

# Housing First Rome: a Community Project Experience

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# Project Partner



SANT'EGIDIO



**Community of  
Sant'Egidio:**  
HF Providers

**fio.PSD:**  
Training and  
Data analysis

**CISCO:**  
Founder

# HF Rome – Nutshell

**Duration:** 4 years (2019–2023)

**Funding:** 1 million dollars

**Target:** 40 homeless people

**Goal:** Experimenting and applying the Housing First model in the city of Rome for the first time

**Challenge:** Incorporating Housing First into Local Strategy to Fight Homelessness





# Why Rome?



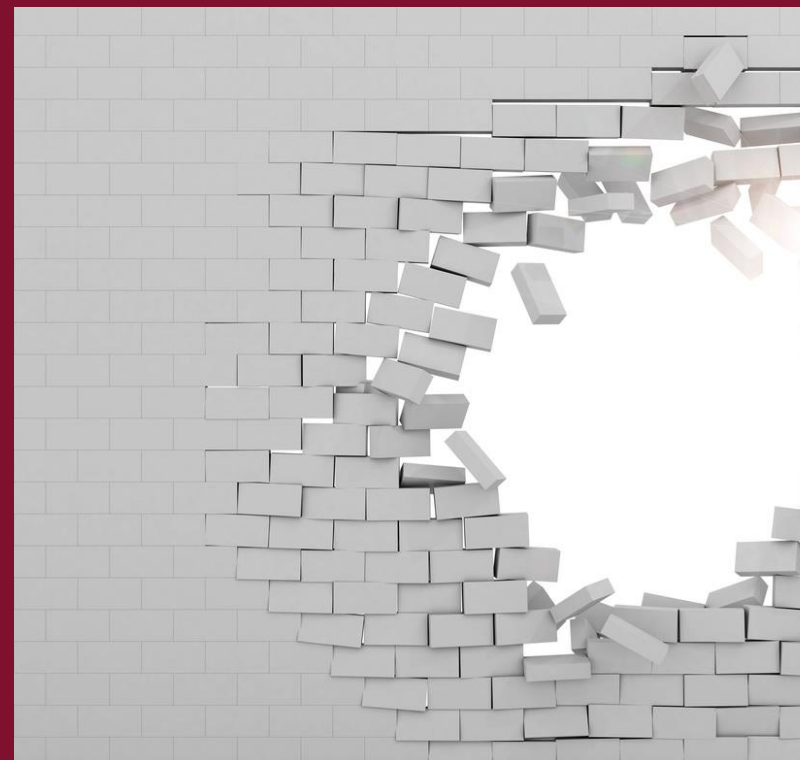
## First

Addressing the unaffordable housing market



## Second

Introducing HF vs. Emergency Approach



## Third

Ending long term or repeated homelessness



# Conceptual framework and Evaluation dimensions

## Quantitative Data Collection

Housing First Principles and Fidelity test  
Housing retention  
Health and well-being  
Social and Community Integration  
Cost-effectiveness of Housing First

(Ref. *Pleace et al 2016, Housing First Europe Guide*)

## Qualitative Interviews

Focus on “what HF users think and feel about different aspects of their own life and the support they received”

(Ref. *HUB HF, Housing-First-Evaluation-Framework-Template-01.2020*)

# Methods and Evaluation Tools

## Quantitative Data Collection

“**Cassandra**” (fio.PSD 2019): Questionnaire to measuring outcomes systematically for three years

“**Rossella**” (Molinari, Zenarolla 2016; 2018): National Edition of Fidelity scale (armonized with EU HF principles) to measuring a coherence/incoherence on *type and housing choice; separation of accommodation and treatment; services programme; structure of the programme; planning and evaluation*)

“**Onda del cambiamento**” (Molinari e Zenarolla 2016; 2018)

National edition of Outcome star to measuring changing in ten domains of users life (self-care; home care; daily management and use of time; health; addictions; relationships; conflict management and legality; money management; work; education)

## Qualitative Interviews

“Focused Interview” about:

