



# The Impact of *Housing First* in a Small City in Portugal

***17th European Research Conference on Homelessness***

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Câmara Municipal de Leiria

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## InPulsar - Community Development Association

- ▶ Non- profit organization;
- ▶ Established in 2012;
- ▶ Located in **Leiria**, a small city in the center of Portugal;
- ▶ **MISSION:** To contribute to the social and economic inclusion of populations in vulnerable and socially excluded situations, with a focus on proximity and community involvement. The intervention centers around the individual and the community's own capabilities.





# MORADA CERTA

LEIRIA HOUSING FIRST



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# Project Development Phases



SIGNALING OF THE PROBLEM

VISIBILITY

SOLUTION DESIGN

**PROJECT START**

PROJECT SCALABILITY

SOLIDIFICATION OF THE INTERVENTION MODEL

2014

2017

2018

2019

2020

2021

“Giros na Rua” Project

- Exhibition "Leiria Without a Roof – Portraits of Invisibility"
- Roundtable discussions on the topic

- Participation in various Housing First Conferences
- Leiria Municipal Assembly unanimously approves the implementation of the Housing First model

- Integration of 3 people experiencing homelessness

- Increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness Integrations
- Ongoing team strengthening and work process enhancement

Assistance to 15 people experiencing homelessness



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# Principles



Housing as a Right



Participant choice and control



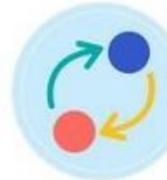
Separation of Housing and Treatment



Guidance towards recovery



Risk reduction



Active Engagement without Coercion



Person-Centered Intervention



Flexible support for as long as needed

# Morada Certa – Leiria Housing First

## Functioning

- ▶ Participants are housed in independent, permanent, scattered-site apartments rented from the private housing market
- ▶ Weekly Visits
- ▶ 24/7 Availability
- ▶ Individualized plan definition in coordination with participant:
  - Support in housing management and maintenance;
  - Mediation and access to social and health services;
  - Access to documentation/identification;
  - Access/maintenance of social benefits;
  - Assistance in utilizing community resources.

