



# FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

Examples and best practices on how to support people with disabilities in education and into working life

The Finnish way

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## INTRODUCTION

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This collection of articles aims to illustrate pathways of people with disabilities from school to working life. The original idea of sharing experiences on this topic came in a cross commission meeting of Rehabilitation International held in Hong Kong 2015. The participants of the meeting felt it would be important to share ideas and practices on how one can support and promote children and youth with disabilities as they are in schools, colleges and universities and what should take into account when supporting them as they move on to working life.

The practices in different countries vary greatly. Some countries are ahead when it comes to inclusive education, some are better in teacher's education and some have better practices to support people in transition to working life. What is important though is that if we want to take the UN convention seriously we should look into various opportunities to develop not only legislation but also the skills of professionals and develop new innovative practices and assistive technologies to promote inclusion and equality of opportunities.

The examples in this leaflet are based on the Finnish system of education, vocational rehabilitation and employment services. However the practices can most likely be implemented in other service systems too in different countries. The articles describe the Finnish way, but the practices and legislation is coherent with the UN Convention of the rights of persons with disabilities. Based on the principles of convention as well as the Finnish legislation children and youth with disability have the equal right for education and employment. To secure these rights there are several rehabilitation, educational and employment services and measures that support people with disabilities to reach their goals.

*First article describes the Finnish system of basic education and how professionals can help families with disabled children to promote the child's own self-assurance and trust on their own capabilities.* Families are provided with peer support, adjusting courses and needed therapies and rehabilitation for the child. Some of these services are provided by public organizations some by NGO's. The day care and schools have special education teachers and support from national network of special education schools. The aim is to give children with disabilities an opportunity for basic education even when it is known that the educational aims might not meet the national standards. Special curriculum is then applied according to the child's own capabilities. The studies show that when a child and the family is provided with such supports he/she is more likely to cope in society and find suitable education and work.

*Second article describes the role of vocational special needs education in Finland.* This system is often criticized for strengthening segregation, but at the same time the system seems to give young people with disabilities support according to their needs, skillful and innovative training as well as accessible environment. The Finnish vocational special needs education organizations work closely with other vocational schools as the two systems are getting more alike. Young people with special needs and/or disability can choose the school they want to apply to and all schools have the responsibility to provide the support they need. The vocational special education schools can therefore also have a consultative role in relation to so called regular vocational schools.

The third article describes the teacher's training system in Finland focusing on special education teacher training. Having skillful and well trained teachers is a key issue when it comes to promoting equality of opportunities in education. Many countries value their teachers' skills and training high and provide university degree training to teachers' education in all levels. From the point of view of people with disabilities it is important that they are provided with training that takes into account their special needs

and knows how to use innovative communication and learning methodologies and how to build self-esteem and trust for one's own skills.

*The third article begins with a short overview of the Finnish vocational rehabilitation and employment services. This helps the reader when moving on to an article that describes the job coach services within that framework. Job coach services as essential, if we want to promote employment of people with disabilities the job coach service has taken many forms all around the world. There is some discussion on what the best practices of implementing the service is, but a great unanimity that having a support person that can individually help the person with a disability to find a job and also help the workplace to include the person in the job is essential. The job coach or support person can work in many transition stages along the way. There have been several projects proving that a support person, counsellor or equivalent can make a great difference when a person is looking for either best suitable education or best internships during secondary training and then ultimately a best work place.*

*The two following texts give an example how to support people with mental disorders and learning disabilities and how to promote employment of people with partial work capacity. The first article describes shortly a study investigating promising models to support people with mental disorders and learning disabilities in education as well as into working life. It points out that it is important to set individual goals, help with career planning and identify skills. In addition it is important to provide social support, also peer support. The latter article looks into studies investigating the effectiveness of different support measures for people with partial work capacity returning to work. This article suggests that combination of different measures, collaboration between stakeholders and seamless chain of tailored services is one way of enabling people to find employment or continue working.*

Most of the articles look at the topic of supporting people with disabilities in education and working life from the public services' point of view. *The last article therefore is an important addition describing the role of disability organizations.* The Finnish disability organizations have traditionally had a great influence in developing special services and setting light on the lives of people with disabilities. The co-operation between NGO's and public services is important; Disability organizations can provide information, training, and expertise also to public service actors. They can also provide innovative and easy to access services for people with disabilities and create important additional services to supplement public services.

