

## YOUNG PEOPLE WITHIN SERVICES – BEST PRACTICES FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE YOUTH GUARANTEE

### Preface

Implementation of the youth guarantee, to promote employment and prevent social exclusion among young people, has been recorded in the Government Programme. The youth guarantee, entering fully into force on 1 January 2013, is one of the spearhead projects outlined in the Government Programme. As of January 2013, each young person under the age of 25, and recent graduates under the age of 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 an educational guarantee, which secures everyone completing basic education a place in a general or vocational upper secondary school, an apprenticeship, a workshop or vocational rehabilitation place, or a place in some other form of study.

This compilation presents various projects and campaigns that have been employed to promote youth employment and education, and to prevent the social exclusion of young people, as outlined in the youth guarantee. In addition, it includes projects and campaigns to promote young entrepreneurship, prevent the social exclusion of young immigrants, and promote the completion of degrees and cooperation with employers within higher education. Finally, multidisciplinary networks within youth services and projects that promote the wellbeing of young people are also presented.

This compilation is intended for people who work with young people and take an interest in youth issues. The purpose of this publication is to spark activities aimed at promoting employment, education and entrepreneurship among young people. It also serves as an example of the possibility of influencing and preventing the social

exclusion of young people.

As examining every project carried out in recent years was not possible, the relatively easy availability of information on the projects influenced their selection process. In addition to the projects and campaigns presented in the compilation, several other projects and campaigns in Finland are engaging in excellent work to promote the employment of young people and prevent social exclusion. Most of the projects presented here have been funded through the ESF, and information on them has been obtained from the EURA 2007 system. In addition to the ESF-funded projects, some challenge campaigns and a project with other sources of funding are also included.

In order to achieve its objectives, the youth guarantee calls for collective responsibility on the part of the authorities, the business sector, organisations and young people. The social guarantee for Finland's young people will be based on a *Public-Private-People-Partnership model*, in which the young people are active participants. Projects and campaigns introduced in the compilation provide good examples of cooperation between various actors, which has been successful in promoting employment, education and entrepreneurship among young people and preventing their social exclusion.

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## 1. YOUNG PEOPLE WITH NO UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

### OPEN VOCATIONAL COLLEGE

#### Starting point

On 1 March 2010, the North Karelia Municipal Education and Training Consortium launched a project called Nuorten Tuki (Support for Young People) under ESF funding. This project was prompted by worries about soaring youth unemployment and young people remaining outside education and training.

Bearing this in mind, the project aims to improve the engagement of young people, who are currently not in education or employment, in studies or work and improve their life management skills. The open vocational college is one form of activity under this project.

#### What is the open vocational college?

The open vocational college provides flexible paths into education for unemployed young people aged 17–24, who wish to become acquainted with an interesting field of education, begin vocational studies or finish an uncompleted degree.

Applications to the open vocational college are made via the counselling and guidance office of the Nuorten Tuki project, while the Employment and Economic Development Office (TE Office) selects students. The content and duration of education are tailored separately for each student. At the open vocational college, it is possible to complete either preparatory training or studies towards a

qualification as labour market training. In preparatory training, young people can complete modules common to all basic vocational education, improve the marks they earned from their basic education and receive career counselling and guidance in taking care of their own wellbeing, improving their social skills and study techniques. In addition, preparatory training can include on-the-job learning. The purpose of on-the-job learning is to help young people to choose their profession and learn the rules of working life. Vocational studies can be completed in order to obtain either partial qualifications or a full qualification. In many cases, education aimed at obtaining a qualification is arranged in a work-oriented form. Young people who aim to attend studies towards a qualification are steered towards vocational colleges and institutes of adult education.

### Results

Most students attending open vocational college aim at upper secondary level qualifications. The open vocational college has been in operation for two school years. Over this period, the total number of students has been 231, of which 159 attended preparatory training and 72 qualification-oriented education. In spring 2011, during the joint application period, a total of 114 young people were attending training or education, 88 of whom applied for a study place through the joint application system. Among the applicants, 75 young people were admitted to studies, with 62 of the admitted students still enrolled by the following spring. Young people have been steered towards educational institutions using other paths, such as through special admissions. In addition, the open vocational college has developed other work-oriented education paths and other flexible routes into education, in collaboration with the region's vocational colleges and adult education institutes.

### Best practices

Using the open vocational college as one approach, the Nuorten tuki project is still ongoing, but from the positive results obtained we can conclude that the open

vocational college constitutes a good and necessary practice. More individual, flexible education paths, like those provided by the open vocational college, are needed. In addition to preparatory training and qualification-oriented education, support and guidance with regard to career choices, social skills and ensuring one's own wellbeing, help young people to access and commit to education and work. In this way, work carried out within the project prevents the social exclusion of young people. As a form of support, the open vocational college encourages young people to be active and provides them with an incentive, as they can receive labour market support supplemented by the maintenance allowance while attending training or education. For many, studying in an open vocational college is more appealing than being unemployed. In addition, young people are strongly motivated by the fact that studies in the open vocational college can count towards a basic vocational qualification.

For more information on the open vocational college, visit <http://avoinammattiopisto.ning.com/page/avoin-ammattiopisto>.

## TRIAL PROJECT FOR EXPANDED ON-THE-JOB LEARNING

### Starting point

The national trial project for expanded on-the-job learning is based on the Development Plan for Education and Research, approved by the Government. In accordance with the Government Programme, connections between education and the world of work will be improved, and employment will be promoted and developed by strengthening training in the workplace. This goal is being pursued by expanding training done in the workplace. The trial project for expanded on-the-job learning began in early 2009 and will continue until the end of 2013. It is being implemented through state subsidies, granted by the Finnish National Board of Education to 29 education providers between 2008–2012.

The trial project is aimed at more extensive, versatile utilisation of on-the-job learning in developing the professional skills of students in basic vocational education, by taking account of their individual needs and plans. The aim is to increase and provide more-versatile, individual opportunities for work-oriented and practical vocational studies. In addition, the project strives to increase applications to engage in vocational education, achievement of the professional skills required, as well as facilitating the completion of basic vocational qualifications and supporting the transition from vocational education into work.

In terms of content, key objectives for expanded on-the-job trials are:

- Increasing practical orientation in teaching
- Increasing alternation between studies and work in teaching
- Supporting individual learning paths
- Supporting and encouraging employers to participate in the expanded on-the-job learning scheme
- Supporting teachers in on-the-job learning
- Supporting the introduction of new curriculum requirements
- Developing quality management for on-the-job learning
- Supporting areas of vocational education that face difficulties in attracting students
- Supporting vocational education, where it is difficult to provide the training within an educational institution
- Developing support measures and guidance services for on the-job-learning

### Operating model

In the context of the trial project for expanded on-the-job learning, expanding refers to a) expanding the amount of on-the-job learning and the time spent on it, b) expanding guidance and support, c) expanding learning environments, or d) expanding education content to be taught in the workplace. In addition to

expansion in terms of time and quantity, attention has been paid to expanding the guidance of students and support in the workplace. During the trials, the learning environments were expanded beyond the working life environments, into on-line guidance environments and the social media. As the trial project has proceeded, all of these areas have gained in importance in the expansion of on-the-job learning. It is not possible to expand one area and ignore others.

The trials for expanded on-the-job learning have involved the development and testing of both group-specific models and models based on individual guidance of students, as well as other models, methods and tools that support on-the-job learning.

## Results

The trial project for expanded on-the-job learning is still under way. However, at this stage of the experiment, the project has created tested operating models for expanding learning in the workplace and rendering it more versatile. Using the group-specific models, the entire group attends the same amount of on-the-job learning. The trial includes an additional 1–52 weeks of on-the-job learning, on top of the minimum amount specified in the curriculum requirements. In most cases, on-the-job learning is apportioned throughout the study period, so that the first year includes introductory on-the-job learning periods, while longer periods of on-the-job learning are completed during the second and third year of study. In many trials, optional components of the qualification are completed through on-the-job learning with the whole group. Group-specific models include longer, more extensive traditional on-the-job learning periods. There is regular alternation between studies carried out at the workplace and in the educational institution.

Most of the models developed within the trial project for expanded on-the-job learning relate to how students' individual study paths can be implemented by increasing on-the-job learning, with a focus on the students' needs and basis for learning. The amount of on-the-job learning has varied by student. There has also been major variation in the apportioning of on-the-job learning periods, including

between students within the same group. In the case of individual expanded on-the-job learning, on-the-job learning could account for as much as 70% of the entire basic qualification.

Models based on individual guidance offer more flexibility in terms of elective studies, and enable individual study paths. When compared to group-specific models, models based on individual guidance provide better support for the realisation of individual study paths. It is possible to tailor a model suited to the student's needs, including the methods of completion and schedules. Individual models are therefore suitable for students who proceed in accordance with their on-the-job learning plans, and for students who proceed at a faster or a slower pace. They are also suitable for students who need special support in their studies, for students who have previously interrupted their studies, students who are studying towards two qualifications, and students in apprenticeship training. In addition, individual models can be based on collaboration with enterprises, where studies can be completed as "precision training" within one company.

Expanding on-the-job learning through various models has increased the workplace orientation of basic vocational education and made it more work-based, while improving the motivation of students and supporting their employment in jobs that match their training. In order for on-the-job learning to be expanded from the current minimum, the diversification of on-the-job learning and support for individual study paths require further development of learning and instruction provided in the workplace.

### Best practices

The trial project for expanded on-the-job learning is still under way. In the next phase of the trial, the focus will be on disseminating the developed models and testing their functionality in another operating environment. Already, at this stage of the trial, it is possible to discern clear benefits, from the perspective of both students and employers, gained from expanding learning in the workplace.

Expanded on-the-job learning increases the work-orientation of studies, alongside practical orientation in vocational basic education, since it involves genuine customers, tools and processes. Students obtain a realistic and up-to-date idea of working life and its requirements, as well as more extensive networks with employers.

