



| <b>Engaged Research Case Study Template</b>  |  |
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| <b>Project Title (8 words max)</b>   | Re-InVest: Investing in the right to a home: Housing, HAP, Hubs  |
| <b>Housing</b>   |  |
| <p><b>Project synopsis (100 words max)</b> Please give a very short description of the societal challenge, the action taken, and the intended/ achieved result.</p>      | <p>This qualitative research project used a participatory action approach to co-construct policy knowledge. The research focused on the experience of lone parent families living in emergency homeless accommodation, particularly in relation to their experience of the private rental subsidy Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) and of Family Hubs, a new form of emergency accommodation. This research is part of the European wide H2020<sup>i</sup> funded RE-InVEST project investigating the societal challenge of under-investment in social services and trends in service sectors (water, housing, early childcare and education, health, and finance).</p> <p>Following a general trend of marketization and years of austerity, we find an undersupply of social housing and new inadequate forms of market-delivered social housing like HAP. We conclude HAP is part of longer-term process aimed at undermining social housing provision and reducing it to a temporary ‘support’. The research demonstrates the need for social investment in a capability and human rights framework, which prioritises types of investment that meets the holistic housing needs of families.</p> <p>Our research highlights the gendered nature of the impact of family homelessness and how women manage the reality of homelessness. Families placed children’s needs at the centre of housing decisions. For lone parents, accessing housing close to family and community networks was vital to children’s well-being. This gendered and emotional perspective is often ignored by policy makers. Marketisation places blame on the homeless, who become responsible for failure to compete in the market. This contrasts with a rights-based approach, which focuses on state obligations to fulfil the right to housing and to build homes.</p> |
| <b>Higher Education Institution:</b>   | Maynooth University  |
| <b>Engaged Research Partners</b> (civic, civil society organisations, Social enterprises, public or professional service or product users, policy makers, members of the | Focus Ireland  |



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| <p>public).</p> <p><b>Engagement (research method or activity) (100 words max)</b></p>  | <p>A qualitative research project involving peer researchers with previous experience of homelessness, the method revolved around a participatory action capability and human rights approach (PACHRA) to co-construct policy knowledge with lone parents families living in emergency homeless accommodation.</p> <p>We worked with peer researchers and a group of families in a Family Hub in Dublin over a 10 week period, introducing them to the right to housing and co-producing new insights into impacts of HAP and Family Hub emergency accommodation. We also interviewed key housing and homelessness policy experts and practitioners.</p> <p>Families described how the right to a home means security, stability, safety and freedom, and explained their reluctance to take-up insecure HAP funded housing. Families, although eligible for HAP, find it extremely difficult to compete for limited and increasingly expensive private rental accommodation, and reported that the impact on well-being is “soul-destroying”. Family Hubs were found to have a negative effect on the well-being of children and parents who reported feeling “demeaned” and being “in prison”.</p> <p>As part of the methodology, the research findings were actively disseminated through dialogue processes with the homeless families and policy makers, and to NGOs, academics and political actors.</p> |
| <p><b>Project outputs and outcomes: (600 words max)</b></p> <p>Please describe briefly the target audience and activities that occurred and short terms results.</p> <p>This information could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• who you worked with;</li> <li>• issue to be addressed</li> <li>• what actions you took;</li> <li>• the geographical location;</li> <li>• any shorter-term outcomes or changes in local situation and circumstances, knowledge and skills attitudes or behaviour, policy, practice, organisational development etc, decision-making.</li> </ul> | <p>The outputs are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A high-quality published policy brief disseminated to policy and political actors.<sup>ii</sup></li> <li>• Policy dialogue day in IHREC (13<sup>th</sup> June).</li> <li>• Parliamentary briefing session (21 July).</li> <li>• Oireachtas Committee on Housing – full plenary meeting (20<sup>th</sup> Sept).<sup>iii</sup></li> <li>• Presentations at national housing policy seminars (Sinn Féin, Simon, Focus Ireland).</li> <li>• Brain storm blog (RTÉ).<sup>iv</sup></li> <li>• Article in Housing Ireland and Village magazines<sup>v</sup>.</li> <li>• Journal articles and book chapters<sup>vi</sup></li> </ul>  |



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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in knowledge of policy makers and political actors.</li> <li>• Engagement in research plan of Dublin Regional Homeless Executive.</li> <li>• Change in local situation and circumstances in emergency accommodation provision.</li> <li>• Discussion with Minister for Children and Youth regarding social policy change and changes to policy and practice.</li> </ul> <p>The outcomes are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research had significant national impact, prompting interest from European academic researchers and NGOs</li> <li>• Demonstrates the importance of participation in research and policy making of those suffering exclusion.</li> <li>• Demonstrates how research can contribute to changing and challenging structures that create inequalities.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Longer term anticipated areas for Impact</b> (Choose from below):</p> <p>Economic<br/>Policy &amp; Public Service<br/>Societal Engagement<br/>Health &amp; Wellbeing<br/>Professional services<br/>Environmental<br/>New knowledge<br/>Human Capacity</p> | <p><i>Policy and Public Service</i> (e.g. potential change in social housing policy following a refocus on core role of state over the period)</p> <p><i>Societal engagement</i> (new PACHRA model of research for societal engagement)</p> <p><i>New knowledge</i> (gendered insights into marketised forms of social housing and impacts on rights and capabilities).</p> <p><i>Health and Well-Being</i> ( greater appreciation of the impact of institutionalised co-living and futile house searching on mental health and family well-being)</p>   |
| <p><b>Funding source:</b></p>   | <p>EU Commission H2020 Grant No. 649447</p>  |
| <p><b>For more information contact:</b></p>   | <p>Dr Mary Murphy and Dr Rory Hearne (Sociology, Applied Social Policy, MUSSI, Maynooth University)</p>  |

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<sup>ii</sup>[https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/Investing%20in%20the%20Right%20o%20a%20Home%20Full\\_1.pdf](https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/Investing%20in%20the%20Right%20o%20a%20Home%20Full_1.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup>[https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_housing\\_planning\\_community\\_and\\_local\\_government/2017-09-20/3/](https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint_committee_on_housing_planning_community_and_local_government/2017-09-20/3/)

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.rte.ie/eile/brainstorm/2018/1005/1001663-housing-crisis-government-policy/>

<sup>v</sup> <https://villagemagazine.ie/index.php/2017/10/housing-policy-agenda/>



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vi <https://www.ipa.ie/fileupload/admin/2.pdf>