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Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

# HOUSING FIRST

*Ending Homelessness*

## Casas Primeiro Program in Portugal

José Ornelas

Organized by



International Conference  
Housing First: Ending Homelessness  
Lisboa 2013



## Casas Primeiro Program in Portugal

José Ornelas



# Casas Primeiro Program

- Immediate access to individualized and permanent housing.
- People are not required to participate in psychiatric treatment or attain a period of sobriety in order to obtain housing.
- Tenants pay 30% of their monthly income towards rent.
- Provides – off site – services (7-24 on call) to help consumers keep housing, facilitate recovery and community integration.



## Casas Primeiro & community contexts

- Individualized and scattered site apartments in mainstream neighborhoods in Lisbon. Apartments are not in the same building or street
- Rental units available on the open market
- Allows more choice, based on housing and location preferences
- Facilitate the access to services and resources that are available to the general population
- Facilitate the contact and relations with people that could be natural supports, like the neighbors



# Independent apartments





# Community neighborhoods





# Casas Primeiro ecological and collaborative intervention

- focus on concrete problem resolution
- access to community resources and services
- support services provided in community contexts
- strengthening of social contacts and natural supports
- collaborative relation between participants and staff: share decisions, mutual learning
- collaboration with other community stakeholders





# Peer Support

- Mutual help group
- Peers as service providers





# Evaluation Methods

- Program records
- Questionnaire (2011): satisfaction with home, quality of life, changes in use of emergency services and substance use.
- Questionnaire (2012):
  - Community integration: Community Integration Scale, developed by At Home/Chez Soi Project (2010)
  - Choice: five items were chosen from Srebnick et al. (1995)
  - Satisfaction with services provided: seven items were chosen from the Core Service Satisfaction Scale, developed by At Home/Chez Soi Project (2010)
- Qualitative interview