Moreover, expanded on-the-job learning increases the breadth of choice for students, alongside their motivation. This further prevents the interruption of studies and supports a faster transition into the labour market. In addition, on-the-job learning enables the acquisition of professional competences in fields of study where such skills cannot be learned in a traditional learning environment, the transfer of tacit knowledge and obtaining special expertise. It also supports the learning and internalisation of key skills related to life-long learning. Through on-the-job learning, students obtain work experience during their studies, which supports their employment in jobs matching their education.

For more information on the project, visit <http://toplaaja.purot.net/>.

## 2. YOUNG UNEMPLOYED JOBSEEKER

### THE NUORILLE TÖITÄ PROJECT (EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE)

#### Starting point

The onset of the recession in the autumn of 2008 significantly increased unemployment among young people with vocational qualifications. There were concerns that young people graduating from vocational education would not find employment as easily as they used to, and as a result may become entirely excluded from the labour market. The Nuorille töitä (Employment for Young People) project,

funded through the ESF, aimed to support the employment of young people under the age of 30 who have vocational qualifications. The project's goal was to find an operating model for expediting and enhancing the employment of recent graduates, as well as training them to become independent jobseekers. In this, the goal was to employ 50% of the project's customers, while steering the rest into suitable further education. The original target regarding the number of customers was 660 young people in two years. The project was launched on 1 December 2009 and ended on 31 January 2012.

### Operating model

A key tool employed in the project was acquired as a contracted service: a job-seeking club, operating on the premises of the Employment and Economic Development Office (TE Office) on a non-stop basis. This meant that young people could participate in club activities whenever space was available. For each TE Office involved in the project, a job-seeking club leader was hired as a contracted service. Project leaders, club leaders and TE Offices were engaged in close cooperation.

The purpose of the job-seeking clubs was to facilitate the participants' entry into the labour market. During the club activities, young people received the information and skills required for efficient job-seeking. They learned to take advantage of electronic services provided by the labour administration in support of job seeking, especially the CV Net service. Above all, they became motivated and committed to their search for work.

Themes discussed at the job-seeking club included the regional and national labour markets, various channels used for job seeking, contacts with employers, marketing one's own strengths, skills and expertise, job seeking documents, electronic services provided by the TE Office, job interviews and apprenticeship training. Further points

of discussion were issues related to employment contracts. In addition, entrepreneurship was briefly touched on.

## Results

The original project goal was to have 660 young people participate in the activities, with half of them finding employment. As concerns these goals, the project was highly successful. A total of 1,401 young people participated, and 718 of them (52%) found a job during the project. Among men, 50.8% found a job, and among women 52.2%. Permanent employment was found by 193 young people (14%) and temporary employment by 507 people (36%). Four young people became entrepreneurs and 14 entered recruitment training. 155 young people (11%) signed up for training, 60 young people (4%) began labour market training and 95 people (7%) began pursuing self-motivated studies. A total of 241 young people (17%) were steered towards other services and 276 young people (20%) were checked out of the project for other reasons. The job-seeking club was attended by 82% of the young people. Since the club activities began only three months after the project launch, the participant numbers are smaller than they would otherwise be. On a scale of 1–5, the young people participating in the project gave the job-seeking clubs an overall rating of 4.27. The club leaders were given a rating of 4.59. In addition, the participating TE Offices found the project successful. As of 1 March 2012, the job-seeking clubs will continue operating, nation-wide, based on the developed model.

## Best practices

Flexibility was one of the strengths of the job-seeking club model. This enabled the acceptance of large numbers of customers with lighter services, for example during the June peak when this spring's graduates registered as customers at the TE Office. During quieter periods in late spring and in the latter part of the year, it was possible to provide more in-depth service and visit smaller locations. The young people valued the possibility of being able to pay a visit with the club leader without making an appointment, and were pleased with the encouragement they received in their

job seeking. It is also possible to tailor the content of non-stop job-seeking clubs to match customer needs, while customers have no need to wait for the service to begin. Depending on the customer situation, club leaders can include very different target groups. Even after classroom instruction, the club leaders follow up on the customers' situations. Once customers have given their consent to the exchange of information, club leaders and the officials at the TE Office can easily confer over the customer's situation.

Having the job-seeking club operate in the TE Office's premises was a clear prerequisite for the project's success. The job-seeking club also proved cost-efficient, as it is possible to purchase at least twice as many hours at the price of an individual job-seeking group when the club leader service is purchased for the entire year, rather than as individual weeks of group activity. This is because the price per customer is lower when high-quality services are purchased for the entire year.

More information on the Nuorille töitä project is available from the EURA 2007 system, under the project code S11181.

## THE DUUNITA MUT! (GIVE ME A JOB!) CHALLENGE CAMPAIGN

### Starting point

The Oulu region has been suffering from severe youth unemployment for many years. To prevent the social exclusion of young people, or their departure from the Oulu region, the regional daily newspaper Kaleva launched the Duunita mut! (Give me a job!) challenge campaign in 2011.

### What is this about?

Companies participating in the campaign employ one or several young people under the age of 25, for at least three months. They commit to being fair employers and giving young people a positive image of working life and the company's line of business. The purpose of the campaign is not to employ young people in positions where other people have been made redundant. The companies then pass on the challenge to other employers. These challenges are published once a month in the Kaleva newspaper, and in real time on the challenge campaign's website and in Facebook. Any company operating in the Oulu region can join the campaign, either on their own initiative or after being challenged by another company.

### Benefits to companies

By employing young people, companies in the Oulu region ensure the retention of expertise in the area, and consequently, the continuation of their own operations. Also, enthusiastic young employees work hard and give companies a new perspective on their business. By helping to tackle youth unemployment, companies receive positive visibility in the region. The newspaper Kaleva lowers the threshold for employing young people, by providing information on the various employment options and subsidies available. The campaign website includes a meeting place for employers and young job seekers. Companies can browse advertisements placed by young people to find an employee, or if they wish to do so, can place their own job advertisement on the website. All companies employing young people are listed on the Duunittajat website and in Facebook. Kaleva grants a badge of honour to companies that join the campaign. They can place the badge on their website or use it in other marketing material, as recognition of their contribution to employment. In addition, in the print edition, Kaleva publishes listings of participating companies and new challenges.

At the end of the year, one company participating in the challenge will be granted the 'Vuoden Duunittaja' (employer of the year) award. All of the participating companies can place entries in the company blog on the website. Companies that

challenge other companies to participate will obtain visibility through short company introductions.

## Results

In 2011, 31 companies participated in the challenge campaign, and the goal was to employ 540 young people. A total of 550 young people were employed through the challenge campaign in 2011. This accounts for over 30% of unemployed jobseekers aged under 25 in Oulu! Nearly 200 young people placed their own advertisement on the Duunita mut website. The car repair shop Kalevan autokorjaamo was chosen as Vuoden Duunittaja, employer of the year, in 2011. The challenge campaign was noted in the journal Suomen lehdistö. In addition, the "100 actions from Oulu" programme of the City of Oulu designated the campaign as one that is making a significant contribution to development and wellbeing in the region. These results also inspired the execution of the Duunita mut campaign in 2012. The challenge campaign for 2012 was launched on 9 May 2012. A total of 16 companies are currently involved and 204 young people have found employment. The goal for 2012 is to employ 540 young people.

## Best practices

In its entirety, the Duunita mut! challenge campaign is a sound and well-functioning practice, which is easy to implement in different regions. All in all, the campaign has yielded very good results. Another positive aspect is that, besides companies, young people have also noticed the campaign. On the Duunita mut website, you can find a meeting place for companies and jobseekers, a career choice test and information on various employment opportunities, such as the wage subsidy voucher Chance card, apprenticeship training and wage subsidy vouchers for summer jobs.

For more information on the challenge campaign, visit

<http://www.kaleva.fi/duunitamut/>

## THE NAPPAA NUORI TÖIHIN CAMPAIGN (EMPLOY A YOUNG PERSON)

### Starting point

In September 2011, the apprenticeship offices in Southwest Finland jointly launched a campaign for employers in the region, with the aim of employing young people between the ages of 17 and 24 in Southwest Finland, through apprenticeship training. Not only does apprenticeship training combine work and education, it also provides young people with a concrete connection to work. Moreover, among unemployed young people apprenticeship training and on-the-job learning are the most popular ways of obtaining professional qualifications. The campaign aims to employ 120 young people.

### Benefits to companies

Employers who enter into an apprenticeship training agreement with an unemployed young person between 17 and 24 years of age will receive increased training compensation, EUR 300 per month for education towards a basic vocational qualification and EUR 150 per month for education towards a further vocational qualification.

Personnel at the apprenticeship offices are happy to provide employers with further information on employing young people through apprenticeship training. This campaign offers companies in the area an excellent way of training employees to have just the right skill set, while contributing to the prevention of social exclusion

among young people. At the same time, the campaign is securing the retention of expertise in the Southwest Finland region and improving the operating conditions for businesses.

## Results

The campaign has yielded good results: current statistics show that, by October 2012, 154 young people under the age of 25 had already found employment through the campaign. This means that the campaign has already exceeded its goal of employing 120 young people. It is likely that these numbers will continue to rise, since the Government has announced an increase in training compensation, to EUR 800 per month. As a result of the campaign, some apprenticeship offices in the region have seen an increase as high as 20% in youth employment!

By the end of October, young people had been employed in training for over 50 qualifications. Basic qualifications in the automotive industry; business and administration; social and health care; the hotel, restaurant and catering industry; and in construction technology are among the highest employing ones. A total of 23 apprenticeship training agreements have been cancelled thus far, accounting for 15% of apprenticeship training agreements. Among the cancelled agreements, 12 were for further vocational qualifications and 11 for basic qualifications.

Nearly half of the companies employing young people are small, with less than 10 employees. The next largest group of employing companies are those with 10–49 employees. In total, almost 150 employing companies participated in the campaign. Among the young people participating in the campaign, the largest age group was 21-year-olds (25%). The age group of 17–19-year-olds had the fewest participants. Women accounted for 40% and men for 60% of the young people who found employment. Among these, 30% had previously obtained a vocational qualification and 47% had completed the matriculation examination, while 23% had completed only basic education.