To sum up, this is a paper sharing our experiences. We hope that these texts give other RI members ideas to develop their systems. We are also happy to receive comments, questions and indeed criticism. We want to encourage all RI members to bring up their best practices, to learn from one another and to promote dissemination of best practices. This will be the best way to promote equality of opportunities in both education and working life.

## 1. WHERE IT ALL BEGINS –SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES AND SUPPORT AT DAY CARE AND SCHOOLS

Tarja Keltto, Coordinator, Support Foundation for Children and Youth with Disabilities

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### 1.1 Family background

The Finnish research has shown that for those disabled people who have managed to finish their studies and get a job on the open labor market has something common: they all have a good **self-assurance** and they **trust on their own capability**. This attitude has its roots in childhood family. These people have an experience of being **an equal member** of the family. They have been trusted and encouraged to be active, to **participate** and become independent. These experiences have an extreme importance for their whole life. (Rajaniemi K. 2014).

In Finland families with disabled children have access to several public services that help them to cope with the situation, to learn to communicate and assist their child based on the child's own needs. Many non-governmental organizations also provide targeted services for children and their families, one of the most important one being different models of peer work.

The Finnish health care system also provides all families with children a special counselling service; since the baby is born until he/she goes to secondary education, all children receive regular check-ups from a nurse or a doctor. This way the possible abnormalities in the child's development can be detected earlier and support measures can be targeted at the right time.

### 1.2 Rehabilitation builds up potential

Disabled people need to get all their potentials to use. That's why they often need rehabilitation from very beginning. They may need support to learn a functioning way to communicate, to move, to make decisions and act as a master of their own life. Need of the rehabilitation should be evaluated individually by taking account the family and other environmental factors reflecting what one wants to do and what one is expected to do in different states of the life-span.

*Finnish rehabilitation system includes medical rehabilitation, educational rehabilitation, vocational rehabilitation and social rehabilitation. Depending on your age, disability and what is disability's background the provider of rehabilitation varies. Rehabilitation services are provided by public-sector health care providers such as health centers and hospitals, social services, special schools, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela) or authorized pension providers and insurance companies.*

### 1.3 Education (day-care and basic education)

Everyone is capable to learn and everyone has right to education of a good quality. Also disabled people. This is written in UNESCO's Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action in 1994 which 92 governments has signed. In that statement there is highlighted the need for more inclusive approaches to education and avoiding segregating practices. Education from a day-care to school should continue a good upbringing that homes have started by giving equal possibilities for children with disabilities. This happens in an **inclusive** environment where **accessibility** and other support disabled children need is available. (Unicef 2012: The right of children with disabilities to education: A rights-based approach to inclusive education)

The Finnish education system is composed of:

- nine-year basic education (comprehensive school) for the whole age group, preceded by one year of pre-primary education
- upper secondary education, comprising general education and vocational education and training (vocational qualifications and further and specialist qualifications)
- higher education, provided by universities and polytechnics ( Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture)

The Finnish basic education system has been based on the philosophy of inclusion for a long time. The focus is on earliest possible support in order to prevent the emergence and growth of problems and from the beginning of 2011 in Finnish basic education has had three- steps support: General, intensified and special support. (Finnish National Board of Education)

In Finland there are state owned special schools, called Valteri –schools which work as a resource center and support of a special need education for local mainstream schools. Municipalities will buy needed services and the state subsidize this. For more: <https://www.valteri.fi/EN/valteri.html>

Similar system called Statped is in Norway except it is all subsidized by Norway state. For more: <http://www.statped.no/Spraksider/In-English/>

Finnish legislation demands that schools have to do needed modifications to reach accessibility children need. That can mean modifications of building, different aids and assistive technology and also modification of teaching and learning styles. This legislation concerns all public services which means basic education, vocational education, collages, high-schools and universities. In classrooms can personal or class –assistant be a big help.

A personal assistant in Finland is the one who helps a disabled person participating and living as independent as possible in schools, hobbies, education, housing, IADL and working life. Personal assistants make possible for disabled children to participate also without the help of family members for example in schools. Disabled adolescents need even more possibilities to participate the life outside of home and there it is needed a personal assistant. A personal assistance is provided by Finnish disability Act.