Satisfaction

Self-determination

Changing

Motivation

Desideries and Perspectives



# Evidence and Results



# HF users (40)

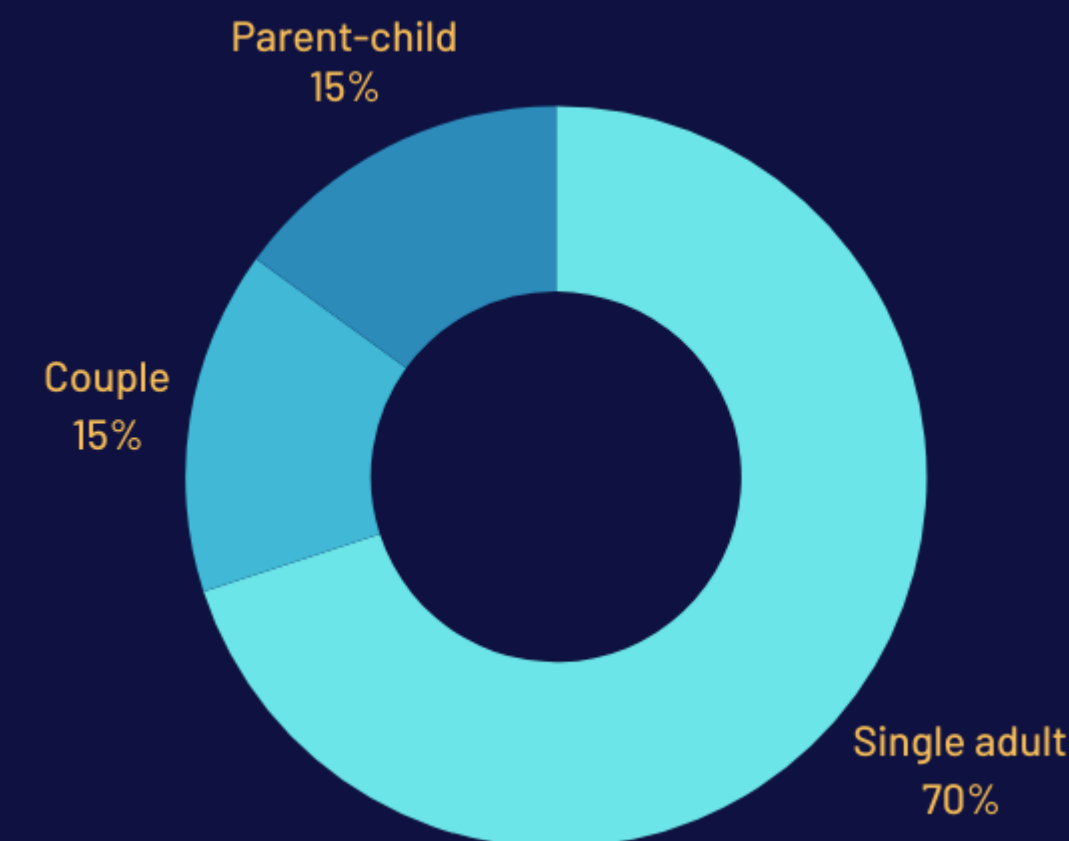