The campaign also included an electronic survey of companies that had employed young people, requesting them to name the factors that had influenced the company's decision to hire the young person in question. These companies' knowledge of apprenticeship training was also surveyed. Since this survey is sent to the hiring company only after the initial four month trial period has ended, the number of replies received is not yet very large. However, it is possible to draw the initial conclusion that the threshold for employing a young person is lower if the company knows this person in advance; the smaller the company, the more important it is for it to know the young person in question. In comparison to over 20-year-olds, the numbers of under 18-year-olds employed through apprenticeship training are small. Companies find that young people just out of comprehensive school lack practical knowledge of how the labour market works, as well as practical job seeking skills. This may be linked to companies' viewpoint that few young people have the social skills, so to speak, to seek jobs independently or provide information on the opportunities of obtaining financial support in connection with apprenticeship training. Moreover, companies are not highly familiar with apprenticeship training as a channel for recruiting employees. Despite this, they considered apprenticeship training a good method of training the employees they need.

### Best practices

The joint campaign by apprenticeship offices is a good practice and successful method of employment in itself. It is also easy to implement at national level. What is wonderful about the campaign is that nothing new or extraordinary was created; young people were employed simply by enhancing communication and cooperation between apprenticeship offices and the TE Offices' youth department.

Apprenticeship training has proven an efficient means of preventing youth unemployment.

For more information on the campaign,

visit <http://www.oppisopimus.turku.fi/public/default.aspx?nodeid=18457>

### 3. DRIFTING YOUNG PEOPLE

THE PROGRAMME NUORTEN TUETUT OPINPOLUT (SUPPORTED STUDY PATHS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE)

#### Starting point

The programme Nuorten tuetut opinpolut (Supported study paths for young people) was funded through the ESF, with the objective of developing a personal tutor model based on close personal guidance, for young people between 15 and 24 years old who need support in the Kanta-Häme region. The target group for the programme was young people aged 15–24 who had interrupted or were at risk of interrupting their basic education, or who had not applied for or been accepted into upper secondary education or work, or who were at risk of interrupting their upper secondary studies. These young people's life situations are often characterised by a range of challenges which they face simultaneously at various stages of their lives.

#### Personal tutor activities

The idea behind personal tutor activities is to offer young people the time to discuss and plan their lives together with someone who has the readiness and opportunity to devote sufficient time to the young person, be present, and discuss the young person's situation and existing opportunities from an objective viewpoint. Tutors

examine the young person's situation in a cross-sectoral manner and offer hands-on support and guidance, where necessary, to help the young person make choices and plan his or her future. Such tutors are not officials; instead, they are tasked with acting as intermediaries between the young people who need support and the service system offering assistance.

The operating model includes identification of young people who are at risk of social exclusion, multidisciplinary cooperation between various actors and sectors, forging of individual solutions and support measures within services, such as the tutor activities, and integration of the operating models developed, in the implementation of the municipalities' basic tasks. Key partners to the personal tutors were the Labour Force Service Centres, TE Offices, healthcare professionals, upper secondary educational institutions, as well as comprehensive schools.

## Results

A total of 257 young people participated in the guidance activities within the project. Among these, 79 young people gained the motivation to apply for a study place. They were supported in the application process and all were accepted into studies. Despite their previous decision to interrupt studies, 50 young people were motivated to continue pursuing their upper secondary level studies. The project helped 20 young people to complete their basic education and another 20 to raise their grades. 13 young people entered work and approximately 70 found an on-the-job training position. In addition, 20 people were accepted for work or training try-outs and 10 for rehabilitative work activities. Of all participants, only in the case of 33 young people did the cooperation end negatively, i.e. no progress was made in the young person's situation.

## Best practices

The personal tutor activities proved to be a good practice. The results achieved in the project were good, and the personal tutoring was proven to be both a financially viable and effective operating model. Tutor activities are cost-efficient and the parties involved in implementing the programme were positively impressed by the effectiveness of their work. In addition, cooperation between the various parties was smooth, and the project successfully obtained the involvement and commitment of a total of 86 organisations in the three sub-regions covered by the activities. Such cooperation partners included counsellors, school psychologists, educational institutions, the church, youth services and the police, among others.

The Nuorten tuetut opinpolut programme was implemented jointly by Social Development Co Ltd. and the municipalities in the Kanta-Häme region. More information on the programme is available from the EURA 2007 system, under the project code S10069.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FOR THE INTERMEDIATE LABOUR MARKET IN SOUTHERN  
PIRKANMAA  
– A MODEL FOR FURTHER PLACEMENT WITHIN THE VÄLIKE PROJECT

Starting point

Funded by the ESF, the Välike project aims to develop the management of employment in the region of Southern Pirkanmaa. Key tasks in the project include creating paths into employment for people with a longer history of unemployment, providing employers with a more-comprehensive service, supporting the development of the intermediate labour market and boosting social enterprise activities in the region. Young people are also a suitable target group for the project. The project began on 1 April 2008 and ended on 31 December 2012.

## Operating model

A key operating model under the Vällike project is the further placement of employees in wage-subsidised employment. Further placement means transferring an employee hired in wage-subsidised employment to another employer, i.e. the user company. Under this model, the employer, who is the actual recipient of the wage subsidies, and the user company that arranges the work, can agree on any fees related to the placement and employment of the employee. However, such further placement requires the employee's consent in every case. In addition, the TE Office must be notified before the further placement begins. Some of the employer obligations always remain with the actual employer. A municipality, organisation, foundation or a social enterprise can further place a person, hired under wage-subsidised employment, within a company, organisation, foundation or with a private person. This requires the employee's consent and he or she must be long-term unemployed, have reduced working capacity or be difficult to employ, as defined under the Act on the Public Employment Service. The actual employer and the user company providing the placement agree on the further placement among themselves. This model for further placement can also be used in the wage-subsidised employment of young people belonging to the above categories.

Customers are steered towards the project by Labour Force Service Centres, TE Offices or the municipal social welfare services. Under the Vällike project, the further placement model and process begin with an initial assessment, after which a suitable employer is sought. When an employer is found, the customer's possibilities of completing on-the-job training or preparatory training within the company are negotiated with the employer, as well as possible further placement included in a period of wage-subsidised employment with the municipality. Customers begin with a 1–2 month period of preparatory training for working life. During this time, the project remains regularly in touch with the employer and employee. If the preparatory training period is successful, it is directly followed by wage-subsidised employment and further placement. The customer, municipality and company draw

up an agreement on a further placement. The duration of employment through further placement is approximately four months. During this time, the project remains in touch with the employer and employee. At the end of the further placement period, the customer may be employed with the company.

During the further placement period, the employee, i.e. the customer, works in the company under the company's direction and supervision, but has an employment contract with the municipality. Working time of the employee varies between 85%–100%. Under the project operating model, the municipality enters into an employment contract with the employee and is responsible for the payment of salaries, occupational health care and insurance matters. The employees' payment is determined in accordance with the collective agreement for the local government sector (KVTES). The municipality can collect a fee from the company for the further placement of the employee. Companies assign work tasks to the employee and are responsible for matters related to occupational safety and induction to the work. They also have the right to direct and supervise the work.

## Results

Most further placements have had a positive outcome. By 1 August 2012, 138 young people under the age of 30 participated in the project (41%). Among these, 27 had attended training, 48 preparatory training for working life or on-the-job training, and 35 were employed, on the basis of wage-subsidies, in a further placement. A total of 54 young people are currently customers, 38 of whom have participated in a labour market measure. There are 84 previous customers, 50 of whom participated in an active labour market measure. Among these, 23 attended training, 32 preparatory training for working life or on-the-job training, and 25 worked in further placement in wage-subsidised employment. 75% of young people under the age of 30 who

completed their participation in the project have found a place or are still participating in a positive labour market measure. After three months, 38.1% of the customers have a job, 32.2% are attending training, 4.7% are participating in rehabilitative work activities and 8.3% are unemployed. In the case of 16.7% of the customers, there was another reason for ending the customer relationship, for example moving to a different location or taking child-care leave. After 12 months of their placement on the project, 42.4% of the customers are in employment, 25.8% are in training, 6% are participating in rehabilitative work activities and 15.2% are unemployed. 10.6% of customers are participating in some other labour market measure.

Among the young people participating in the project, 78 had upper secondary level qualifications, 55 had completed only a basic education, three had higher education qualifications and two young people had obtained a specialist vocational qualification. Around 60% of the young people were guided towards the project by TE Offices, around 20% by Labour Force Service Centres, and the rest by social welfare services, youth services, or participated in the project on their own initiative.

### Best practices

During further placement through the Välike project, companies are relieved of the risks related to entering into an employment contract. Since the companies can hire the employee directly after the further placement period, this is also a safe way of recruiting new employees. With respect to employees, this model provides them with the opportunity to prove their skills to employers and gain work experience. In addition, the model prevents and reduces the municipalities' labour market subsidy expenses and social assistance payments made to young people, while also supporting youth employment. The involvement of municipalities in the model has provided the project with notable benefits, since the municipalities have covered

salary costs during the further placement. Excluding tax revenue from the calculation, the municipalities have incurred roughly the same costs as they would have by paying labour market subsidy and social assistance to the customers over a six month period.

Another good practice has involved the inclusion of on-the-job training or preparatory training at the beginning of the placement period. This offers the customer with a sufficiently long period of work within the company. Simultaneously, it is possible to verify the possibilities of moving on to the wage-subsidised employment and further placement phase. In addition, the project has been able to offer employment and education training services to customers in further placement.

Further placement is a suitable method of finding employment for people undergoing a protracted period of unemployment, but who are not experiencing major problems with life management. The further placement model also requires that active contact be maintained with the companies.