References:

Rajaniemi K. 2014. Vammaiserityisiä työllistymisedellytyksiä vai tavanomaisia työuria? Tutkimus vaikeavammaisten ihmisten työllistymistä edistäneistä tekijöistä. Pro gradu – tutkielma. Valtiotieteellinen tdk. Helsingin yliopisto

More information:

<http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/?lang=en>

<http://www.kela.fi/web/en>

[www.vamlas.fi](http://www.vamlas.fi)

## 2. VOCATIONAL SPECIAL (NEEDS) EDUCATION IN FINLAND

*Mr. Petteri Ora, Development Director, Kiiipula Foundation / Vocational Special Needs College*

One of the goals of the Finnish education system is that after secondary school, all children continue in education in either lukio/high school or in vocational education. In mainstream vocational institutes there is extra support available for students with special needs. For those young people, who for whatever reason are not able to study in mainstream institutions, there's also additional support available. This support is offered in the special needs vocational education colleges.

Vocational Special Needs Education ensures equal educational opportunities to all children leaving secondary school. Vocational SNE options ensure that the Youth Guarantee (and the Educational Guarantee) are successful and that young people's participation in society increases.

The Youth guarantee In Finland means that each young person under 25 and recently graduated people under 30 will be offered a job, a traineeship, a study place, or a period in a workshop or rehabilitation within three months of becoming unemployed.

The youth guarantee includes training guarantee, which means that each young person who completes their basic education has the opportunity to attend further education in upper secondary school, vocational education, apprenticeship training, a youth workshop, rehabilitation or a place in some other form of study.

The foundation of special needs vocational education is individual paths. For a student with additional support needs, a personal education plan is drawn up. The plan takes into consideration his or her abilities, possibilities and support needs. The education provider, together with the student and his/her supports, is responsible for making and monitoring the plan.

Additional or special support can mean making changes to teaching arrangements, the content of taught material or the learning environment. The most common forms of special support are additional guidance, support in "learning how to learn", making modifications to teaching and learning methods and finally, making individual accommodations to course requirements. Special support can be subject-specific, or for some students, a transfer to a smaller group with additional support can be arranged.

About 20% of vocational students receive special support during their studies. Most of these students (75%) study in mainstream vocational institutions integrated in normal classes. This is in accordance with the Finnish principle of inclusion.

In Finland there are seven special needs vocational colleges that provide education to those students who are not able to integrate into mainstream colleges, even with additional support. Special needs vocational colleges are responsible also for the education of students with more severe disabilities. However, mainstream curriculum can also be applied in the SNEs. Individual goals and teaching arrangements apply.

Pre-vocational training courses a part of vocational special needs education. Many vocational institutions offer pre-vocational training aimed at preparing students for continuing onto a vocational qualification course. These courses are offered for students who after secondary school are unsure of what they want or are able to do.

For students with more severe disabilities; for whom a vocational qualification course is too challenging to complete even with accommodations, vocational special needs colleges offer more general training aimed at preparing these students for independent living and work.

There is no age limit for completing a vocational qualification. Also adult learners can attend special needs vocational education, though accommodations in the curriculum cannot be made. Adult learners with additional needs are supported through personal education planning and by offering more guidance and support during studies.

The aim of special needs vocational education is to guarantee equal educational opportunities for all students. However, a vocational course forms only a short period in a (young) person's life. Vocational special education is offered, so that each student would have the ability and opportunity to be an active citizen and employee.

As part of vocational special education, support for gaining employment is also offered. Teaching is largely work-based and students spend long periods learning with employers. In addition to teaching staff, for example Job Coaches are used to help students find work. The employment prospects of special needs students are lower than those in mainstream education.

**More information:**

Sahlberg Pasi: Finnish Lessons: What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland? Teachers College, Columbia University. See also free presentations from internet:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kK6u7AsJF8> and Pasi Sahlberg's home pages

[http://www.oph.fi/english/education\\_system/support\\_for\\_pupils\\_and\\_students/support\\_in\\_upper\\_secondary\\_education\\_and\\_training](http://www.oph.fi/english/education_system/support_for_pupils_and_students/support_in_upper_secondary_education_and_training)

<https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/finland/national-overview/special-needs-education-within-the-education-system>

[http://www.stat.fi/til/erop/2013/erop\\_2013\\_2014-06-12\\_tie\\_001\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/erop/2013/erop_2013_2014-06-12_tie_001_en.html)

