

Y-Foundation (official name Y-Säätiö sr); basic details

(Programme coordinator Taina Hytönen, November 2019)

Y-Foundation is a non-profit social housing provider founded in 1985 to offer housing for homeless people. It is an independent and neutral body established by the cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Turku and Tampere, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, the Church Council, The Finnish Red Cross, the Confederation of Finnish Construction Industries, The Finnish Construction Trade Union and The Finnish Association for Mental Health. These organizations are represented in the board of Y-Foundation.

The headquarters of Y-Foundation are in Helsinki. The CEO is Mr. Juha Kaakinen and the number of employees is 137.

Pursuant to its statutes the basic task of Y-Foundation is to support health and social welfare services by arranging housing matching human dignity for people in need of housing and being capable to live independently or almost independently. The foundation can also in other ways take part in improving the social and health conditions of the abovementioned groups and support research which serves these purposes.

To fulfill these tasks Y-Foundation buys and builds rental housing and implements development projects to create sustainable housing solutions also for tenants with special needs. The operation has throughout the years been based on normal housing: the foundation does not build hostels or temporary solutions. The original way of action was buying scattered housing from private housing market. Today the foundation owns also normal social rental housing and has built apartments targeted for special purposes. Facilities for supported housing consist of individual apartments even though there can also be room for on-site services.

Today Y-Foundation owns the total of 17 327 apartments and operates in 54 cities and municipalities. As a non-profit organization, the foundation is entitled to state investment grants and loans for construction by ARA, the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland¹. In housing targeted for people with special needs this can cover up to 50 % of building costs. Another important financier has been STEA, the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations². STEA has granted funds both for buying scattered housing for the homeless as well as various development projects. Loans from banks and other financial institutions are also used.

Over the years, Y-Foundation has actively developed support services for the tenants in cooperation with local authorities, social and health services, several non-governmental organisations and social work of the church. Target groups in this work have been, e.g. young people, people with mental health or addiction problems, homeless people and people with disabilities. The foundation supports national programs on homelessness based on the Housing First principle by providing housing and since 2011 also by coordinating a national development network on Housing First. The project organizes training, implements pilot projects and offers a platform for sharing information and carrying out other joint development activities.

¹ <http://www.ara.fi/en-US>

² <http://www.stea.fi/web/en/frontpage>



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Y-Foundation is a member of FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. Since 2016 FEANTSA and Y-Foundation have actively promoted the establishment of a European platform for development work on Housing First, the Housing First Europe Hub. It aims at improving the living conditions of people who have experienced homelessness by sharing expertise in training, work practices and research.³

Other ongoing projects of the foundation are an employment project for its tenants, developing housing advice services to prevent homelessness and creating low-threshold work activities for tenants outside the open labor market. It is also involved in creating innovative housing solutions for rental housing and promoting integration.

Y-Foundation's work has been internationally recognized with the World Habitat Award (2014) and the European Civil Society Prize (2015).

³ <http://housingfirsteurope.eu/>