For more information on the project, visit: <http://www.valike.fi/>

## 4. PROMOTING YOUNG ENTREPRENEURSHIP

### JA-YE FINLAND – YOUNG ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMMES

#### Starting point

Super skills of the 2020s: interaction, cooperation, critical thinking, an entrepreneurial attitude, creativity, and the management of one's own finances will

become the basic skills required in working life and in managing one's own life. The Junior Achievement - Young Enterprise Finland (JA-YE Finland) activities support the acquisition of these super skills of the future, the harnessing of young people's skills, an active approach to issues and an entrepreneurial attitude, while preventing social exclusion.

### What is JA-YE and who is it intended for?

JA-YE Finland offers educational programmes to young people between 7 and 25 years old, based on the principle of "learning by doing". JA-YE serves as a bridge between educational institutes and the world of work, shaping children's and young people's knowledge of and attitudes towards entrepreneurship, working life skills and the management of their personal finances. With a focus on responsibility and own initiative, the JA-YE programmes are based on highlighting young people's strengths and skills. The JA-YE programmes familiarise young people with an entrepreneurial, active way of doing things, civic skills, skills for working life and the management of their personal finances, through everyday examples. Integrated in all programmes is a section or exercise in financial management. Through a hands-on approach, students are able to transfer the information they have learnt at school into practical skills. Based on a "learning by doing" approach, the JA-YE programmes prevent social exclusion by reinforcing an entrepreneurial attitude in young people and encouraging them to work in an active way, taking the initiative and shouldering responsibility for their own actions. The JA-YE educational programmes are open to all young people, if the school in question wishes to include the study programme in its course selection. JA-YE Finland arranges training for teachers in connection with the programme and aims to have its operating models entered in the school's objectives.

### JA-YE educational programmes

Programmes for lower grades follow the learning by doing principle, offering various learner types the opportunity to use their own skills and strengths. It is also possible for young people with an immigrant background to actively participate in these programmes, as they encourage an active approach and identification of one's own skills.

JA-YE programmes strengthen the connections between education and the world of work, since each programme includes an active role for a school representative and a representative of the world of work outside school. Representatives of the world of work can act as experts or sparring partners, hold classes, or arrange visits to their workplace/company. They provide the students with deeper knowledge of the rules of working life and the skills required, as well as boosting the benefit gained from local competences. At the same time, the entrepreneurs are given the opportunity to network with future experts.

The study programme JA-YE Personal Economics improves young people's understanding of their personal finances. Through the programme's content and practically oriented exercises, the management of personal finances and using money is brought close to young people.

The JA-YE Company Programme lasts for one school year. During the programme, young people establish a mini business that operates with real money. Young people between 16 and 19 years of age can participate in this programme. Within the programme, they come up with an idea for a product/service, formulate a business plan, find a mentor, sell their product/services and participate in various competitions. After the school year, the students write an annual report to summarise their experiences.

## Results

The activities of JA-YE Finland have expanded rapidly. In the school year 2011–2012, more than 13,000 young people participated in the JA-YE programmes, at various

levels of education. From the earliest grades upwards, demand for the JA-YE programmes is increasing. This year, 3,000 young people participated in JA-YE programmes taught in primary schools. The forthcoming school year will see further strengthening of activities in primary schools. JA-YE activities create networks for matching the skills learnt in Finnish schools with the needs of working life. In February, Renewa Oy collaborated on the execution of an JA-YE programme. Thanks to this programme, young participants have already found jobs. According to a recent survey conducted among young people, the JA-YE activities were thought to activate young people, highlight different strengths and prevent social exclusion.

This year, 3,100 young people aged 16–19 participated in the JA-YE Company Programme across Finland. Among the participants, 60% studied in vocational upper secondary education, 30% in general upper secondary education, and 10% were in the 9th grade of comprehensive school. According to a survey conducted with the students, a third intend to set up a company within five years of completing the study programme. The programme provides them with the motivation to take responsibility, while lowering the threshold to becoming an entrepreneur. Each year, these businesses compete against each other in the Finnish best company competition for companies established under the JA-YE programme. This year's winner was ADPineapple NY from Kajaani Vocational College. The winning company will get to represent Finland in the JA-YE Europe Company of the Year competition. Despite top place in the European competition going to Ireland this year, the event was an amazing learning experience for the young people. ADPineapple's success has taken the popularity of entrepreneurship studies at Kajaani Vocational College to a whole new level, and helped to create a positive cycle. After the JA-YE Company programme year, the young participants set up the first cooperative in the school's history. This is led by the same young people and serves as a platform for others interested in entrepreneurship after the JA-YE year. In the coming school year, a record number of young people will enter the JA-YE entrepreneurship course! These youngsters agree that the JA-YE Company Programme has provided them with instruction on real life, while providing them with responsibility and an extensive learning experience.

## Best practices

Clear strengths of the JA-YE programmes include the learning by doing approach and the highlighting of each participant's particular strengths. This makes it possible for all students to participate. These programmes enable the discovery of diverse skills and abilities, boosting the youngsters' self-esteem. Management of personal finances, which improves the understanding of one's personal finances and the use of money, is incorporated in each JA-YE programme. Hands-on activities, linking the programme to curriculum objectives in a practical manner, and the discussion of topical societal themes with a representative of the world of work from outside the school, also support the national goals of activating young people and preventing their social exclusion. Both young people and representatives of the world of work are given the opportunity to network and establish future contacts. Some young participants have already found a job and some have set up companies. The JA-YE activities activate young people and lower their threshold for becoming entrepreneurs. Since the entire age group can be reached through comprehensive school, strengthening the related activities in primary schools lends further support to entrepreneur education and the activation of young people. This, in turn, has a broader influence on their attitudes and actions.

For more information on the JA-YE activities and programmes, visit:

[www.nuoriyrittajyys.fi](http://www.nuoriyrittajyys.fi). More information on last year's winning company in the JA-YE Company Programme is available at: [www.adpineapple.net](http://www.adpineapple.net)

ENTREPRENEURSHIP COACHING CENTRE VOIMALA

### Starting point

The entrepreneurship coaching centre Voimala was a project funded through the ESF, lasting from 1 May 2008 until 29 February 2012. Voimala was aimed at creating a whole new model for entrepreneur education in the Pirkanmaa region, involving active cooperation between various educational institutions, companies and other parties interested in entrepreneurship. Another objective was to disseminate the learning methods used in Proacademy, the entrepreneurship unit of the Tampere University of Applied Sciences, and in various educational institutions and companies. Students in upper secondary level and higher education, teachers and entrepreneurs formed the project's target group. Coaches at the entrepreneurship unit Proacademy of Tampere University of Applied Sciences and the young entrepreneur students of Proacademy were responsible for the project's coordination and implementation.

### Operating model

Voimala operated in the same premises as Proacademy and the innovation and entrepreneur communities to be created in Tampere. Voimala's operating model was intended to provide young people with inspiring entrepreneurship coaching, focused on learning by doing, working together, learning within a team, being self-motivated and learning how to learn. Voimala's activities are aimed at continuity: young people had the opportunity to participate in training organised by Voimala at various stages of their studies, embarking on a path to entrepreneurship starting from upper secondary level studies and continuing as an entrepreneur or in entrepreneurship education in a university of applied sciences or within a university. The teaching methods employed have a practical orientation, inviting students to participate and providing inspiration, while taking account of different learning styles. Training is based on process-based learning and a highly learner-centred approach. Instead of teachers, Proacademy coaches and entrepreneur students lead training sessions. By participating in training as assistant coaches, young

entrepreneurs at Proacademy gain experience of entrepreneurship coaching during their studies. They can contribute to promoting entrepreneurship and serve as examples among young people. Voimala also engaged in continuous cooperation with companies and educational institutions in the region.

Voimala arranged different types of training for various target groups. Aimed at educators, the Voimala Energia camp aimed to empower teachers, discuss a coaching approach to teaching, as well as producing new ideas and insights on the early stages of entrepreneurship education. After the Energia camp, teachers had the opportunity to strengthen their skills at the Voimalan Virta camp, where the aim was to deepen their expertise in entrepreneurship education and create practical models and practices to be applied in education.

Voimalan Bisnes coaching for students in upper secondary education taught them the basics of business through learning by doing. During this coaching, participants had the opportunity to execute a project assigned by a customer, for example a campaign or event. The students came up with a solution to the assignment given by the customer, in a Voimala entrepreneurship camp that lasted twenty-four hours. An older, more experienced entrepreneurship student brought extra project skills to the training, assisting the coach in instructing the youngsters. Voimala also involved the provision of coaching entitled Voimalan Kesä. The goal of this was to offer some of the young people participating in the business coaching the opportunity for self-employment as entrepreneurs during the summer. For students in higher education interested in entrepreneurship, Voimala offered a Business Camp to develop their business ideas, improve their business expertise and create new networks and partnerships between participants, through participatory methods. After the camp, the entrepreneurs were sparred with in matters related to starting a business, and students were networked with business experts and players in the business world. In Business Action coaching, the students were given the opportunity to familiarise themselves with entrepreneurship, by executing their own project.

## Results

The Voimala entrepreneurship coaching centre was a successful project. As demonstrated by an assessment prepared as an assignment in late 2011, the project had a significant impact on promoting entrepreneurship education in the region. Based on this external assessment, it can be concluded that the target groups and stakeholder groups viewed Voimala as an important player in implementing entrepreneurship education. In all, the respondents had a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship. The hands-on approach adopted in coaching provided them with a positive image of entrepreneurship. Students and teachers alike obtained new insights into entrepreneurship through these activities. For teachers, it will be easier to employ the entrepreneur education methods, introduced during the coaching, in their future work. Through Voimala, students obtained more information on entrepreneurship and matters such as the importance of customer service. As added value to teachers, Voimala offered new information on entrepreneurship and enabled the introduction of new teaching tools. In addition, both teachers and students were given the opportunity improve their cooperation skills.

A total of 1,312 students and 226 teachers from more than 20 general upper secondary schools, five vocational colleges and the Tampere and Pirkanmaa Universities of Applied Sciences participated in the Voimala coaching. In addition, nearly 50 companies were also involved. Various marketing campaigns and events, various customer events and events aimed at young people were devised and organised for these companies. The Voimala project created operating models that can be disseminated at national level. One channel for conveying this information is a concept handbook compiled on the basis of the coaching. A total of more than 200 teachers received coaching at the Voimalan Energia and Voimalan Virta camps.