<http://www.koulutustakuu.fi/training-guarantee/>

<http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Nuoriso?lang=en>



### 3. SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION AND TEACHERS TRAINING IN FINLAND

*Ms. Marja Laurikainen, Planner, Global Education, HAMK School of Professional Teacher Education*

The Constitution of Finland stipulates that no one shall, without an acceptable reason, be treated differently from other persons on the grounds of health, disability or any other reason that concerns him or her:

- 1) Everyone has the right to education and it shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit (after compulsory basic education).
- 2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights, equality and fundamental freedoms.
- 3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Currently in Finland, a special needs person is defined broadly and special needs education as a concept is understood in a comprehensive way. In history, the concept has changed from recognition of abnormalities to supporting of diversity and individualization in education.

The term "special educational needs" has a legal definition, referring to persons who have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn. These persons may have e.g. physical disability, illness, delayed development, emotional disorder, social problems, learning difficulties from auditory, visual or linguistic impairment or originating from chronic illness. The need for extra help may be seen several ways in e.g. schoolwork, reading, writing, number work or understanding information, self-expression or understanding others, relation to other people, behavioral issues, self-organization, sensory or physical needs that affect everyday life. Therefore, special needs education can be seen as a way to solve the linkage between the needs of the students and the requirements of the school, and the basis to do this is the individualization of the learning process. However, in Finland it is understood that also the talented students can be seen as persons with special needs as they require special attention on their studies and individualized study paths.

At present, the structural and content-related changes in the education system have shaped the work of special needs teachers: individualization of education has extended into the development of the institutional as well as the regional community. In addition, mergers of institutions and the creation of larger education coalitions set more demands on the planning, implementation and development of special needs education.

In addition, the Finnish Government has set a goal to be the most competent nation by 2020, which means that education has to be more efficient, the dropout rate needs to be very low, there needs to be more individual support and each person should have a meaningful education to maximize their potential. Therefore, each education provider is responsible for organizing special needs education and services for students that need additional support.

The Finnish basic education system is based on the philosophy of inclusion, which means that basic education is the same for all. There is no streaming, but children are supported individually so that they can successfully complete their basic education. Amendments to the National Core Curricula for pre-primary and basic education include a new systematic way of organizing support. The focus is on the earliest possible support in order to prevent the emergence and growth of problems.

The National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools emphasizes the fact that the purpose of special support is to help students in a way that guarantees equal opportunities to complete their upper secondary school studies.

In vocational education, all students have the right to receive sufficient personal and other educational guidance as needed. Vocational institutions are required to pay particular attention to the counselling and guidance of students with learning difficulties, absences from school or problems with everyday life in order to improve their chances of being employed after their studies. Vocational special needs education and training is primarily provided in regular vocational institutions with all other students. However, there are seven separate vocational special schools, which provide special facilities and services to promote vocational education primarily for students with the most severe disabilities or chronic illnesses. In addition, some of these function as development centers for special needs education.

In addition, as a part of lifelong learning principles, special needs education and support is provided already in early childhood education at kindergartens by kindergarten special education teachers, as well as later phases in adult education and higher education.

These requirements for each education provider affect teacher education as well. Special needs teachers in:

- a) *kindergarten must hold a Master's degree in education with kindergarten special pedagogy as the specialization subject,*
- b) *basic education (grades 1-6) must hold a Master's degree in education with special pedagogy as the main or specialization subject, and*
- c) *any other level of education must have a teaching qualification including special needs teacher studies, on top of their normal teacher studies and some work experience in teaching.*

The objectives of the special needs teacher training are based on the national alignments and policies in education that emphasize inclusion. The starting point of special needs teacher training is to develop one's own teacher identity and one's own teaching from the point of view of special pedagogy. Practical learning situations and the exploration of learning processes raise up a new perspective on how to understand and implement special education and guidance. Special pedagogy and rehabilitation concepts support the understanding of the teacher. These theories and practices are applied in a teacher's own work community in cooperation with the world of work.

In addition, within the core of the special needs teacher training is the ethical foundation of the teachers that emphasize, for example, respect for individuals, tolerance, appreciation of diversity, and equality. A part of special needs teacher's work is evaluating the motives and goals of operating in personal and organizational level from the point of view of ethics.

