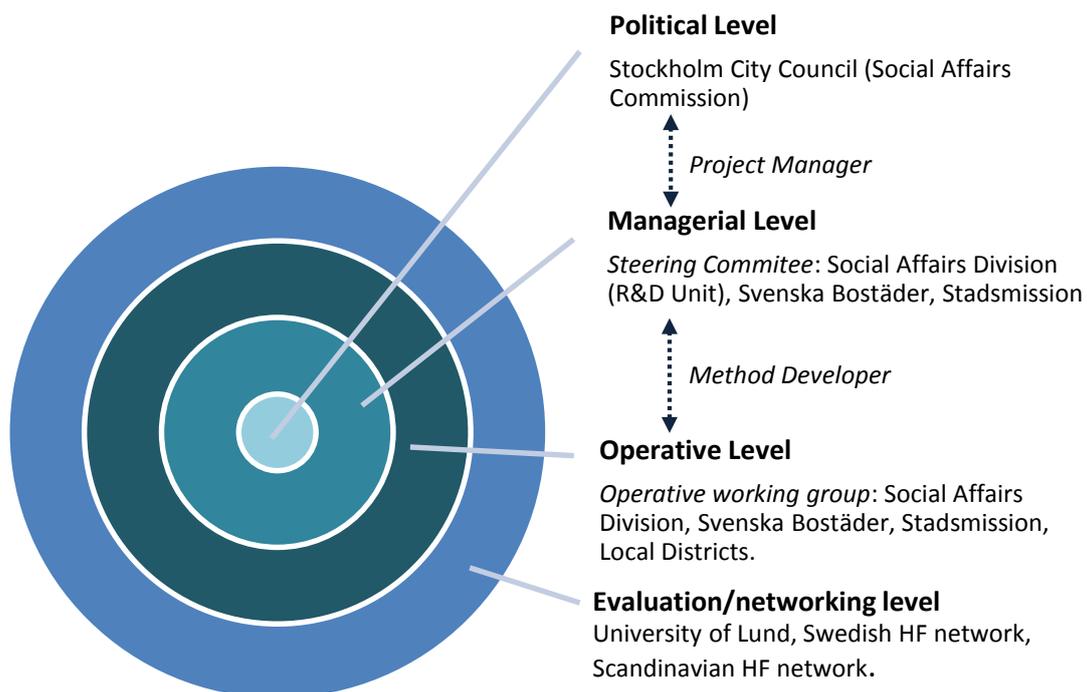
Time is considered to be an important aspect of the empowerment dimension and HFS, apart from some cases of interruption⁸, it gives its clients the possibility to take their time, up to two years, to get used to managing an apartment and to introduce changes in their habits. All the social workers report that this is a crucial aspect considering the target population of the project, and that traditional intervention never gave them so much time.

Except for these strategies of individual empowerment, promoting participation is reported to be very difficult with the respective target group. In this regard, HFS is employing a rather traditional idea of homeless people as clients receiving services rather than promoting a transformation of the social relations. Attempts to increase the possibility of actively involving the tenants will be gradually implemented however⁹.

6 Institutional mapping and governance relations

HFS is managed through a public-private governance network coordinated by the Stockholm Municipality.

Figure 1. HFS and the levels of governance: actors and relationships.



Source: own elaboration from desk analysis, interviews and focus group.

The governance relations are structured at three levels: political, managerial and operative. The political level is mainly comprised of the Social Affairs Commission of the City Council. The second level is led by the Steering Committee whereby the partner organisations are represented by heads of

⁸ See section 4.1.

⁹ See section 7, challenge #3

department or similar. Finally the third level is delivered by an operative working group, where social workers from the various partner organisations participate.

The role of the Method Developer is particularly relevant in mediating between the managerial and the operative levels, especially in trying to bring to the attention of the Steering Committee the requests coming from the operative level.

The Steering Committee is accountable to the Social Affairs Commission of the City Council. In this case the mediation is carried out by the project manager, who is in charge of presenting reports to the Commission and implementing directives and inputs coming from the political side.