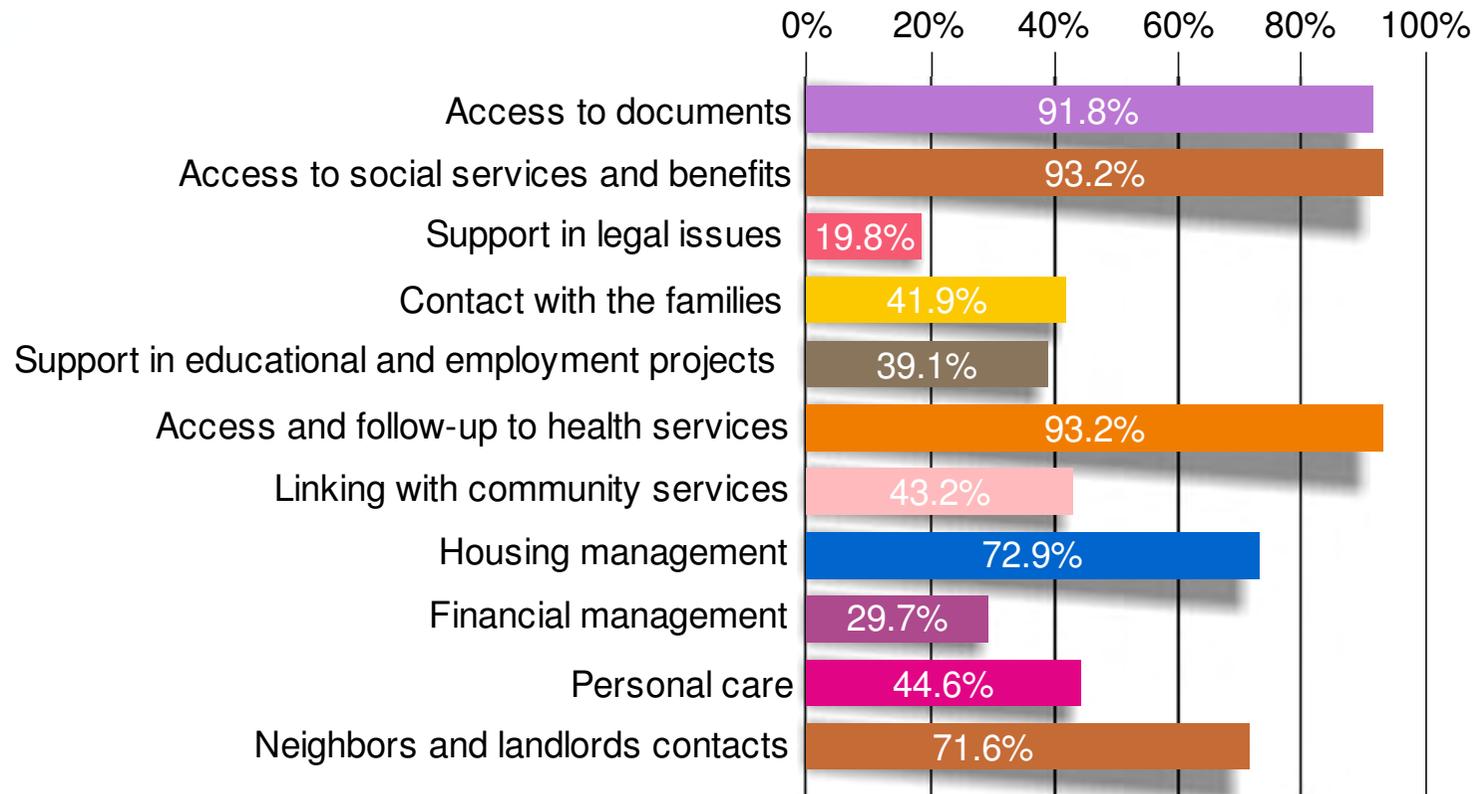
## Casas Primeiro: participants

Between January 2011 to December 2012, 74 homeless people with mental health problems have used the Casas Primeiro's program.

- 73% were male and 27% were female
- 80% have a diagnosis of schizophrenia and 29.7% also present a co-occurring substance abuse disorder
- 48.6% of the participants were homeless for more than six years and 6.7% for more than 16 years



# Support provided



Support provided to participants, particularly in terms of accessing documents, to social services and benefits, health services and housing management



## Main results

- Housing retention: 80% of participants remained in housing.
- The number of participants reporting having to use 112 emergency service decrease 87%.
- The number of admissions in psychiatric hospitals decreased by 90% and no one reported having spent the night on a police squad after move into housing.



## Main results – quality of life

- The impacts of housing in participants' perceived quality of life are clearly significant, in terms of personal safety (98%) nutrition and sleeping habits (82%), health and mental health (78%), and social life (52%).
- The number of participants that had a monthly income increased substantially from 29 to 73 (social benefits and salary).



## Main results - Satisfaction

- 96% of the participants reported they were satisfied with the house: privacy, tranquillity, comfort and sense of control over the space.
- 91,2% were satisfied or very satisfied with the support provided by the program (e.g. with the way services help to reduce and address problems, as well as help them to get better and stay well)
- 86.7% considered that is easy to contact the program team when needed