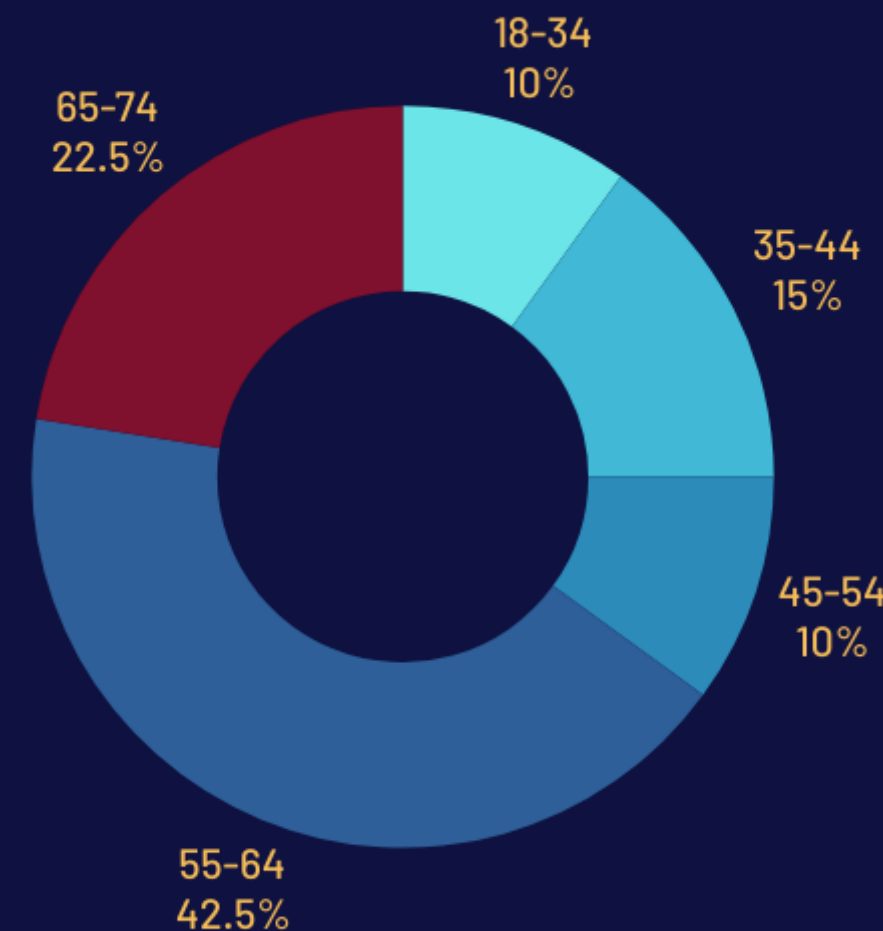
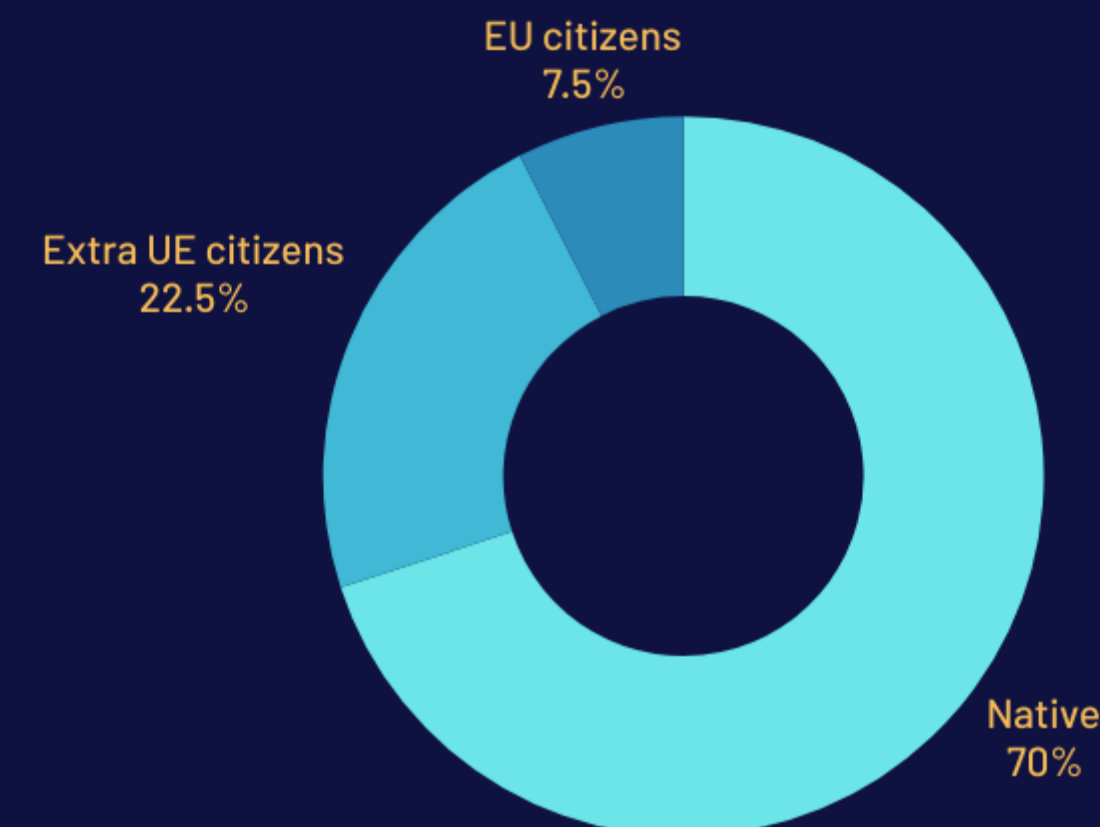
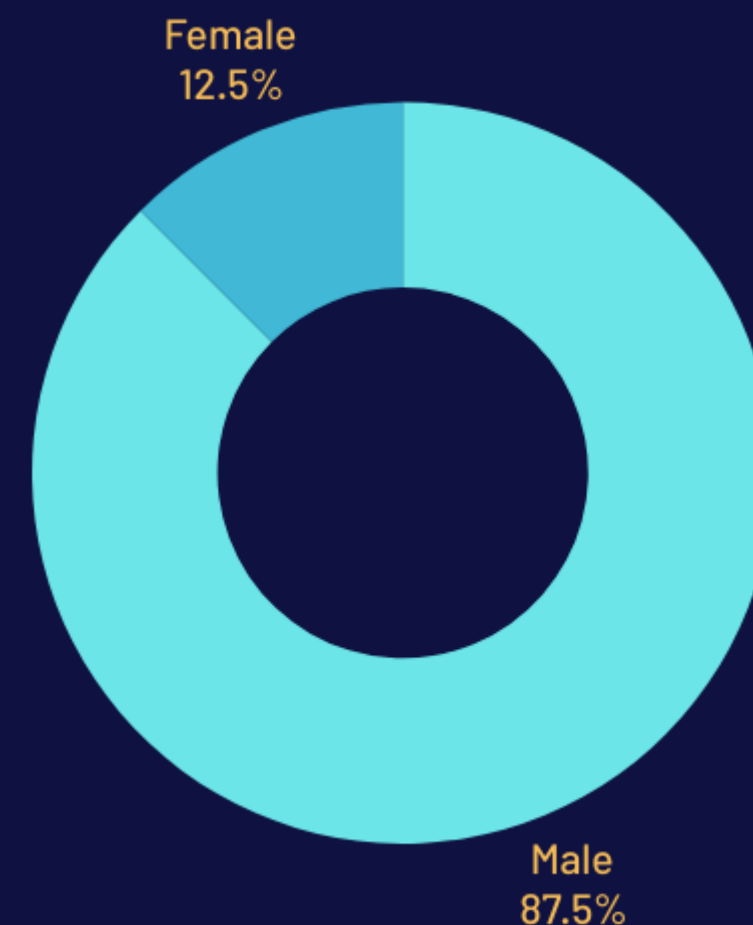
## Socio-anagraphic profile