Nearly 900 general upper secondary school students and more than 200 vocational college students participated in Voimalan Bisnes coaching and entrepreneurship

camps, aimed at upper secondary level students. Voimalan Kesä training enabled summer jobs for 17 young people, who attended the Voimalan Bisnes course as entrepreneurs. In the summers of 2010 and 2011, the Voimala summer entrepreneurs set up a summer cafe in the centre of Tampere. In 2010, they had a turnover of EUR 19,000 and one of EUR 12,000 in 2011. The coaching results are visible in new entrepreneurship education models, which are now being implemented in practice, as well as more than fifty projects carried out in cooperation with enterprises. The results can also be seen in everyday life in schools. Of training concepts developed during the Voimala project, the Business Camp and teacher coaching Energia and Virta remain in use and are being further developed under the Y-Campus project of Tampere University of Applied Sciences.

There have been requests for a continuation of such coaching, and Tampere University of Applied Sciences is looking into possible methods of executing follow-up coaching sessions.

### Best practices

Among the project's best practices are its brief and effective coaching concepts, applied in a manner suitable for each level of participant. Approaches that focus on doing and that encourage creativity, alongside cooperation with companies, are also among best practices. It was precisely the inspiring, practice-oriented learning methods employed by Voimala that enabled continuous cooperation between the students and companies. A coaching approach to management, combined with learning, constitutes a further good practice. Another positive aspect of Voimala's operations is continuity: young people could participate in Voimala's coaching sessions at various stages of their study path, and continue on their paths towards entrepreneurship. In addition, Voimala inspired young people to network with each other through events organised for Voimala coaching participants. Also, the Voimala Facebook site was employed in engaging young people as members of the Voimala community.

More information on the project is available from the website [www.voimalaan.fi](http://www.voimalaan.fi) and from the EURA2007 system, under the project code S10297.

## 5. MULTIPROFESSIONALITY AND CLOSER COOPERATION WITHIN YOUTH SERVICES

### MAST – A REGIONAL GUIDANCE MODEL

#### Starting point

The MAST project was aimed at creating a regional guidance model for young people. A further aim was to develop and consolidate a network of experts responsible for the steering of young people in Southwest Finland. The project was carried out between 1 January 2009 and 31 December 2011. Young people under the age of 25 who were at risk of social exclusion formed the project's primary target group. Also included in the target group were teachers and counsellors at educational institutions, workshop personnel, various authorities, representatives of employer and employee organisations, as well as entrepreneurs. The MAST project was implemented in broad-based collaboration between educational organisations and other actors in the region.

#### Operating model

A key product developed by the MAST project is the regional guidance model. This guidance model is based on cooperation between educational institutions and youth workshops, and basic education and upper secondary education. It also includes the implementation of a regional monitoring system for young people and the introduction of new pedagogical guidance models, as well as the enhancement

of cooperation between the various actors. Measures included in the steering model can be employed to support young people as they advance on their study paths, to prevent them from interrupting their studies and to promote course completion. Measures included in the project were divided into three themes: 1) cooperation between schools and youth workshops, 2) the first transition phase, prevention of interruption and individual guidance and learning pathways, 3) enhancing the completion of upper secondary level studies and transition from education into work.

## Results

The regional guidance model for the Southwest Finland region involved the development of an agreement between the educational institutions and youth workshops, plus the related operating models. This agreement pertains to the completion of vocational studies at a youth workshop, in accordance with the curriculum. In addition, the course curricula were broken down by vocational branch. Based on this, various workshops developed their own curricula that comply with the common assessment criteria. Cooperation between educational institutions and the workshops has been further developed through various events. For example, teachers are now more aware of the workshops, and of the practically oriented learning environments offered by the workshops. The project also developed a working and operating model for MAST teachers.

To prevent withdrawal from studies during the first transition phase and to create individual guidance and learning paths, the project involved the development of various models to support young people in their choice of career, when in the final grade of comprehensive school. These include the development of trial days in schools, the combination of workshop studies with school-based teaching, as well as preparatory training for vocational education or working life for those in need of special support. In addition, the project involved the development of a process description for providing guidance to students who did not obtain a study place in

upper secondary education. The project also coined the concept of home municipality responsibility, which means that persons responsible for guidance were appointed in all municipalities within the region.

To enhance the completion of studies in upper secondary education and ease the transition into work, the project developed special needs education at upper secondary level, created an operating model and action plan for interruption of studies, launched courses on job seeking and the skills required in work, and created various forms and materials. In addition, each spring a mailshot was aimed at municipalities, highlighting their responsibilities with respect to employing fresh graduates. The municipalities were indeed exemplary in fulfilling these responsibilities: the city of Somero hired 44 summer workers aged between 16 and 20 years, the city of Raisio decided to employ seven vocational graduates for four months, and the city of Turku hired young people to work in assistant tasks for 1–2 months.

In 2009, the Turku Vocational Institute conducted a study indicating that it is possible to reduce the social exclusion of young people and achieve clear savings by stepping up cooperation, guidance and various support measures. Investments made by the Turku Vocational Institute in developing guidance and support measures and new kinds of education models has led to a clear fall in drop-out rates in educational institutions, while completion rates have increased respectively. According to studies, in central government transfers alone, the reduction in drop-out rates generated savings of approximately EUR 186,000 in 2009 and EUR 471,000 in 2008! Studies completed at the workshops have also proven cost-efficient, as costs incurred by the educational institutions for the workshop periods are EUR 2,254 per student, on average. When students complete their studies without interruption, the educational institution also receives the central government transfer payment, EUR 8,880 on average, for the final year of study. In addition, the educational institution gains further benefits in the form of performance financing, as the young people graduate. By breaking the circle of a young person's social exclusion, the society saves approximately EUR 28,000 per year.

According to a study by the MAST project, students who were steered towards participation in the workshop periods would probably have withdrawn from their studies, or their studies would have been significantly prolonged, if they had not been offered a tailored learning pathway. The workshop studies were attended by a total of 55 students. In the school year 2010–2011, seven of these obtained a degree-level diploma, 34 continued their studies and one young person completed basic education. A total of 12 curricula were dissected.

### Best practices

The success of the MAST project is first and foremost founded on cooperation, an open approach, a positive attitude towards developing issues, boldness, listening and forging commitment.

In itself, the MAST – regional guidance model is a good practice that can be transferred to other regions. Best practices in basic education and in the first transition phase include the introduction of workshop activities in comprehensive schools, in order to support learning. Further best practices included work carried out by the career counsellor, as well as cooperation and tools facilitating the transfer of information. In Turku, the transition phase counsellor assists study counsellors and special needs teachers for students in the 9th and 10th grade, in supporting young people who are experiencing difficulties with their school work. A career counsellor acts as a personal support person for these young people in the transition phase between basic education and upper secondary education, and as their contact person between basic and upper secondary education. In Turku, basic education providers and the Turku Vocational Institute have agreed on the mutual transfer of information. The tools employed include forms for the transfer of information, collaboration meetings with counselling staff, and cooperation with guardians.

Best practices at upper secondary level include workshops for completing courses in which students are behind, group support, investments in the quality of guidance, and meetings with teachers. Workshops for courses in which students are behind aim to address slowness of degree completion in vocational institutions and low

completion rates. These workshops offer students a place for complete their courses under guidance. Each workshop is intended as a low-threshold place. Students can work on individual assignments, take exams or even complete a larger part of their studies through the workshop. Such work is always evaluated by a teacher.

For several years, Turku Vocational Institute has arranged support group activities for students, on problems related to life management skills, mental health problems and nervousness. There is also a support group specifically aimed at boys. MAST also invests in the quality of counselling. During the project, the educational institutions set up a common working group to reduce drop-out rates. In preventing the interruption of studies, the focus is on prevention, a sense of community, openness, distribution of information, and addressing any shortcomings immediately. The working group compiled a list of the various activities in which educational institutions can engage to make schools pleasanter and improve their community spirit. It also prepared a description of how to address a situation that might lead to the interruption of studies, at the earliest possible stage.

For several years, the trade and health unit of Salon seudun ammattiopisto (the Salo region vocational institute) has arranged so-called "meet the teacher" dates. These meetings can be used to arrange training for teaching and counselling staff. Teaching personnel from a given vocational branch are invited to each meeting, where the agenda includes important practical issues and new ideas in the field of teaching and counselling. But the key aspect of these meetings is discussion and the sharing of experiences.

The workshop activities in their entirety can be viewed as a good practice, since the number of students who require special support or are different learners is constantly increasing. Within the MAST project, all youth workshops in the region and the largest educational institutions have concluded a framework agreement for enabling the completion of studies at workshops. Assignments and activities completed at workshops are assessed in accordance with the curriculum criteria. Such studies can therefore be counted towards a basic vocational qualification. The

workshops have introduced a so-called proficiency certificate, to record all studies that young people complete in accordance with the curriculum in question.

In the second transition phase, the MAST project supported the students' transition into work. All units of the Salo region vocational institute have organised info weeks with the theme "Spring is coming, are you ready", to provide students with information and support regarding working life. In Loimaa, this event has been modified into the educational institutions' own info day. The info day included exhibition-type info stands and lectures by representatives of the world of work, and by the defence forces. Young people in Loimaa were also encouraged to seek information by themselves. To support this, a competition was arranged, with a tablet PC as the main prize in the draw from among those who had given the correct answer.

For further support in the second transition phase, the project developed a package containing material and exercises in support of job seeking. Turku Vocational Institute has offered support for young people in need of special support. Each year, some 10–20 young people participate in such guidance.

More information: for information on the MAST project, visit <http://www.mastohjaus.fi/>, for information on the study conducted by Turku Vocational Institute in 2009, contact Project Manager Matti Mäkelä, [matti.makela@turku.fi](mailto:matti.makela@turku.fi).