The role and internal organisation in relation to the project by the different actors is as follows:

The Municipality of Stockholm is the project leader. HFS is assigned to the Social Affairs Division, one of the seven divisions of the Municipality of Stockholm, which is in charge of the coordination of the social services and interventions in the city. The project manager is working in the Research & Development Unit. This unit aims at connecting research and practice with the purpose to develop old and new services and, although innovation is not a keyword, when a new project has to be designed and implemented it is usually the R&D Unit that deals with it.

We talk more about development than innovation but then on the other hand a lot of innovative issues land on our table. It was natural for example that HF would have been developed by the R&D Unit, and if you think of HF as an innovation then you know we ended up doing it. (HFS project manager)

Local districts are the administrative areas in which the City of Stockholm is divided. The provision of the social services is one of their responsibilities, including the ones addressed to homeless people. Four local districts, all located in the outer city, have been involved in the trial project: Spånga-Tensta, Hässelby-Vällingby, Skarpnäck and Skärholmen. Their role in the project is to select the beneficiaries and coordinate the case management of every client, besides paying their rent at least in the trial period, when the contract is made between Svenska Bostäder and the local district.

Svenska Bostäder is in charge of the provision of the apartments reserved to HFS. It is represented in the Steering Committee by the Head of Security. This choice was made with the idea that SB's role in the project would have been mainly a question of managing the possible disturbances created by the clients.

Stadsmission is a big local NGO which provides a great number of services to contrast poverty addressed to different groups within the city of Stockholm: children, families, single mothers, young adults, young parents, elderly, homeless people. Its role in the project is the provision of the social support. It is represented both in the Steering Committee (by heads of departments) and in the operative group (by social workers).

A fourth level includes the external actors or networks that support the development of HFS. The University of Lund launched the HF model in Sweden¹⁰ and is following the activities of all the Swedish HF projects, collecting data to produce an evaluation.

The Swedish HF projects are connected in a national network in which the HFS is also involved. The network meets twice a year to exchange experiences. Also a Scandinavian network of HF projects is active and periodically organises meetings and conferences.

HFS is not involved in any European network. The project manager is developing some personal international contacts (in Denmark, Norway, and Scotland) that might conduct future collaborations.

¹⁰ See section 3.

7 Governance challenges

7.1 Mainstreaming social innovation

As previously elaborated, during the trial period (2010-2014), HFS had 24 apartments and 35 clients. In the second edition (2014-2016) the availability of apartments will reach 64 in number: 20 more in 2014/2015 and another 20 in 2015/2016. This is a signal of a gradual mainstreaming of the initiative, although the number still remains low in comparison with the potential target population: 2,866 homeless people in Stockholm. Nonetheless, if we strictly consider the specific target group of HFS, that is people presenting both substance addiction and mental health issues, the potential target population reduces to around 500 people, as reported by the interviewees. To this extent, the increase from 24 up to 64 apartments is a good step, since it could result in a total coverage of at least 10% of the target population.

An obstacle to the mainstreaming of the project is the structure of the housing market, which makes it very difficult to find apartments for the purposes of HFS: both private landlords and municipal housing companies are not interested in allocating apartments for these kind of projects as they can rent them to more reliable and stable tenants. Finding an apartment is also very difficult for households not assisted by social services, thus creating competition and long waiting lists.

Ordinary people with no problems cannot get a flat. Someone told me “my son has worked for so many years, and he cannot find a flat, do I have to tell him to start taking drugs, so you will give him a flat?”. So, for us it is horrible that it turns out into a competition, but that’s the situation today: our target group competes with the normal people. (Social worker of the local district)

The dissemination of HF model is also undermined by the existence of vested interests: the previous practises related to the staircase model are resistant to changes in the whole country because of two reasons. First, they are feasible to the organisation of the housing market, since the clients are always maintained in the secondary market (Knutagård and Kristiansen, 2013). Second, public, private and non-profit organisations that manage shelters and other types of accommodation have strong interests in keeping the staircase model alive (*ibid.*, 2013). So far, only 7 out of 290 Swedish municipalities have started a HF project despite the method having been promoted by the University of Lund as evidence-based and cost-effective¹¹.

