



# The Rise and Fall

of the Dutch National Strategy on Homelessness

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## The Rise (2006-2010)

- 6 ministries, the 'Big4' cities, service providers, housing corporations develop integral 'Action Plan on Social Relief'
- The national government invests €170 million
- Results: 12.400 people individual plan; 7.550 people housing & support; 33% decrease evictions; 53% decrease criminal offences; fewer care-leavers become homeless



## The sequel (2010-2014)

- No targets, but process-indicators
- Another 6000 adults & 3000 young people have an individual plan
- Overall decrease in number of evictions: 22%
- Slight rise in number of people leaving institutional care
- No change in number of criminal offences



# The Fall (2015 -?)

- Gradually the Action Plan faded out
- Number of evictions increased again, as well as the number of (young) homeless people
- Poverty is increasing, especially among one-parent families and older unemployed people
- Affordable housing not available; shelters are overcrowded, few move-on options.
- Flaws in monitoring, no reliable figures



# Reflections

- **Urgency is essential** ('urgency in policy arises when citizens experience an inhuman and severely unpleasant situation which causes nuisance for them')
- **Financial investment by government** ('carrot or stick')
- **Willingness to cooperate** (government, municipalities, housing corporations, service providers, clients organizations)
- **Extent to which the problem can be influenced by policies** (best-effort obligation v.v. obligation to achieve results)
- **Concrete measurable targets, instruments**



# Sustainable policies?

- Individualized plans & care for clients are key
- Focus on 'living a normal life'
- Cooperation between different organizations and sectors, coordinated by local authority
- Balance between low-threshold, less-intensive forms of care and specialized care
- Organizing access to care & housing
- Setting concrete targets & monitoring results



# Questions?

- How to organize urgency?  
(political action, story-telling, research, facts & figures, media, involvement service-users, visibility, and / or ...?)
- How to keep prevention of homelessness on the agenda, when the strategy is working?