There is a predominance of men (87.5%) and a smaller presence of women (12.5%).

Most people are aged between 55 and 64 years (42.5%). The youngest HF user is 22 years old and the oldest 74 years old.

They are mostly people with Italian citizenship (70%) or extra-European citizenship (22.5%). Fewer are European citizens (7.5%).

70% are single adult and only 6 person live in couple. The majority have no family responsibilities and only 6 people form two households of 3 members each.





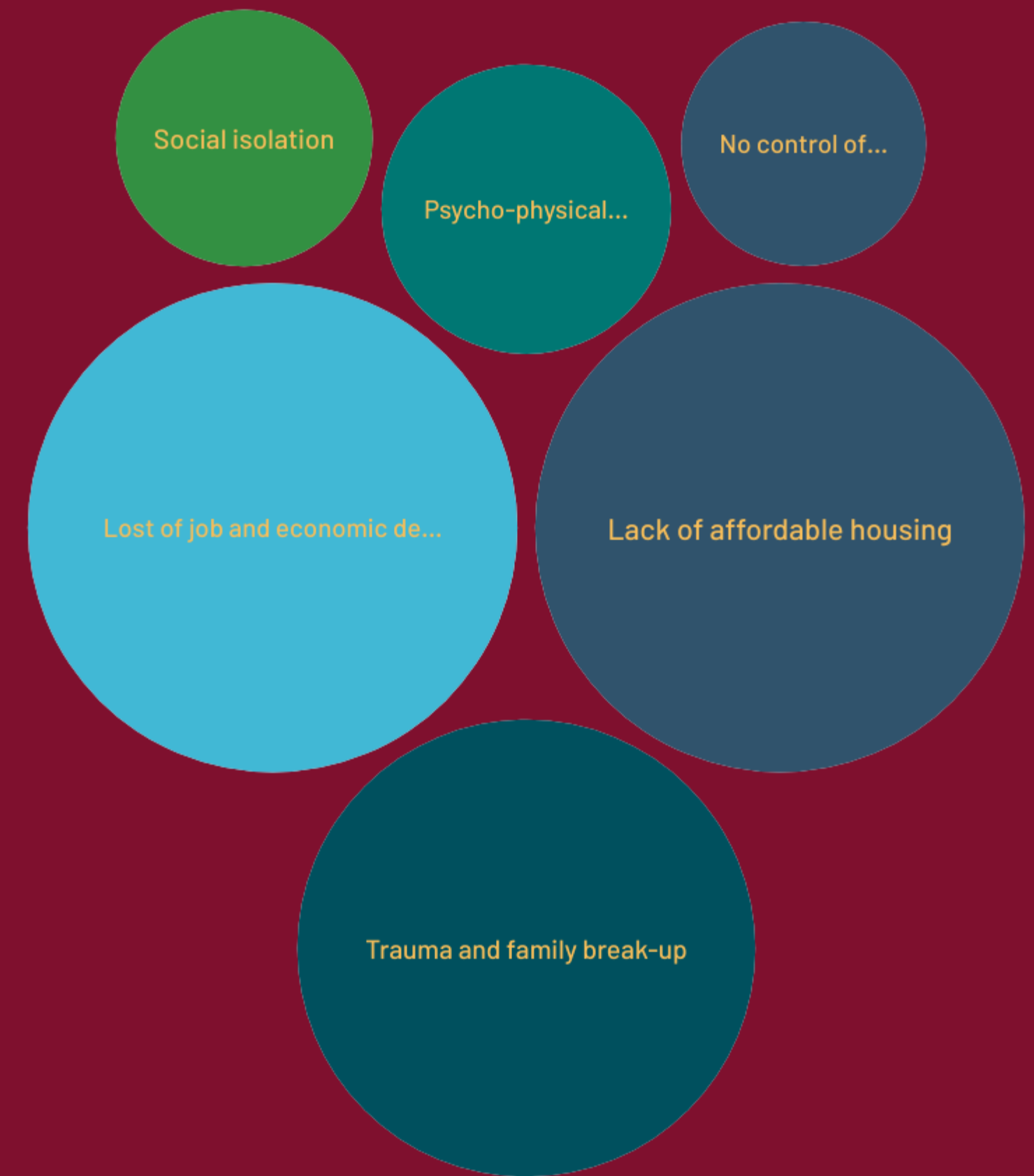
# HF users (40)