The special needs teacher qualification is competence-based and relies on a strong link with the world of work. The training emphasizes competences such as coaching, consultative approach, rehabilitative teaching methods, guidance, assessment methods and several kinds of tasks related to the development, guidance and support for teaching in different learning environments. In addition, a special needs teacher should know how to apply different plans and documents that guide special needs education in Finland as well as to design Individual Education Plans for the students.

Special needs teachers work in different kinds of positions in special education, both in teaching and as experts. The work consists of curriculum design, teaching and guidance as well as cooperation with internal and external networks, which include different local, regional and international actors. The foundation of a special needs teacher's work is the versatile, flexible and confidential relationships with the students, their own work community and the regional cooperation partners, including the enterprises, who are employing. Working in multiform learning environments requires constant assessment of personal and organizational level as well as networks' operations, the development of teaching especially from the point of view of special education.

To summarize, the focus of education is on supporting the communality and participation of the students. The increase in diversification of education possibilities and students set requirements for each person

working in teaching and guidance. On the other hand, promoting accessibility of learning is the core value of the Finnish education system. Therefore, special needs teachers play a crucial role in Finnish education, enhancing teaching and guidance methods as well as learning environments that support all kinds of learners enabling them to rehabilitate and get employed, and thus, to have a meaningful life.

More information:

-Vocational Special Education Colleges: <http://ameo.fi/briefly-in-english/>

-Vocational Teacher Education in Finland: [http://www.oph.fi/english/education\\_system/teacher\\_education](http://www.oph.fi/english/education_system/teacher_education)  
and <http://www.jamk.fi/en/Education/Teacher-Education-College/Vocational-Special-Needs-Teacher/>

## 4. THE EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SYSTEM IN FINLAND

Mr. Patrik Tötterman, Senior Officer, Ministry of Employment and the Economy

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### 4.1 The vocational rehabilitation

The vocational rehabilitation tasks are handled within different service and administration systems. The main players in the field are Social Insurance Institution (SII), accident and motor liability insurance institutions and authorised pension providers, where division of responsibilities is based on client's situation. The services and support measures of vocational rehabilitation aim at either job retention or finding suitable job opportunities in partly or totally new professional sector.

Irrespective of service and administration system, vocational tasks and measures are reasonable similar, including work and training try-outs, job coaching, vocational education and financial support for self-employment. Rehabilitation allowances, paid by SII and the earnings-related pension scheme, are the main benefit systems providing income maintenance during rehabilitation. In case accidents and diseases covered by the laws on Industrial Accident Insurance, Motor Insurance, Military Injuries and Military Accidents the income maintenance is covered by these special laws

The vocational rehabilitation courses, an innovative measure provided by SII, somewhat differs from traditional measures by combining individual rehabilitation process and peer support provided by other customers. Based on their previous work experience and training, the customers are supported in finding work that would match their capacities and interests, in which the injury or illness would be as little of an impediment as possible.

### 4.2 Public employment service

The labour authorities in Finland prefer to integrate disabled persons into mainstream training and employment programmes offered by all employment and economic development offices (TE-offices) around the country. Services for disabled customers are handled in TE-offices according to so-called normality inclusion principles. In serving customers with disabilities, every effort is made to utilise first and foremost the employment services intended for all citizens: job placement services, vocational guidance and career planning, labour market training and vocational information, and employment coaching, etc..

A productive service for individual customers means that they must know the TE-office's services and obtain services that will best promote their placement onto the open labour market. An appropriate and productive service for individual customers also safeguards the availability of a capable workforce for employers. Assessing a service need is based on interaction between the employment official and the customer and on their joint conclusions.

The services and support measures aim at finding employment for disabled persons primarily in the open labour market by promoting their employability and maintaining their professional capacities and ability to work. Primarily, an effort will always be made to find a vacancy for a jobseeker or guide him/her to training that would promote the finding of a job through employment services. In case a jobseeker cannot find employment through such individual measures, the TE-office may grant an employer a wage subsidy towards the wage costs of an unemployed person.

Placement of a disabled person in a workplace or retention of that job may also require changes to work machines, tools or methods or the external working conditions at the workplace, or arrangements that are essential in order to compensate for or reduce the inconvenience caused by the disability or disease. The

resulting costs can be reimbursed to the employer subject to an application for subsidy for arrangement of working conditions.