The evidence of cost-effectiveness could be a decisive point in fostering the upscaling and roll-out of the HF model. It is actually reported by all the interviewees as an important point which requires attention by the political actors in the case of Stockholm. For this reason, the City Council, through the Commission on Social Affairs, follows the development of the project very closely through a continuous exchange of reports, feedbacks and directives with the Steering Committee.

7.2 Governing welfare mix: avoiding fragmentation

HFS and the traditional interventions inspired to the staircase model are managed by the same organisation (the Social Affairs Division of the Municipality of Stockholm). However HFS is only operating in four city districts and its beneficiaries receive a very different level of support, both when dealing with housing and social support.

¹¹ See chapter 3.

Both the Steering Committee and the operative working group meet regularly, giving all the partner organisations the possibility to actively participate in the management of the project, thus reducing the fragmentation of activities and information within the project.

This is particularly important as far as the local districts are concerned, since they are located in the outer city, while the municipality, Stadsmission and Svenska Bostäder work at a centralised level. The involvement of the social workers of the local districts is particularly important, therefore, in ensuring the internal coherence of the initiative.

There is a risk of fragmentation concerning the possibility of collaboration with the health services. Only preliminary contacts have been established with the provincial healthcare system, despite its consideration as a crucial actor. The lack of psychiatric support was identified as a major weakness of the project by all the interviewees at any level of action. The main reason is that the municipal social services and the provincial health services do not have a tradition of collaboration, because of a different approach in the provision of services. The interviewed social workers perceive the healthcare system as being very hierarchical and based on doctors' authority. The onus is on the user to be aware of their own need, be willing to change his/her situation and ask for help to the services; they must be able to attend precise appointments, to be visited by the doctors and follow exactly their indications. According to the social workers this approach does not work with the HFS target group, which has many difficulties in searching for help, attending visits at established days and hours and even physically entering institutional offices. The result is that in most cases the beneficiaries do not have a professional diagnosis of mental illness made by a psychiatrist. On the contrary, social workers carry out an informal diagnosis based on their experience.

In the end HFS could be a way for some clients to receive a formal diagnosis, since some of them succeed in staying drug and alcohol free thanks to housing stability and can finally get a psychiatric assessment. Getting an official diagnosis is very important because of access to various entitlements.

Indeed, the collaboration with the substance addiction service was reported to be much easier and it resulted in the employment of two nurses in the second part of the project (2014). Yet the management of the project is working hard to develop a collaboration also with the psychiatric service: a psychiatrist is actually expected to start collaborating, but the negotiations still have to proceed.

Another driver of fragmentation is the lack of direct communication between the social workers and the caretakers of SB, which makes all the operations slower and more difficult.

It's hard to get in contact with them (the caretakers, editor's note) because they have a sort of call center for the tenants and we have to call them, we would like to have a direct contact, to have their mobile phone number. We have to call this call center and they say 'ok he (the caretaker, editor's note) can call you next week' and that's too late. With a direct contact we can prevent problems, it would help not only us but also them, and we would never abuse of it, we would only use it to avoid a crisis, they are afraid that we are going to call all day long. (Social worker of the local district)

7.3 Governing welfare mix: developing a participatory governance style

The project is reported to have a democratic and participatory governance style from the perspective of the organisations involved, thanks to the work of the two groups (Steering Committee and operative working group) that meet regularly, giving all the partner organisations the possibility to be updated and to take collective decisions.

The Steering Committee receives directives from the City Council but also input coming from the operative level. A very important role is played by the Method Developer, who is acting as a mediator between the two levels as is recognised by everybody.

The working groups allow social workers and representatives of the housing company to sit on the same table and discuss their visions - which are sometimes quite different¹² - and have led to a better mutual understanding. This situation also has practical effects on the daily intervention: building a relationship of trust with the landlord is crucial for the housing stability of the tenants and the mutual knowledge exchange between the actors involved helps both partners to work better in the direction of housing stability.

As regards to the participation of the beneficiaries, it has been very difficult to promote among the target group of the project. However, some attempts are going to be tested in the new edition. A first step should be the introduction of a periodic tenants' meeting. Secondly, the increased presence of tenant voices in internal meetings and public debates concerning the project should be aimed for. This has already happened during a conference of the Scandinavian network of HF programmes, where two tenants of Housing First Stockholm did participate.