## BYSTRÖM YOUTH SERVICES

### Starting point

There has long been a need for low-threshold youth services in Oulu, since young people do not necessarily find the services they need, or are unable to access them

quickly. As a solution to this, a low-threshold place for young people was set up at the Byström house.

Byström youth services are a low-threshold service centre where young people can obtain customer-oriented, easily accessible, multiprofessional services. The services available facilitate placement in work or education, or provide help with matters related to everyday activities and life management, health, substances, exercise, leisure time, international matters, housing and personal finances, among others. Each staff member belongs to more than one workplace community, since staff are employed under their own administrative branch, under an immediate supervisor located in their own unit. The service is primarily intended for young people between 16 and 25 years old, living in Oulu. The official opening ceremony of the Byström house was held on 18 November 2011.

### Operating model

Young people can visit the Byström house either by appointment or by dropping in. The aim is to provide services to young people on a one-stop shop basis, instead of leaving them to ponder where to obtain the services they need. At the Byström house, the focus of youth services is on preventative services, aiming to reduce young people's transfer to so-called corrective services. Youth services, welfare services, the Oulu region TE Office, sports services and the third sector all operate under the same roof at the Byström house. Youth service staff working there include counsellors from the youth information and counselling centre Nappi; personal youth workshop coaches; a career coach; youth workshop activities not tied to any specific location; youth outreach work counsellors; job exchange counsellors; youth workers within targeted youth work and multicultural youth work; youth workers from the youth cafe Bysis; and counsellors responsible for young people's summer jobs and the Arpeetti activities. Staff from the welfare services include a nurse, a psychiatric nurse and a social counsellor. An employment advisor and career psychologists represent the TE Office. A study counsellor from the educational services is available through an online service, and sports counsellors from the sports services are also on hand. Third sector operators include a crisis

centre worker, available in the house on one day each week, and a debt advisor every second week. In addition, the women's association Pohjois-Pohjanmaan Martat ry has collaborated with the house with on-duty services, info sessions, theme days and activity groups. Cooperation with various partners is easier when help with young people's affairs is available from one address.

The youth information and service centre Nappi's services can be used anonymously. While there are no limitations as to who qualify as customers, the activities are mainly targeted at 13–29-year-olds. Unemployed young people aged 17–24 living in Oulu can seek an on-the-job training or a preparatory training placement in the City of Oulu's units, through the so-called job exchange service (Työpörssi). Summer jobs are offered to school pupils aged 15–17 living in Oulu and to students over the age of 17. Young people can also post their questions online to a question forum where questions and answers are visible to everyone. These questions are answered by personnel of the Byström house, sexual health counsellors and study counsellors of the city of Oulu. In addition, young people can use a question and answer form to get in touch personally. They can access electronic services of the TE Office, the healthcare service Omahoitopalvelu of the city of Oulu's welfare services, while the nurse working at the Byström house is available on a private chatline in the IRC Gallery online nurse community every Tuesday from 14–16.

Under this operating model, the person who first meets with the young person will chart his or her situation and choose the most suitable actor for continuing work with the youngster. When necessary, young people are accompanied to the next service. Some of these services are based at the Byström house and some are on duty at certain times. Activity groups, theme days and info sessions have been organised at the Byström house.

## Results

The Byström youth services were launched on the basis of the need to create a low-threshold youth centre in Oulu. Since the gradual launch of the activities in the Byström house during the autumn of 2011, no precise results have yet become available on their effectiveness. Some feedback has been obtained from the young people, however. Their feedback has mainly been positive, supporting the workers' views of the effectiveness of the activities. The workers find that, at the house, they can provide rapid service to their customers, since customers are met jointly, alongside other workers, in accordance with the customers' needs. It has proven easy to consult with other workers. Byström youth services activities have sparked a great deal of interest, both locally and at national level.

### Best practices

Gathering youth services together under one roof, within a low-threshold service centre, is a good practice that can be easily transferred to other municipalities. It is important, for example, that a young person who has dropped out of school does not need to figure out where to access the required services. At the house, the worker receiving the young person guides him or her to the right service on a one-stop-shop basis. Instead of shunting young people back and forth between services, it has been agreed that if the workers have been unable to meet with a customer when he or she first comes in, they will call the customer and arrange a meeting for a later time.

More information on the Byström services is available at

<http://www.nettinappi.fi/tietoalue/mista-apua/bystromin-nuorten-palvelut/> and on

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMa-YR3mfDk>

PETRA: THE YOUNG PEOPLE TO WORK AND SCHOOL PROJECT

## Starting point

At the time of launching the project, Vantaa had exceptionally high youth unemployment rates in comparison with the rest of the capital region. In 2009, there were 1,289 unemployed young people under the age of 25 in Vantaa. About half of these lacked any vocational qualifications. There was a fear that unemployment figures would continue to increase, and that some young people would face permanent social exclusion.

The project PETRA, Young People to Work and School, aims to build an efficient model in cooperation with the city of Vantaa, the TE Office and KELA, for guiding their customers, unemployed young people, into work, an on-the-job training placement, education or other services, before their period of unemployment becomes prolonged. This model takes a multi-professional approach and aims to provide services to young people on a one-stop-shop basis. The target group for the PETRA project are unemployed young people between the ages of 17 and 24 living in Vantaa. Particular attention is paid to young people without vocational qualifications. The project receives funding from the ESF. It was launched on 1 March 2010 and is scheduled to last until 28 February 2013.

## The project's operating model

Operating models in the PETRA project consisted of active guidance, multi-professional cooperation, cooperation with employers and network-based cooperation. Young people in the project received active guidance in job seeking every two weeks, and their registration as job seekers is valid for only two weeks at a time. In this way, each youngster's job seeking situation was separately assessed by each service and within a group. In connection with this, young people were provided with guidance to develop their life management skills, if necessary. A multi-

professional approach was emphasised in project activities: the project operated on the principle of "mutual customers, mutual goal". Under this operating model, a nurse first examined the young person's state of health and directed him or her to the required further measures, such as substance abuse treatment. But this was not the end of the guidance provided; instead, the nurse actively monitored issues such as the situation with regard to substance abuse treatment. This project also involved service co-ordinators with extensive expertise and a suitable educational background. In addition, service co-ordination in a group format was developed. This was based on the idea that group meetings are part of the customers' job search process. Sometimes customers meet with the service co-ordinator in a small group, sometimes privately.

Since some of the group meetings were led by partners from the social services or the third sector, for example, they also served as a platform for developing network-based cooperation. The PETRA project also engaged in cooperation with the TE Office and the social services. In both cases, cooperation was seamless.

Approximately 200 companies participated in employer cooperation. Employers allocated individual assignments to projects and recruiting events were organised for young people in accordance with the employers' wishes. The PETRA project cooperated with the project "Yllätetään yhteiskunta" (Let's surprise society).

## Results

The PETRA project has achieved clear results through sound cooperation with companies, multi-professional, network-based cooperation and service coordination, and the customer guidance model jointly developed with the TE Office. This project has achieved its goals in accordance with the project plan. Significant results achieved in the PETRA project include reduced unemployment rate among under 25-year-olds and the development of multi-professional network-based cooperation in

Vantaa. During 2011, the unemployment rate of under 25-year-olds in Vantaa fell by 19.2%, while at national level the respective decrease was only 5.6%. By the end of 2011, more than 1,200 people had participated in the project. It seems that the project's quantitative targets with regard to new jobs may well be met.

### Best practices

Best practices in the project included its operating models, which emphasised an active, multi-professional approach to the guidance of young people. Following up on the job search every two weeks and, during the job search process, having young people participate in various group events alongside personal guidance has proven to be a good practice. These activities activate young people, who begin to take more responsibility for their own situation.

Nurses made a significant contribution to the project; according to the project workers, the project would not have succeeded without them. In April 2011, two nurses began working in the project. During the year, they developed a new concept for a health meeting with a nurse. This has proven a highly necessary service in employing young people. If concerns are raised about the young person's health or any health-related issues need to be checked, the employment counsellor or service co-ordinator will book an appointment with the nurse. The PETRA project nurse will meet with a referred young person 1–5 times, in order to comprehensively chart their situation and guide them towards the required services, or to continue with the job search/study place application. Close cooperation with the service coordinators, personnel at the TE Office and other partners form an integral part of the nurses' work. Meetings with more than 100 customers have revealed that some unemployed young people require many services before it even becomes possible to plan their employment or education. Due to an accumulation of various problems, these young people often need plenty of support, motivation and guidance in accessing health care and social services, for example.

Broad cooperation with employers was also of significant benefit in the project, as it increased encounters between employers and young people at job fairs and various recruitment events. The services provided to companies are clear and employers receive any help they need, for example with matters related to internships and pay subsidy agreements. Moreover, young people obtain the crucial first experiences of employers and job interviews.

More information on the PETRA project is available from the EURA2007 system using project code S11343 and from the project's website at [www.vantaa.fi/petra](http://www.vantaa.fi/petra) and in Facebook at [www.facebook.com/petraprojekti](http://www.facebook.com/petraprojekti)

## 6. PROMOTING THE EMPLOYMENT AND PREVENTING THE SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF YOUNG IMMIGRANTS

### VASKOOLI PROJECT FOR YOUNG IMMIGRANTS – INTRODUCTION AND MODELLING OF THE EDUCATIONAL GUARANTEE IN THE TURKU AND SALO REGIONS

#### Starting point

The VaSkooli project for young immigrants, funded through the ESF, had the aim of developing a regional educational guarantee model for the Turku and Salo region, targeted at young immigrants. A further objective was to chart and identify all transition phases in the education path of young immigrants, and to develop the required support measures. The target group included 15–25-year-old young immigrants living in the region, who were at risk of social exclusion. The project began on 1 April 2008 and concluded on 31 January 2011.

## Operating model

The project was based on cooperation between various organisations and actors, the development of existing training, flexible cooperation with employers, ensuring the sufficiency of the right type of study places, supporting parents in fulfilling their parenting responsibilities, and strengthening young people's life management and experiences of working life. A key aspect of the model is flexible cooperation between various actors, and ensuring sufficient guidance and support measures at the various stages of young immigrants' education paths. The VaSkooli project views the educational guarantee as a broader process, rather than just a transition between basic education and upper secondary level education. This is because young immigrants' education paths involve several transition phases, since some of them attend several preparatory training courses prior to proceeding to upper secondary level education.