## Social profile

Each person has his or her own life history.

The ever pushing “toward homelessness” is a **crucial mix** of Structural causes and individual events:

trauma and family break-ups, lack of affordable housing, problems related to the uncontrolled use of alcohol and drugs, social isolation and psycho-physical distress, complex and multiple needs



# HF apartments (16)

## Urban zone and housing stock

Private market: 100%

North West Quadrant (Trionfale): 63% of flats; about 9 km from the centre - 37 minutes by bus/urban train;

Central urban area (Esquilino): 37% of flats; about 10 minutes from the centre by bus

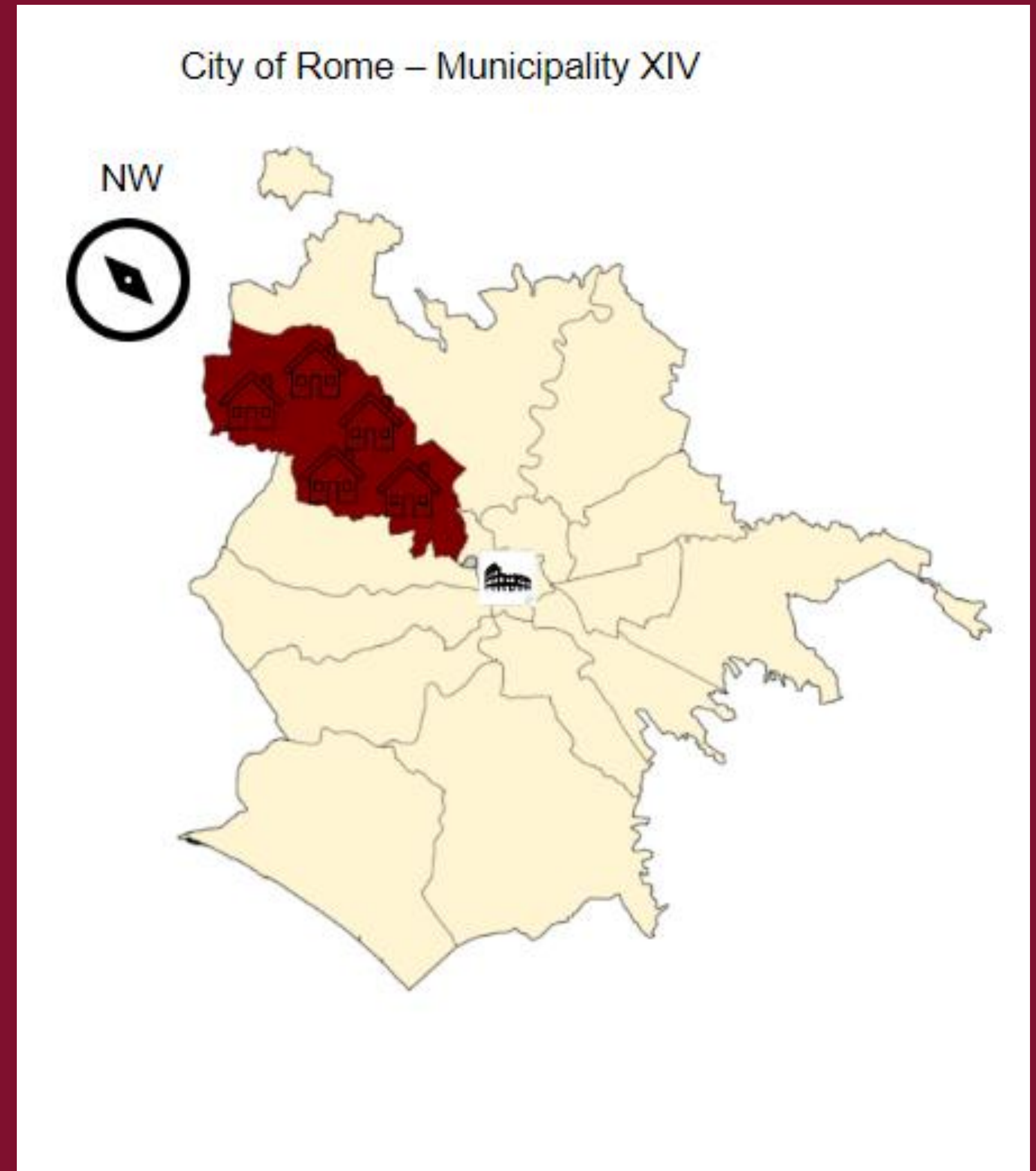
Single flat: 1 unit

Two single rooms flat: 3 units

Three single rooms flat: 3 units

Large flat (single bedrooms and private WC; shared kitchen ): 6 units

Other: 3 units







Focus on:

Housing maintenance  
Quality of life/ontological  
security  
Social and community  
integration



# Housing retention

To maintain housing despite complex needs is possible



- Persons housed: 40
- Persons who left voluntarily the HF project : 1
- Persons who became self sufficient from the HF project before 24\* months: 6
- Persons in HF home after 24 months *without program support*: 23
- Persons in HF home after 24 months *with program support*: 10

\*(Collins et al., 2013)