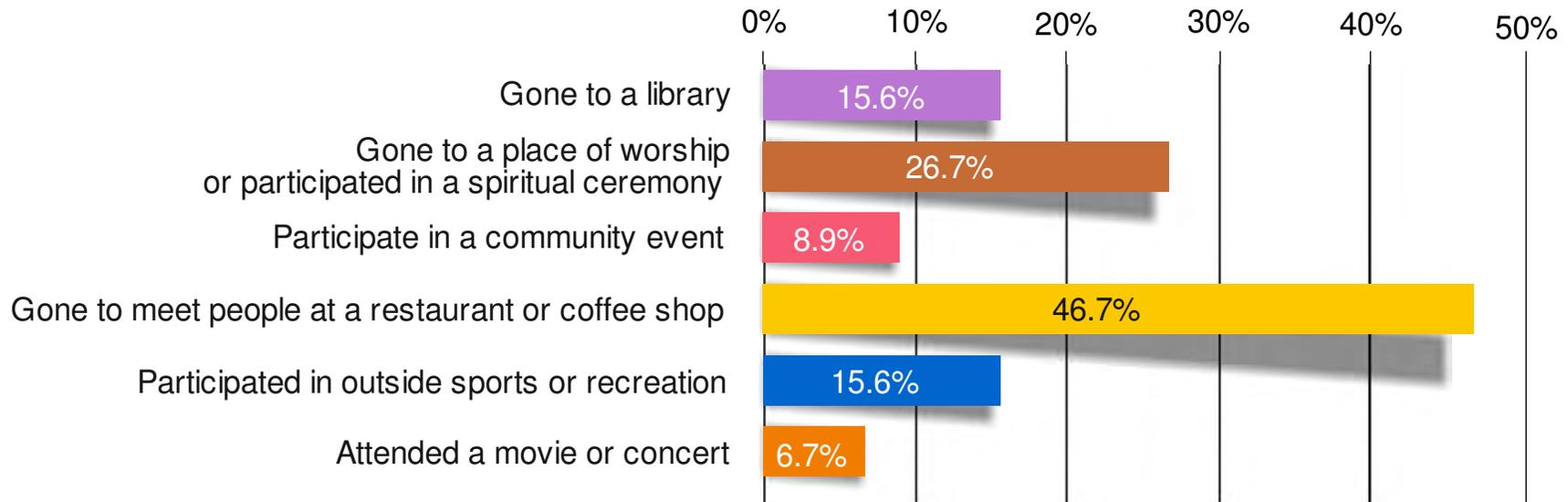
## Main results - Choice

- Regarding the level of choice participants have in contacts with the program team, 82.3% considered that is completely or mostly their choice
- 75.5% reported that it is completely or mostly their choice who and when visitors can come over
- 73.4% reported that it is completely or mostly their choice whether or not take medication



# Physical integration

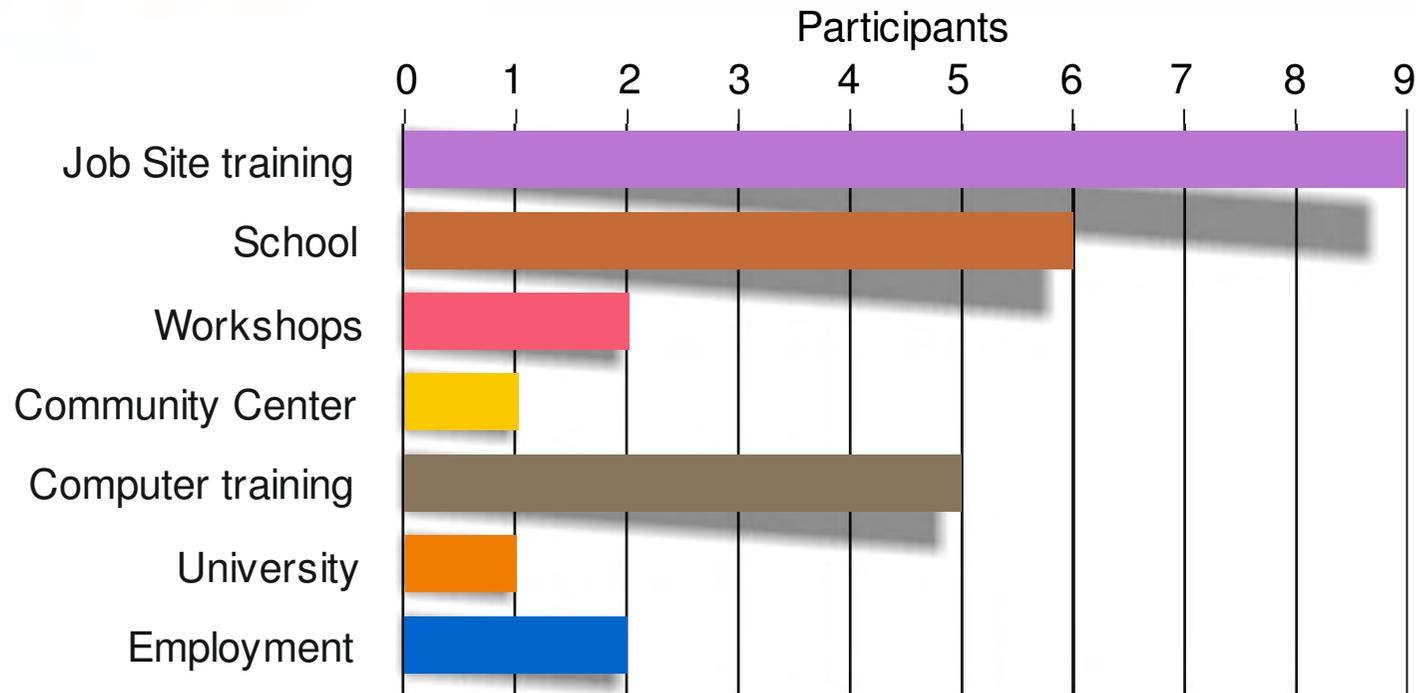
## Community activities done in the past month