The project was divided into five different themes: development of cooperation and transfer of information in the transition phase; development of existing training and competence development of educational institution personnel; the development, trialling and adoption of new guidance and support measures; the development of new forms of cooperation and cooperation networks; and the modelling, productisation, incorporation and dissemination of best practices. For each theme, the project identified key problems and issues and drew up proposals for solutions.

## Results

A total of 1,072 people participated in the various measures under the project. During the project, cooperation between various education programmes increased, the education was profiled in accordance with the target group's goals, new flexible education programmes and practices that facilitate the transfer of information were introduced, and monitoring systems were created. Language test arrangements were harmonised and a joint application system was developed for preparatory training. Preparatory training for various vocational branches was launched, its level

of work-orientation was increased and new operating models were developed in support of self-direction by students. In addition, the project involved the development of study materials, student-oriented guidance, and arranged training and support and consultation services for teachers.

The effectiveness of the project results is underscored by the fact that the investment made in developing training for young immigrants has made a rapid impact in various educational institutions. Among students selected through the joint application system to study at the Turku Vocational Institute, 7.4% had a foreign native language. In 2009, their share was 6%. The language test was passed by 75% of students participating in preparatory training (in 2008, 35%), and 66.7% of students in preparatory training obtained a study place in upper secondary level education or in a university of applied sciences (in 2008, 32%). A total of 84.7% of students in preparatory training found a place in education or a job. Rates of interrupted studies among students with a foreign native language, in courses leading to a basic qualification, have been nearly halved since 2006. At the Turku Christian Institute, 10.6% of students in immigrant training withdrew from such training; in 2008, the drop-out rate was 26.7%. Cases of interruption of studies, where the student does not continue with other studies, work or military service, declined by approximately one percent from 2008; in the school year 2010–2011 they accounted for 2.2%.

The share of students with a foreign native language, selected through the joint application system in the Salo Region Educational Federation of Municipalities, has increase by approximately one percent each year. Among students participating in preparatory training, 90% passed the language test, 70% were accepted for upper secondary level education or into a university of applied sciences, and an amazing 100% were accepted into education or found a job. The drop-out rates for students with a foreign native language studying for a basic qualification have also decreased.

### Best practices

The most significant best practice in the project was the educational guarantee model for young immigrants. In addition, the project developed well-functioning cooperation models to prevent the social exclusion of young immigrants. Among other things, the project created a cooperation network comprising organisations responsible for training and other guidance provided to the young people. This network will continue to operate even after the project's conclusion.

Further good practices include the joint application system for preparatory training and beginner-level language training aimed at immigrants in the Turku region. Preparing a description of the immigrants' education paths, models for cooperation between the educational institutions and youth outreach work, and various monitoring and predictive systems, also constituted good practices. In addition, best practices include the creation of new operating models for the transfer of information, so that the responsibilities of various actors are defined with respect to the transfer of information and the monitoring of young people. New operating models were also developed for cooperation with the parents of young immigrants and immigrant organisations.

Best practices in the development of education for young immigrants include profiling of education, preparatory training with a vocational orientation, a default duration of four years for degree studies, developing new training for young immigrants, new models of cooperation with employers, extending on-the-job training to beginners' language training, and cooperation with the third sector. As regards models for guidance and support, best practices include models for group and individual guidance that support the students in their learning and life management, as well as new study and training materials for students, such as easy-to-read material for various technical fields.

More information on the VaSkooli project is available from the EURA 2007 system under the project code S10202.

## THE SAMOVAARI PROJECT

### Starting point

The project was aimed at improving the employment rates of immigrant women and young immigrants. A further specific goal was to provide the target group with Finnish language teaching, guidance in the management of their everyday lives and handling personal administration, and guidance and advice on becoming an entrepreneur. In addition, the project had the goal of establishing one company that would employ seven people. Samovaari was an ESF project operating in the Lahti region between 1 April 2009 and 31 December 2011.

### Operating model

The key objective in the project was to support the employment of immigrant women and young immigrants in the open labour market, through preparatory training for working life, on-the-job training and work try-outs, as well as the planning of education paths. New customers began their journey with an interview with an immigrant coordinator or employment counsellor, who charted the customers' educational and work background and assessed their current needs for training and the customers' wishes regarding employment. After this, a training and employment plan was prepared. Where possible, the customers first began with one month of on-the-job training with the Koti ja Kuusi cooperative. During the on-the-job training period, the project's employment counsellor offered job coaching. After this, if necessary a suitable Finnish language training, preparatory vocational training or education programme towards a qualification was sought for the customer. At this stage, the aim was to employ the customers through employment subsidies, either with the Koti ja Kuusi cooperative or partner companies. A final aim was for customers to find employment on the open labour market, or to set up their own company or cooperative.

The project collaborated with its extensive network of partners, encompassing organisations and companies in the region, the city of Lahti and the TE Office, and the Lahti Region Enterprise Agency.

## Results

As a total of 267 people participated in the project, it can be considered necessary. The project workers believe that the customers were happy with the services provided. The results achieved include the successful paths created for the customers, as they received a pay-subsidised job after labour policy measures and were able to attend labour market training and preparatory training for working life, improving their opportunities of finding employment on the open labour market. In addition, the customers' life management skills improved and some of their problems were solved.

By the end of 2011, customers who participated in entrepreneurship counselling had set up two own companies, three had joined existing cooperatives, and one incorporated her own line of business in her husband's company. In addition, one immigrant entrepreneur has filed a patent application, with the assistance of the project's immigrant coordinator.

## Best practices

Extensive cooperation with various actors has helped the project to achieve its goals. Customers have been able to participate in training offered by project partners, such as hygiene training, which improves their opportunities of finding employment e.g. in the food industry.

Best practices include providing labour policy measures to immigrants, in an authentic workplace environment with real customers, and having the employment counsellor provide guidance and induction, together with other company personnel.

Further strengths of the Samovaari project were the individual guidance and support offered to immigrant customers, and immigrants being able to obtain help and support in their own language.

More information on the Samovaari project is available from the EURA2007 system, under project code S10899.

## 7. HIGHLY EDUCATED YOUNG PEOPLE

VALMIS TUTKINTO TYÖELÄMÄVALTTINA (A COMPLETED DEGREE AS AN ASSET IN WORKING LIFE)

### Starting point

The project was based on developing study counselling for students in higher education, to further their studies and support their transition into work. A further aim was to increase the counselling skills and expertise of counselling and teaching staff, especially in career and work counselling. The project was funded through the ESF and ran from 1 September 2008 to 31 March 2012.

### Operating model

The project Valmis tutkinto työelämävalttina (A completed degree as an asset in

working life) was implemented jointly by seven higher education institutions. Various seminars were arranged and the thesis guidance, study counselling and career group counselling provided to students in higher education was developed. Counselling training was also developed for project staff. Throughout the project's duration, the experiences gained and measures implemented were analysed and reported. The project also involved the development of an online tool kit for students and counsellors, in order to support them in counselling, proceeding through their studies and making the transition into working life.

## Results

The project Valmis tutkinto työelämävalttina achieved its goals by the end of the project period. It involved the successful development and implementation of thesis guidance, study counselling and career group counselling for students, and counselling training for project staff. During the school years 2009–2011, a total of 593 students participated in thesis guidance or study counselling and career group activities, and a total of 69 groups were arranged. Experiences gained from the project, along with surveys, demonstrate that students can increase their chances of completing their degrees and finding employment by participating in a group. But first and foremost, the students obtain support and encouragement in pursuing their studies and further goals in life. Their life management skills and quality of life improve, making progress with their studies smoother and enhancing their capabilities to complete their degree and move into the world of work.

Counselling training arranged through the project was also successful. A total of seven key counsellors and 30 tutors from different fields of education participated in counselling training. According to the feedback received, because the training related to topical themes, the counselling training organised during the project was thought to be highly useful. The training also provided counsellors with practical tools for their work. In addition, they were able to network at training sessions and felt that discussions with other teachers were important. As indicated by the project results, counselling training supports the development of counselling within higher

education. Experiences gained from the training should be further developed, as should the training contents. Group counselling models were actively introduced at various national expert seminars and events. The seminars arranged as part of the project were felt to be necessary and useful.

Several publications were produced under the project. Among other topics, these dealt with the reasons for delays in studies and students' and counsellors' experiences of counselling groups. Based on the group counselling experiences gained from the project, an online tool kit was compiled for students and counsellors. This tool kit supports counselling, progress with studies and transition into work. It can be used either independently or in groups. In addition to the tool kit, other activities were developed for facilitating the faster completion of studies and transfer into work. The University of Oulu, for example, arranged thematic afternoons for students, and the University of Lapland organised Alumni evenings.

### Best practices

Development of thesis guidance and study and career group counselling was one of the best practices implemented in the project. Another good practice was counselling training, as was the online tool kit compiled for the group counselling process: this supports the sustainability of results achieved during the project, as well as their national implementation. In addition, publications under the project gave major prominence to the importance of group counselling and counselling training in the development of higher education.

More information on the project is available from the EURA 2007 system, under the project code S10653.

THE LÄHDE TYÖELÄMÄÄN PROJECT (SPRING TO WORK)

## Starting point

Cooperation between institutions of higher education and employers is a key factor in improving students' capacities to engage in working life. Major obstacles to increasing such cooperation are lack of information and difficulties in approaching the fragmented field of higher education.

A key objective in the Lähde työelämään (Spring to work) project was to increase interaction between institutions of higher education and employers, and to chart the practices and procedures of various institutions of higher education relating to internships, project studies, thesis cooperation and employer cooperation. The project also sought to compile information from various sources on internships, as part of higher education, and other forms of on-the-job learning, in order to provide employers with a clear, productised idea of cooperation possibilities and the competences of students in higher education. Another aim was to create new network-based cooperation between various actors. The project focuses on best practices within employer cooperation and seeks to establish criteria for assessing these practices.