# Housing stability

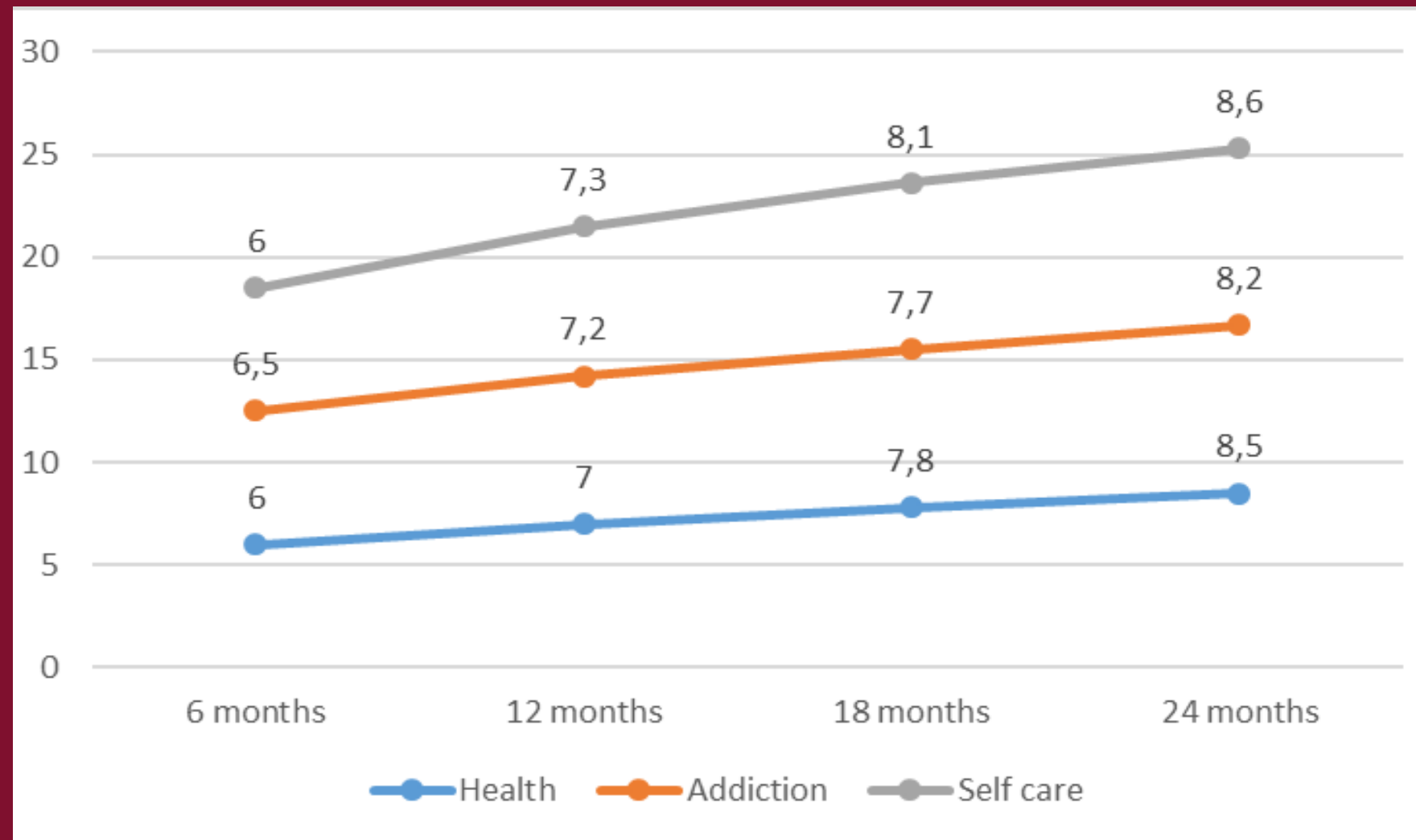
Stable, safety and quality housing

- Tutor support
- Affordable housing costs (549 euros average monthly cost per flat)
- Social integration and good neighborhood liveability
- Ontological security (*"I feel good at home"*)
- Motivation and self care
- Community recognizing