All listed activities had presented some level of participation



# Employment - training - education

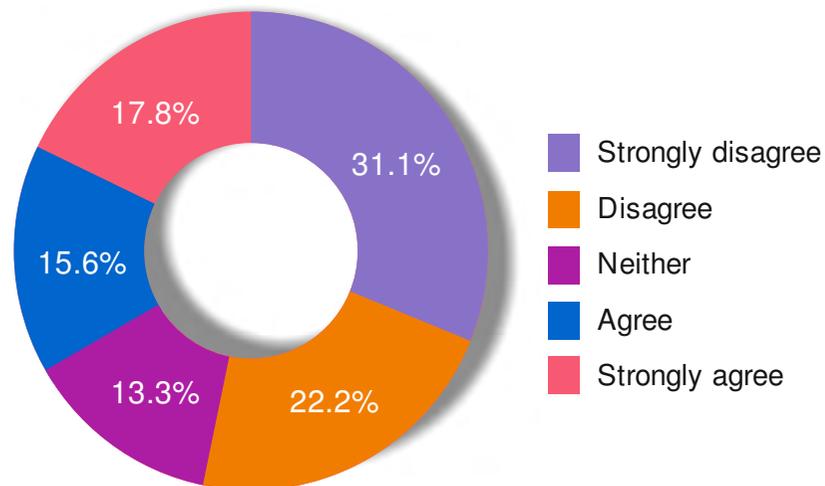


26 participants have become involved in school, training, employment or other activities

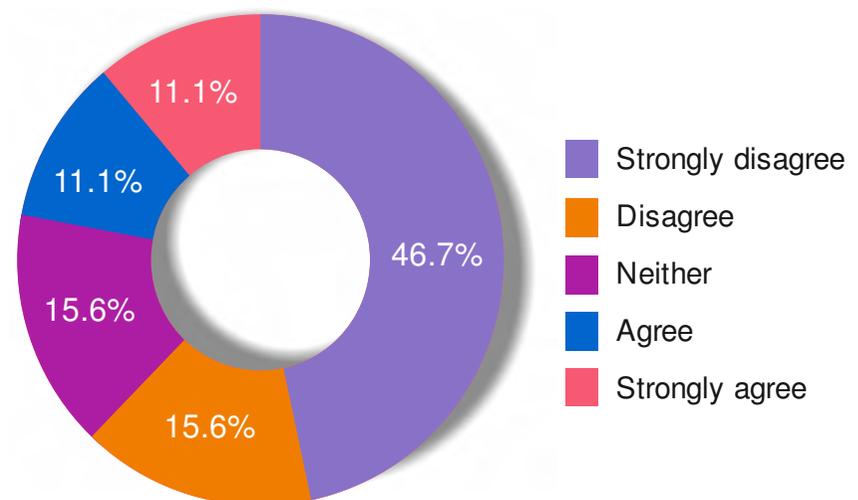


# Social integration

Knowing most of the people who live near me



Interacting with the people who live near me



33.4% reported they agree or strongly agree that they know most of their neighbours with only 22.2% of the participants reporting some kind of social interaction with them.