More information see <http://www.te-services.fi/te/en/index.html>

## 5. JOB COACH SERVICES IN FINLAND

*Mr. Petteri Ora, Development Director, Kiipula Foundation / Vocational Special Needs College*

The Finnish rehabilitation system is a complex entity comprising of several stakeholders and administrative sectors. There are four key actors providing or organizing vocational rehabilitation services that also include job coach services (JCS):

1. The Ministry of Employment and the Economy organizes job coach services through public employment offices for unemployed persons including persons with disabilities.
2. The Social Insurance Institution (SII) offers, as statutory vocational rehabilitation, also job coach services for persons with diagnosed illnesses or injuries and who are not eligible for vocational rehabilitation funded by other actors. The service is targeted to persons aiming to return to labour market, seeking for a new occupation or vocational training
3. The third actor in this field is the work pension system that provides so-called earnings-related vocational rehabilitation services including e.g. vocational training, work trials and job coaching for those still at work, on sick-leave or on temporary work disability pension.
4. In addition, the municipal social services provide support services for persons outside the labour market, on disability pension (e.g. persons with learning disabilities, mental health problems, physical disabilities) or in an otherwise disadvantaged position in the labour market (e.g. young people without vocational education).

The implementation of job coach services varies according to the funding or organizing authority. Usually the services are supplied by third sector organizations or service providers of federation of municipalities with contracts from the service organizer.

**Employment offices** offer JCS for all clients in need for extra support for finding and keeping a job. JCS can be part of other services, such as work trials, attending job-seeking clubs or wage-subsidised work. JCS includes training in job-seeking skills, study visits to workplaces, and searching jobs etc. The main aim is employment, i.e. to get a job, and activities aiming to improve the client's general life situation are not included in the service. The ministry has in-house guidelines for JCS that point out that the service provider should implement the service according to the national quality standards of supported employment (published in 2001 by Vates foundation).

The number of persons taking part in the JCS of employment offices is approximately 1 500 annually, half of them long-term unemployed and the other half persons with disabilities. The shift from unemployment to employment after JCS is quite modest: increase in the share of those in employment after JCS was 13 percentage units (Härkäpää et al. 2013).

**The JCS of the SII** is based on rehabilitation standards that are updated regularly. The JCS period lasts normally 2-6 months with the exception of clients with mental health problems for whom the period can last up to one year or longer. The standards guide the implementation of the service by providing guidelines as to the staff and its qualifications, daily hours of the service and its general content. In addition, it states the general aims of the service, e.g. improvement in the clients' day-rhythm and general coping skills. Job coaches work together with a colleague or as members of a multi-professional team.

The number of clients taking part in JCS of the SII has increased remarkably during the past years. For example in 2007 the number was 760 clients per year, but in 2012 already 1300. It seems however, that the service does not lead to employment in the open labour market – the share of those in employment before JCS was 8 % and after the service 13 % - an increase of 5 percentage units (Härkäpää et al. 2013).

**The work pension institutes or pension providers** organize - in addition to vocational training and other measures (such as rehabilitation evaluation) - so-called work-place rehabilitation that consists of work trials and job coaching usually at one's own/former workplace, sometimes in a new workplace. The number of clients taking part in earnings-related vocational rehabilitation is approximately 12 000 persons per year. Of those 40 % take part in work-place rehabilitation and 30 % in vocational training. About 50 % of all rehabilitation participants return to work after vocational rehabilitation, those in work force before rehabilitation more often (56 %) than those on temporary pension (34 %) (Finnish Centre for Pensions 2013).

The work pension institutes have common webpages where rehabilitation providers and buyers of the services can work together (palveluverkosto.fi). Webpages include descriptions and prices of different modes of rehabilitation. Pension providers can order e.g. JCS by using those pages. In 2015 17 pension providers and 78 service providers have registered themselves as users.

**Municipal social services** organize rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities. Most of the service users are persons with learning disabilities or long-term mental health disorders. The services are often carried out as daily work in sheltered workshops or other workshops, sometimes in social firms. For long term unemployed people (often with mental health problems) municipalities arrange rehabilitative work experience. These services can also include job coaching into open labour market. No systematic statistics is available about the number of clients in the services or employment results. According to some surveys the number of clients in JCS is quite small, the clients work mainly and more or less permanently in workshops.