# Quality of life

- According with Padgett (2007), Housing is a fact predictor of well being
- According with Gilmer et al. (2012), Housing has beneficial effects on psycho physical well-being and use of alcohol, drug or tobacco



Source: Elaboration of data by "Onda del cambiamento" (Cortese, Sbrana 2024)

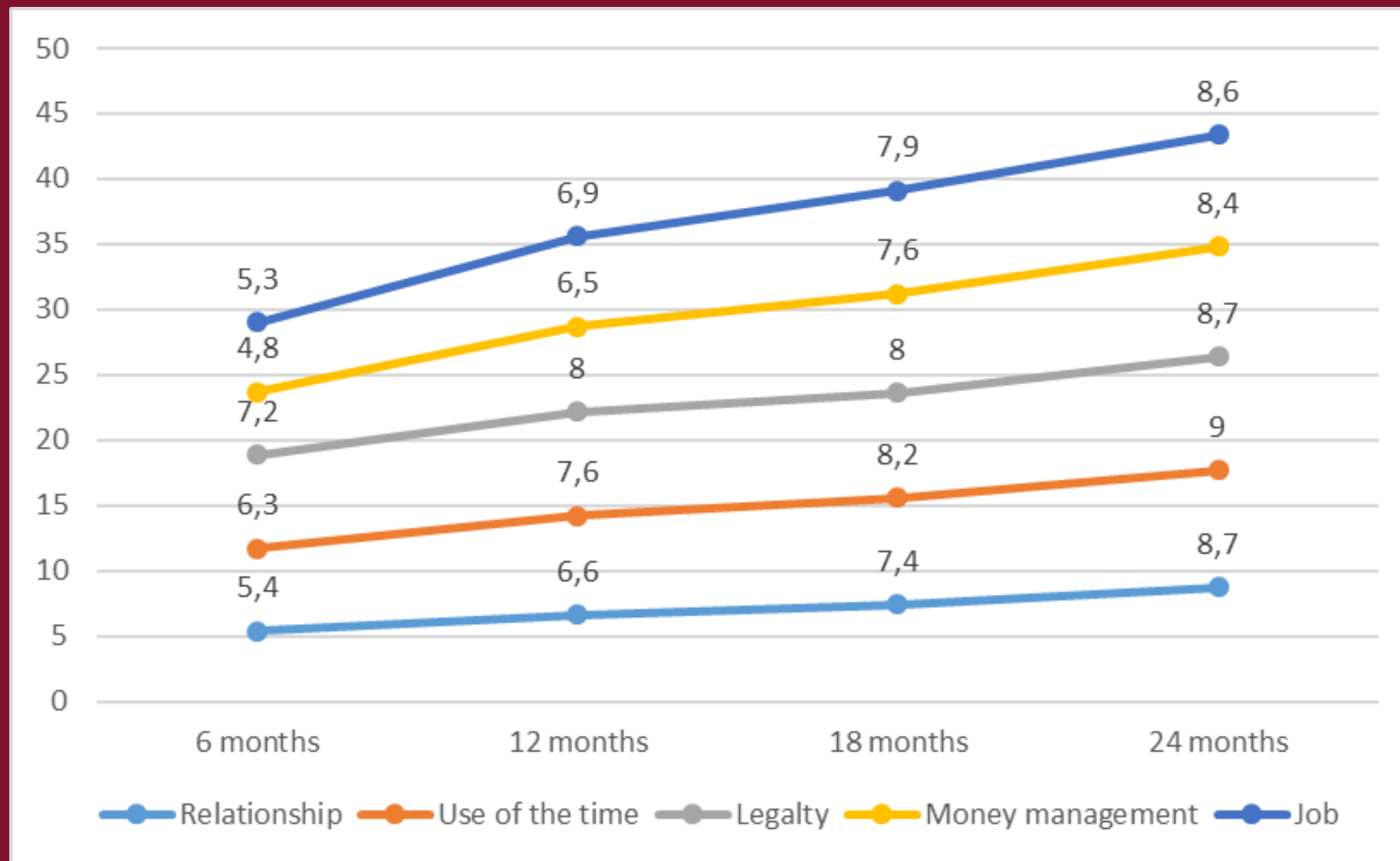
HF Rome users improve their living condition in three domains of life