# Social integration

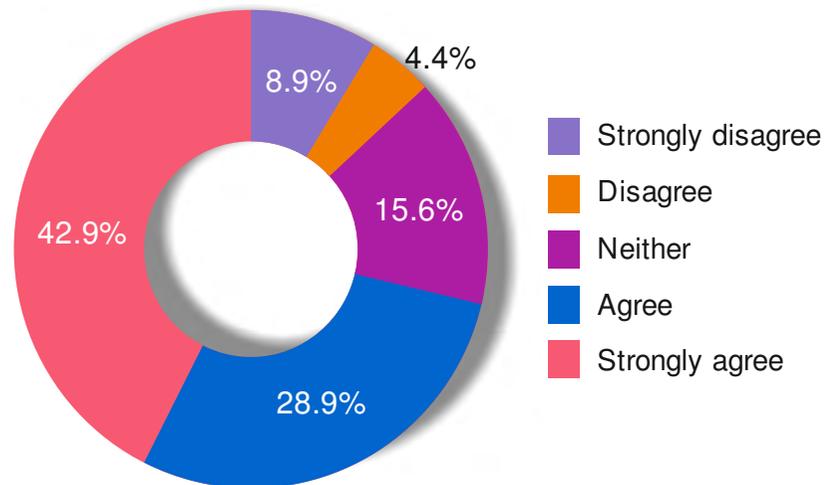
- *“...my neighbors help me a lot, they’re always available and I have an excellent relationship with all of them. Sometimes I spend hours talking to them. I feel appreciated in this neighborhood...”*
- *“...I get along with the neighbors and I know most of the people here. Whenever I meet them they usually speak to me and extend me sympathy since I moved here...”*
- *“...I think I have a good relationship with my neighbors. In fact, some neighbors are friends, most of them are always willing to talk to me about everything: football, politics, etc. ...”*

(participants of “Casas Primeiro program”)

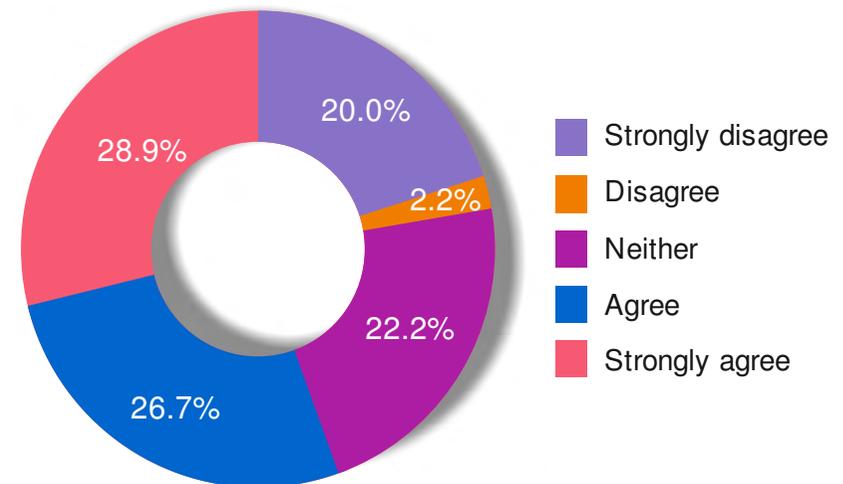


# Psychological integration

Feeling at home\_where I live



Feeling like I belong to my local community



71.1% of participants felt at home in their neighborhood

The majority of participants (55.6%) felt they fit in and belong to their community



## Costs

- Casas Primeiro - 16,40 euros per client per day (€498,83 per month)
- Night Shelters - 18,60 euros per client per night
- Hostels rooms - 30,77 euros per client per day
- Psychiatric hospitalization in acute wards have a one time cost of €2500 per client