7.4 Equality and diversity

HFS is a targeted intervention that has an impact on the issue of equality, since it allows some people to jump the official waiting list for public housing. The beneficiaries of HFS get a direct contract into the regular housing market after a trial period of nine to 24 months, while others must normally wait 5 to 15 years in a queue. This situation is particularly challenging in these times of housing shortage, since it creates competition among individuals and groups.

The beneficiaries of HFS are selected among the same target group as the traditional interventions inspired by the staircase model. This creates inequalities since the clients of HFS have the opportunity to enter the regular housing market.

As regards to equality and diversity a tension between SB and the social workers of the local districts and of SM was reported. SB tends to apply the same treatment to everybody, mainly considering the financial stability of the tenants, while the social workers tend to work more on the diversity within the target group, examining the situations on a case by case basis¹³.

7.5 Uneven access

The access to HFS is limited clients of one of the four districts involved in the project, thus excluding people registered at other districts.

Furthermore HFS addresses people that suffer from acute homelessness and comorbidity. The existence of these two conditions is assessed by the social workers of the local districts without referring to any formal criteria. The condition of acute homelessness is not defined in terms of time spent living on the streets or in any other terms, and even the condition of comorbidity is the result of an assessment made by the social workers and does not comprise a psychiatric diagnosis. As the number of beneficiaries represent a very small part of the total target population, there is room for discretion.

When we come to the contract takeover, the main actor regulating the access becomes Svenska Bostäder, since the contract is signed directly between them and the client. In this phase, the economic conditions become more important than the social ones: the client must be able to prove to SB to have a certain degree of financial autonomy in order to pay the rent regularly and to repay any possible previous debts with SB.

¹² See challenge #7.

¹³ See challenge #7.

7.6 Avoiding responsibility

Only one out of three municipal housing companies accepted to host HF clients in their apartments, despite the fact that local districts offered to pay the regular rent. The project is indeed economically inconvenient; given the current situation of the housing market in Stockholm, the housing companies are quite certainly able to rent their housing units immediately to more reliable clients. Svenska Bostäder explicitly stated to have accepted the municipality's proposal for reasons of social responsibility. The other two housing companies decided to avoid taking this responsibility. Probably this would not have happened until the last ten years, when the municipal housing companies could operate on a not-for-profit basis and their main goal was to satisfy the public interest.

7.7 Managing intra-organisational tensions

This is a major challenge for the project. Many tensions were reported, within organisations and among them:

- *Public administrations:* on a general basis, the decision to adopt the HF model created tensions within many Swedish municipalities among people who wanted to start new projects and others who wanted to preserve the institutionalised practices of intervention ('staircase model'). The former prevailed only in 7 out of 290 municipalities, also because the latter (often a coalition between public administration, private and non-profit organisations) were able to defend their vested interests in the staircase model (Knutagård and Kristiansen, 2013). On the other hand, HF has proved to be an evidence-based and cost-effective model of intervention and for these reason, a growing number of municipalities are taking into consideration its implementation. However, in none of the seven municipalities that experimented with HF have these projects become mainstreamed.
- *Housing companies:* since they are required to act on a for-profit basis, housing companies developed a high degree of internal tension as far as social projects are concerned; they are public actors but at the same time they have to generate profits and reserving apartments for social purposes in the secondary housing market is not worthwhile.
- *Svenska Bostäder:* coming to the specific HF project, tensions have been reported between different levels within the company. The head of security is responsible within SB for the HF project but the caretakers are more than anyone else on the field working with people and managing conflicts on a daily basis. They are technicians who are in charge of an area of the city or housing estate. First of all, the caretakers are not involved in the project, yet they have to handle its practical consequences trying to fulfil needs and complaints and to manage difficult and conflictual social situations. Secondly, they are not involved in the process of tenant selection, since the decision is taken by the local districts with the approval of the head of security of SB. Thirdly, only a few SB caretakers host HFS tenants in their area and they experience this decision as unjust. This feeling of injustice is caused by the fact that their wage is related to an index of customer satisfaction measured annually by SB, by collecting data directly from the tenants. This index is highly valued within SB and it is broken down for the different areas of the city, so that it can be compared with the work of each caretaker. The index of an area usually declines when HFS tenants move to that area.