In addition to the above described services there are several local and regional, often ESF-funded projects going on that try to develop employment support services, some of them implementing the principles of SE standards. A rough estimate is that a few thousand individuals attend some sort of job coach services in different projects. The projects are often closely linked to the public service system and their role is to complement and develop the services.

### **To sum up**

As can clearly be seen, every funding organisation defines JCS slightly differently and targets it to different client groups, based on varied criteria for client inclusion.

Another point concerns the training of job coaches. There is no officially accepted training available for JCS. Therefore anyone can start a job coach service without credentials. From 2011 there has been a new official training (60 credits) for job coaches and employment support workers of workshops. The training level is the highest vocational non-academic training level, Specialist vocational qualification (EQF 4). And finally, there is no systematic follow-up or statistical data available concerning JCS and its outcome. Research data is scarce and focuses – with only a few exceptions – on the results of project based services.

More information:

- Kristiina Härkäpää, Jaakko Harkko ja Tuula Lehikoinen (2013) Työhönvalmennus ja sen kehittämistarpeet. Sosiaali- ja terveysturvan tutkimuksia 128 Kelan tutkimusosasto | Helsinki. English Abstract

## 6. DEVELOPING REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS WITH MENTAL DISORDERS AND LEARNING DISABILITIES (LD)

*Ms. Johanna Korkeamäki, researcher, Rehabilitation Foundation*

Several studies suggest that gaining education is more difficult for people with disabilities and long-term illnesses. The lower the education level is, the more difficult is to get employment. Therefore transitions into education are important. A recent OECD study on adult basic skills (PIAAC 2012) found basic skills in literacy, numeracy and technological problem solving lower if a person had a disability or long-term-illness.

The paper is based on integrative literature review that was conducted on studies that investigate educational support for young and adults with disabilities, especially learning disabilities (LD) and mental disorders. The review was funded by the Finnish Social Insurance Institution, KELA. Based on the review there are promising models that can help people with disabilities to gain better education. Setting individual goals, helping with career planning and study skills are important. Social support, including peer support, is needed.

**Transition planning** (also transition services) is meant for students with disabilities who receive special education. A student-centered approach and support for self-determination are important for successful transitions. **Supported Education** is developed for people with severe mental disorders in order to help them to reach their educational goals. The research suggests that interventions based on Supported Education are promising.

In Finland many educational institutions, non-profit organizations and recently also Kela have developed models in order to help access to education. These models have developed guidance and rehabilitation that take advantage of peer support, too. However, there is little research on how these model work.

**The OPI project** developed a new form of outpatient group rehabilitation program that enables young people aged 16 to 25 years with depression and/or anxiety disorder to participate in a rehabilitation course alongside vocational education. The aim of the program was to support these students in their studies, to teach coping skills and to promote their general well-being.

The Rehabilitation Foundation has developed several rehabilitation models for adults. The aim of **the Learning to Learn Project** (2006-2010) was to develop new services for adults with dyslexia and other learning difficulties that interfere with their everyday life, work or studies. The **Nuttu project** (2014-2017) develops a group intervention model to support education or gaining employment of young adults with depression and learning difficulties. The project runs three peer groups in parallel for those with 1) mental health problems, 2) learning difficulties, and 3) both mental health problems and learning difficulties. In **the Effectiveness of Neuropsychological Rehabilitation in Young Dyslexic Adults project** the focus of rehabilitation is on solving the current problems the rehabilitees are facing in relation to dyslexia in their studies or work or other main life tasks and on supporting their self-esteem and understanding of their learning difficulty. Group rehabilitation uses the same focus, but takes advantage of the peer support aspect as well.

More information: <http://www.kuntoutussaatio.fi/foundation>



## 7. SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH PARTIAL WORK CAPACITY

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Many people may have difficulties entering the labor market because of partial work capacity, i.e. long-term health condition or disability. The issue has received increased attention during the past decades and efforts have been made to ensure equal labor market opportunities. It is now acknowledged that many people outside working life possess significant working capacity and willingness to work, within the limits of their capacity. Nevertheless, people with partial work capacity may have difficulties in getting a job, retaining a job or returning to work after absence. In Europe, the economic downturn makes the situation even more problematic.

The paper is based on integrative literature review that was conducted on studies that investigate support for persons with partial work capacity in retaining a job, returning to work or getting a job. Both quantitative and qualitative studies were included. Scopus, Web of Science, EBSCO Host, PsycINFO, ProQuest were used to search for literature published in English from January 2004 to March 2014. Altogether 75 studies were examined.