# Community integration

- According with Tsemberis (2010), *"normalization"* means living inside the society, in a "normal" house, in a "normal" neighborhood.

HF Rome users improve their sense of belonging to the community



Source: Elaboration of data by "Onda del cambiamento" (Cortese, Sbrana 2024)



# **Strengths: social and community work**





**HF does not mean Housing only!**

**The house alone is not enough,  
and the use of collective  
services, the life of the  
neighbourhood, the  
participation in the social,  
political, recreational or  
spiritual life of the context in  
which one lives, become equally  
fundamental ingredients for the  
success of the project.**





# The relationship with the members of the Community of Sant'Egidio – 1

**Build a personal relationship (or make it stronger if it already exists)**

**Staying close, listening and accompanying**

**Making important choices: getting treatment, managing the house, requesting one's rights, giving back through volunteering, looking for a job**





# The relationship with the members of the Community of Sant'Egidio – 2

**Accompanying the homeowners  
too**

**Remaining friends even after  
achieving financial independence**





Providing accommodation  
is the first step, then  
accompanying individuals  
is crucial for:

Restoring trust, together

Overcoming loneliness within a larger  
collective 'We'

Navigating difficult times together



# THE KEY

The key to the success of the project (and also for the results obtained to last over time) is the choice to accompany each person in a personal relationship, placed in a community dimension, remaining in a friendship relationship even after having achieved autonomy







## Concluding remarks and challenges

**HF a valid model for everyone: the beneficiaries were very different, but the results are always excellent. And the costs are not high.**

**In Rome this project is a great novelty (the Municipality only follows the staircase model). It has shown that a home and valid social and relational support can change your life. It could be a "best practice".**

**The State and municipalities should adopt the Housing First model as a valid welfare tool, to spread it throughout Italy. And they can help to find flats, using public housing stock and/or with a guarantee fund for the private market**

## Povertà estreme

Un'analisi sul sistema dei servizi  
per le persone senza dimora a Roma

a cura di Sergio Mauceri e Luca Di Censi



### 8. *Housing First a Roma*

di Caterina Cortese, Filippo Sbrana\*

#### 8.1. Introduzione

L'Housing First (HF) è un modello di intervento nell'ambito delle politiche per il contrasto alla grave marginalità adulta basato sull'inserimento in appartamenti indipendenti di persone senza dimora con problemi di salute mentale o in situazione di disagio socio-abitativo cronico, allo scopo di favorirne percorsi di benessere e integrazione sociale. L'approccio affonda le sue radici negli Stati Uniti, quando Sam Tsemberis, considerato il suo fondatore, avviò nel 1992 a New York il programma *Pathways to Housing*. Il potenziale innovativo di questo approccio e i buoni risultati conseguiti negli ultimi anni anche in Italia sono stati evidenziati da recenti ricerche (Molinari e Zenarolla, 2018) e studi di settore (fio.PSD, 2022), che vedono la casa come un driver di cambiamento sia nel paradigma di intervento all'*homelessness* (partire dalla casa come diritto), sia per i risultati che esso produce nella vita delle persone in termini di riacquisizione di diritti, dignità, benessere, stabilità abitativa e integrazione sociale.

Il presente capitolo ha lo scopo di presentare i principali risultati, i punti di forza e le sfide, di un progetto HF su scala urbana denominato *Housing First Roma*. Il progetto presenta delle peculiarità sia per il partenariato che lo ha realizzato, sia per il tipo di accompagnamento sociale offerto alle persone inserite in casa, che lo rendono unico nel panorama della implementazione dei progetti HF in Italia.

\* Gli autori hanno condiviso l'impianto generale del capitolo e i contenuti presentati. In particolare, hanno curato rispettivamente: parr. 1, 2, 3 e 4 (Caterina Cortese); parr. 5 e 6 (Filippo Sbrana).

Reference





# Thanks

**Any questions?**