You have a lot of balls in the air at the same time, so in this case you take these tenants and they give us a lot of problems. But you have another ball in the air, which is, isn't it a human right to have somewhere to live? Of course I think it is a human right. Every single person in this world ought to have a place on his/her own. And when I talk to our caretakers about this, everyone say "yes, yes, but...", like they should have somewhere to stay but not in my house. So we have a lot to work on, internal in our own organization. (Representative of Svenska Bostäder)

7.8 Enabling legal framework

The legal framework in the Swedish housing sector is not particularly favourable for enabling the project. The main issue is that the Swedish housing regime is traditionally considered as universalistic, so that the national and local housing policy has been built within that framework. HF is, instead, a selective practice that reserves selected apartments to selected tenants.

It is not a new question, since each municipal housing company already reserves a stock of apartments for the use of the social services. However, HF is the first project whose goal is to provide people with housing stability in the form of a direct contract between the housing company and the client. In the other cases the apartments are sublet by the social services for the necessary period only (e.g. to follow a treatment or while waiting in the queue for a public apartment) or for emergency situations.

The Swedish housing regime is changing and the existence of a specific social housing sector within the public housing system is gradually becoming a fact. Nonetheless the implementation of HF on a large scale would probably raise a big debate and this aspect could hinder its upscaling.

A characteristic of the Swedish housing system that may foster the success of the project is the level of protection of tenure security: once a tenant signs a contract with a landlord, they are highly protected from almost every possible attempt of the landlord to get rid of them. The only major duty on the tenant side is to regularly pay the rent. This is almost the only area of contention that can lead a court to decide against a tenant. This legislation is enabling because HF clients, after the two-year trial period, can gain real housing stability. From the opposite side, this feature can prevent housing companies from participating to the project so as not to have to deal with problematic tenants they cannot evict.

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Appendix

In March and April 2014 the Urbino team conducted:

- Analysis of documents concerning the innovative experience (e.g. project, agreements, websites of the actors involved). Analysis of institutional documents, data and research to describe the local context (e.g. laws, public strategies, reports).
- 3 qualitative interviews involving the Project Manager of Housing First Stockholm, from the Research & Development Unit of the Social Affairs Division of the Municipality of Stockholm; the Method Developer of HFS; social worker at the Social Affairs Division of the Municipality of Stockholm; the Head of Security of Svenska Bostäder.
- A focus group involving 5 participants: The Method Developer of HFS; a social worker of the local district Spångavägen-Tensta; a social worker of the local district Hässelby-Vällingbyvägen; two social workers of Stadsmission.

ImPRovE: Poverty Reduction in Europe. Social Policy and Innovation

Poverty Reduction in Europe: Social Policy and Innovation (ImPRovE) is an international research project that brings together ten outstanding research institutes and a broad network of researchers in a concerted effort to study poverty, social policy and social innovation in Europe. The ImPRovE project aims to improve the basis for evidence-based policy making in Europe, both in the short and in the long term. In the short term, this is done by carrying out research that is directly relevant for policymakers. At the same time however, ImPRovE invests in improving the long-term capacity for evidence-based policy making by upgrading the available research infrastructure, by combining both applied and fundamental research, and by optimising the information flow of research results to relevant policy makers and the civil society at large.

The two central questions driving the ImPRovE project are:

How can social cohesion be achieved in Europe?

How can social innovation complement, reinforce and modify macro-level policies and vice versa?

The project runs from March 2012 till February 2016 and receives EU research support to the amount of Euro 2.7 million under the 7th Framework Programme. The output of ImPRovE will include over 55 research papers, about 16 policy briefs and at least 3 scientific books. The ImPRovE Consortium will organise two international conferences (Spring 2014 and Winter 2015). In addition, ImPRovE will develop a new database of local projects of social innovation in Europe, cross-national comparable reference budgets for 6 countries (Belgium, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Spain) and will strongly expand the available policy scenarios in the European microsimulation model EUROMOD.

More detailed information is available on the website <http://improve-research.eu>.

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