Detailed and comparative information about the effectiveness of different measures is difficult to extract. There is variation in definition of concepts that are used in different countries as well as in research (i.e. work disability, return to work (RTW), work participation, job retention, vocational rehabilitation, partial work capacity). The reliable data is broken down for different sectors and groups. As a result there are variations in reported data between different countries and cross-country comparisons differ and produce inconclusive results. (See also Asplund & Koistinen 2014; Scharle 2013.)

A person experiencing challenges in the labor market due to disability or illness is considered to have partial work capacity. Concrete tools for supporting people with partial work capacity may be divided in tools in the workplace, health care and social services, rehabilitation, education and training, employment services and social security. Support for work and employment may be organized by public and private sector parties as well as non-governmental organizations depending i.e. on the services provided.

Despite the contradictions in evidence, some means of support have been proved to be effective. There is some evidence that moving the emphasis away from inactivity compensations towards assessments of capacity for work is effective (Greve 2009). There are many interventions and vocational rehabilitation programs that show good results in supporting people with partial work capacity to retain a job, returning to work or getting a job (e.g. Varekamp et al. 2013). Long term, sustained and staged support (Clayton et al. 2011) and addressing educational needs of people outside the labor market is essential (Roulstone et al. 2014). It has also been stated that one of the most important factors is that employers and health care professionals are committed to supporting people with partial work capacity (e.g. Gould et al. 2012; Waddel et al. 2013) as well as collaboration between the employee, employer/employment services, health care and rehabilitation professionals (e.g. Seppänen-Järvelä 2014).

Combination of different measures, collaboration between stakeholders and seamless chain of tailored services to the special needs of a person with partial work ability is one way of enabling people to find employment or continue working (Nevala et al. 2015; Vuorento, Terävä 2014). However, the issue is subject to legal, administrative, social, political, and cultural challenges and thus is very complex (Loisel et al. 2005). In spite of the growing evidence regarding support for people with partial work ability, effective implementation of evidence-based models remains challenging.

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## 8. DISABILITY ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE IN FINLAND

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Non-governmental organizations in Finland gather together people with shared values and ambition. In Finland there are many organizations of persons with disabilities. These organizations or associations are grounded on the basis of one or more diagnosis, particular disability or purpose.

Finnish disability organizations have always been working with educational needs and employment issues of persons with disabilities. Many initiatives of schooling and education have started from the organizations of persons with disabilities. They have even established vocational schools accessible to persons with disabilities.

Because of the poor situation in the labor force of disabled people, the disability organizations have started their own employment services. These employment services accompany the public employment offices because it has not always been clear that a person with a disability can get services from the public employment office. Employment services of disability organizations give guidance and counselling on the matters of how to enter the labor market, what kind of support and assistance is available and how to stay in the labor market.

Services of disability organizations are based on peer support. Disability organizations have professional knowledge on employment but also they have peer knowledge on disability and its effect to employment. Disability organizations run rehabilitation courses for persons with disabilities with the peer support theme to orientate to or back to the labor market.

Organizations of people with disabilities have influenced policy-makers to promote employment of people with disabilities. This work includes influencing general attitudes towards people with disabilities and various development projects. Projects are often implemented in co-operation with schools or academies. Many development projects have started from the initiatives of disability organizations (e.g. ESOK - high education without barriers).

Vammaisfoorumi ry (Finnish Disability Forum) is a network of co-operation of the organizations of people with disabilities. It is a member of the European Disability Forum. Finnish Disability Forum has 32 member organizations and thereby represents around 330 000 persons. The Finnish Disability Forum has founded a network on employment issues of people with disabilities. The network consists of 12 disability organizations and 2 foundations who deal with the challenges of employment of people with disabilities and works together to solve those challenges.

This group of organizations has carried out instruction and training for the authorities in the public employment services on the matters concerning disability. These instructions include the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, equality in the labor market, positive discrimination and reasonable accommodation in education, labor market and working life.

*More information:*

<http://www.invalidiliitto.fi/portal/en/>

[www.vammaisfoorumi.fi](http://www.vammaisfoorumi.fi)

[www.duunimentori.fi](http://www.duunimentori.fi)

<http://www.esok.fi>