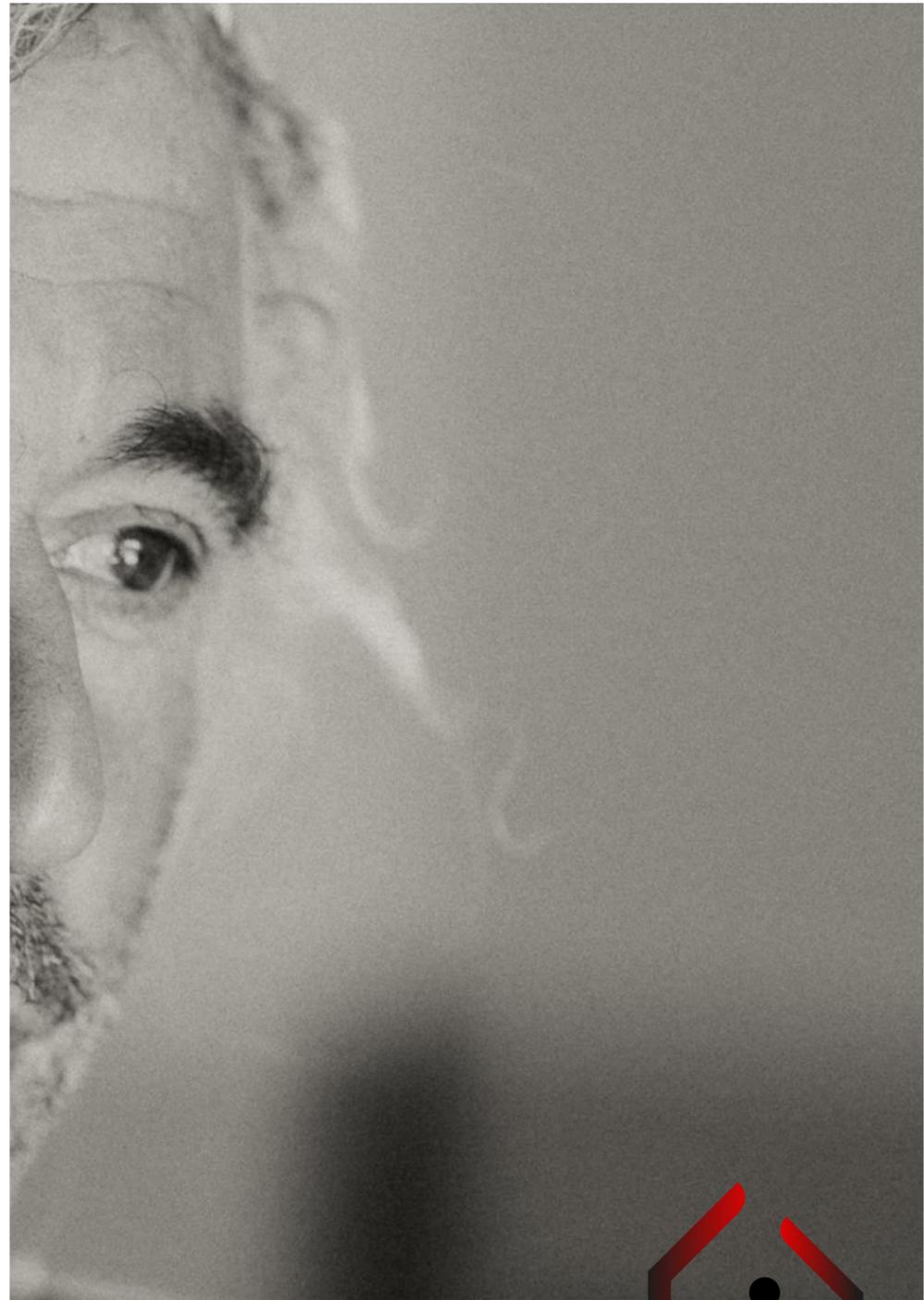






## Morada Certa – Leiria Housing First Participant Characterization:

- ▶ 19 individuals integrated (16 Men/ 3 Women)
- ▶ Average age: 51 years old;
- ▶ Majority falls within the age group of 45-64 years (59%)
- ▶ Place of origin: Leiria (65%)
- ▶ Single (63%)
- ▶ Low educational attainment (37% with Primary School education; 6 individuals with no formal education)
- ▶ 62,5% (10 individuals) had been experiencing homelessness for more than 10 years



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# Main Results

- ▶ Greater engagement in healthcare and subsequent health improvement;
- ▶ Reduction in substance use;
- ▶ Increased feelings of security, stability, and privacy;
- ▶ Enhancement of autonomy and responsibility conditions;
- ▶ Proactive involvement of partner network (NPISA - Homelessness planning and intervention unit; healthcare; landlords; individuals);
- ▶ Enhancement of image of people experiencing homelessness;
- ▶ High housing retention rate – 90% did not return to their previous situation;
- ▶ Participant satisfaction with the program.

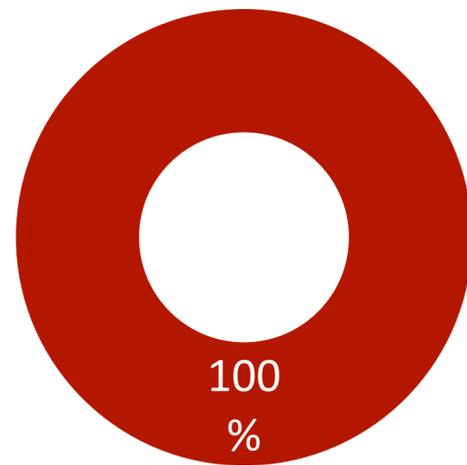


# Participant Project Evaluation...

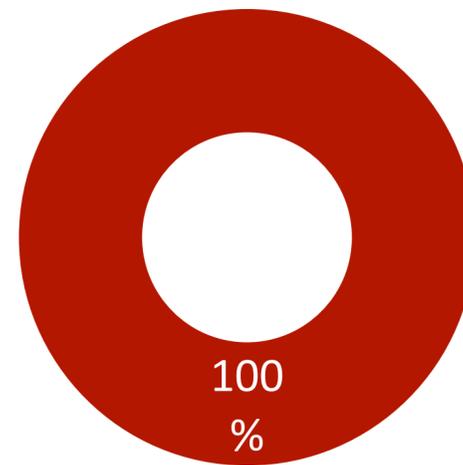


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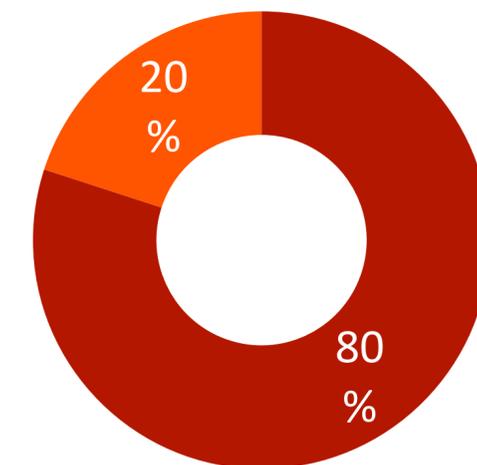
LEIRIA HOUSING FIRST



100% feel highly satisfied with the support from the Housing First program.



100% feel highly satisfied with the level of engagement and care from the project team members.



80% feel very good, and 20% feel good about how the Housing First program helps them feel well.



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Sources:

Core Service Satisfaction Scale, At Home/Chez Soi Project (2010). Translated and adapted by ISPA/ AEIPS (2012)

Ornelas, J., Vargas-Moniz, M., & HOME\_EU Consortium Study Group. (2020). Homelessness as unfairness.





# Morada Certa – Leiria Housing First - Making a Difference:



- ▶ The implementation of the Housing First project in a small city has offered a fresh perspective on homelessness issues.
- ▶ The positive results demonstrated its effectiveness, a solution that works even in small city's. This results are in line with those obtained in other Portuguese study (Ornelas, 2014).
- ▶ Demonstrating its effectiveness led to the first-ever combination of public and private funds in Portugal to support a Housing First project.
- ▶ This project also promoted public discussion about homelessness topics and contributed to create the local homelessness units (NPISA), also, being recognized as a good initiative of social innovation by the national homelessness strategy.

Ornelas, J., Martins, P., Zilhão, M. T., & Duarte, T. (2014). Housing First: An ecological approach to promoting community integration. *European Journal of Homelessness* \_ Volume, 8(1).



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# Next Steps...

- ▶ Enhance the community integration process;
- ▶ Develop occupational activities tailored to the characteristics and vulnerabilities of the individuals being supported, promoting employability and professional inclusion whenever possible;
- ▶ Improve the process of monitoring and evaluating Housing First outcomes. An ongoing evaluation is envisaged, focusing on the development and tracking of proposed objectives, as well as an impact assessment centered on the changes observed in the individuals integrated into the program.





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