The project's target group comprised actors responsible for employer and stakeholder cooperation in institutes of higher education, counsellors coordinating traineeships in Finland and abroad, and other employer cooperation, and various actors within trade and industry, SMEs in particular. The Lähde työelämään project is funded through the ESF, running between 1 May 2010 and 30 April 2013 (intended conclusion).

## Operating model

The project involves cooperation between various institutions of higher education. Employers are provided with one, sufficiently comprehensive source of information, and solutions are sought to emerging development themes, in cooperation between universities and universities of applied sciences. Further efforts to resolve the issue

of fragmented employer cooperation in the field of higher education include development of practices within institutions of higher education.

## Results

Although the project is still ongoing, its objectives have already proven to be achievable. Online services for improving cooperation between higher education and employers have been developed within the project. The results of these development efforts include two online services for employers: the joint information directory and the competence search at [www.korkeakouluosaajat.fi](http://www.korkeakouluosaajat.fi). The joint information directory includes information on the universities and universities of applied sciences, from the employers' perspective. The competence search, on the other hand, illustrates the competence profiles of university graduates, by making novel use of employment monitoring. In addition, cooperation across fields of education has been increased in employment matters.

## Best practices

Thus far, the project's best practices include new, easy-to-use applications offered to employers as an online service. The project's partner universities have surveyed forms of employer cooperation in various departments and identified contact persons. No such surveys have been previously conducted, and they will surely be of use in the future promotion of employer cooperation. In addition, since closer connections are being forged with employers and the use of resources is being actively discussed, a good practice has emerged in the form of various administrative and departmental actors, within the piloting institutions of higher education, being connected through the project's employer cooperation networks.

While it is still too early to tell what kind of results the online services will yield, they make access to information easier for employers, which may improve cooperation between them and institutions of higher education.

More information on the project is available from the EURA2007 system, under the project code S11311.

## 8. OTHER PROJECTS PROMOTING THE WELLBEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE

ASUNTOLA – RIITTI AIKUISUUTEEN (STUDENT HALLS OF RESIDENCE – A RITE OF PASSAGE TO ADULTHOOD)

### Starting point

The project Asuntola – riitti aikuisuuteen (Student halls of residence – a rite of passage to adulthood) targeted the challenges faced in halls of residence accommodation. An increasing number of young people begin gaining their independence at an early stage, as they move to a new town to study. At the same time, more and more young people suffer from a lack of motivation with their studies and also lack life management skills. Personnel working in halls of residence are often alone with their work and responsibilities. The everyday realities of current halls of residence accommodation were the project's starting point. Its aim was to develop sound operating models in order to reduce the interruption of studies among students, improve students' life management skills and ease the work of personnel working in halls of residence. The Vocational College Lappia, the

Peräpohjola Folk High School, colleges in Tornio, the Rovala College and the Ylitornio Christian College participated in the project. The project was funded through the ESF, running from 1 January 2009 to 29 February 2012.

### Operating model

The project was aimed at supporting students in remaining on schedule with their studies and completing them on time. In order for students to spend their leisure time in a way that supports studies, the project offered them various target-oriented leisure time activities. Personnel working in halls of residences can adopt operating models based on these activities in their future work. To strengthen community spirit and participation among students, the project organised team-building days, guided activities, theme evenings in halls of residence and recreational trips. In addition, tutor activities and a system of responsible persons for shared apartments were arranged. To cite a few examples, karaoke evenings, a grill evening with activities, as well as game and movie evenings, were arranged in the halls of residence. In addition, cooperation between the halls of residence that participated in the project was enhanced by arranging common events. To support their participation, the young people were involved in the planning and execution of such events.

A project worker was present at the halls of residence, to assist personnel in their work two days a week. The project worker's time was split on a 50-50 basis, between the Peräpohjola Folk High School and the Vocational College Lappia's Tornio unit. When at the halls of residence, most of the project worker's time was spent in interactive discussions with students and personnel. In discussions with students, most topics were related to social relationships. Where necessary, the project worker guided the young person towards seeking professional help, such as health care services. To strengthen peer support among personnel in the halls of residences, regular meetings have been arranged, Facebook groups have been set up for assistants, and training has been provided and a form developed for reporting on evening shifts.

The project had the aim of promoting the health of young people living in halls of residence. Exercise groups were set up, gym times booked, and one hall of residence acquired an exercise bike. Each week, health-related issues were also discussed with the students. Discussion events on substance abuse were arranged jointly with the A-Clinic in Tornio. Non-smoking students were treated to a free afternoon coffee. To help students develop their life management and everyday skills, the project assisted them in their dealings with the authorities, guided them towards establishing a good circadian rhythm, and provided advice on matters related to cleanliness and hygiene. A homework group and a study workshop were set up to support students with their learning. The study workshop is intended to support progress with studies and their completion. In addition, daily discussions on matters related to studies are held with the students.

## Results

The project supported young people in becoming independent, by having an adult present in halls of residence during the evening. The sense of community among students has been strengthened. Since the students have come to know each other and become a group, this has had a significant impact on their mutual interaction and on the mutual trust between the students and personnel in halls of residence. Both students and personnel have given positive feedback. The students have come to know each other, and are no longer mutually shy or wary, or simply idle. Good feedback has been received from all halls of residence on the evenings of guided activities. Among the students living in the halls of residences, 38% participated in the guided evening activities.

In all halls of residences included in the project, there has been a significant decrease in vandalism. Vandalism or abuse of the school's property is now practically non-existent. There is also less alcohol consumption on week nights and the students have engaged in more goal-based exercise. Dishes, bottles and cans are recycled in an exemplary manner.

A study workshop supporting students with their studies has become a permanent activity at the Peräpohjola Folk High School, as part of assisting students in need of special support. To the students, the study workshop has provided a low-threshold place for completing unfinished assignments. In Lappia, there is also the study workshop Majakka, where two employees work full-time to provide study support to students. Project activities have contributed to a reduction in the interruption of studies by students. During the project's duration, drop-out rates have decreased: between 1 January 2009 and 31 July 2009, 5.6% of students living in the student halls of residences interrupted their studies. Three years later, the drop-out rate was 4.0%.

### Best practices

Best practices under the project included team building days, supporting the creation of a community spirit and participation, as well as the future workshop. Both of these practices have built and increased community spirit in the project and improved the mutual trust between students and personnel in the halls of residences. In addition, the events and guided leisure activities were thought to be good. Evening events organised through the project have been a success, both in terms of their content and the number of participants. For example, many students who have otherwise not taken part in guided activities attended the karaoke evenings. Indeed, the karaoke evenings proved to be an excellent way of meeting quieter, less active students. At the same time, the opportunity to shine on the singing stage helped these students to gain confidence and boosted their self-esteem.

Further best practices include the regular meetings and trainings organised for personnel in halls of residences. The project coordinator organised and chaired these meetings, which dealt with development needs in the halls of residences. Themed and free discussions have formed an integral part of these meetings. During such discussions, everyone has been given the opportunity to freely share their opinions and experiences of the work. The meetings have promoted the project's goal of increasing peer support, and will remain a permanent practice after the project's conclusion. In addition, the meetings and training sessions have strengthened the

personnel's professional identity.

More information on the Asuntola — riitti aikuisuuteen project is available from the EURA 2007 system, under project code S10762.

## MIELEN HYVINVOINTI (MENTAL WELLBEING)

### Starting point

The project Mielen hyvinvointi (Mental wellbeing) was funded through the ESF, with the aim of developing the professional competences of teaching and guidance personnel working in upper secondary level schools, in order to promote mental health. Educational institutions providing upper secondary education highlighted the need for material and work to promote mental wellbeing. When the project was under planning, there was growing concern about the mental wellbeing of young people and their need for support, even if the majority of young people are doing well. According to various surveys, teachers require more training and competence development in matters relating to mental health and in supporting the emotional life and social skills of young people. School health promotion surveys also indicated a need for work and material on promoting mental health. A further goal was to promote and identify matters related to the mental wellbeing of students, such as motivation and coping, and to develop forms of cooperation to improve mental wellbeing, for subsequent implementation in educational institutions.

In September 2009, a preliminary survey was carried out within educational institutions participating in the project. The responses show that the majority (86%) feel they need more expertise and training in mental health issues, and believe that the project's training would support them in their work and provide information that

bolsters their expertise. Less than a half (43%) of the respondents thought they had sufficient knowledge of matters related to mental wellbeing. Only a third (33%) felt they had sufficient knowledge of mental disorders. A large share of the respondents (81%) said they needed more information on young people and their mental wellbeing. In their work, teachers were increasingly often faced with ill-being in students, and also had to deal with student welfare-related tasks. Nearly all of the respondents (93%) thought that mental health problems had increased among students and that there was a clear need to support the mental wellbeing of students in educational institutions. Improving students' skills and knowledge on maintaining mental wellbeing was felt to be important by 99% of the respondents. Based on the results of the preliminary survey, there was a need for the training provided in educational institutions by the trainer network of the Mielen hyvinvointi project.

### Operating model

An important premise in the project was the idea of mental health as a resource, promoted by the Finnish Association for Mental Health. When mental health is thought of as a resource, it is viewed as a life skill that develops when people interact with their environment and community, and which is acquired and used throughout one's life. The project Mielen hyvinvointi introduced this concept to personnel working in the educational institutions, and provided them with tools for strengthening their knowledge of mental health matters. As a whole, the Hyvinvoiva oppilaitos (Wellbeing in educational institutions) material and training form a packaged product that can be considered a social innovation, since it has introduced a new perspective to the strengthening of resources in upper secondary level education. Upper secondary level education is an important transitional phase in young people's lives, while supporting mental wellbeing at this stage is particularly important.

Key skills in the modern world, at work and in life in general, include communication skills, mental flexibility, and understanding oneself and others. A key theme in material concerning wellbeing in educational institutions is the learning and teaching

of emotional skills and communication skills. The Hyvinvoiva oppilaitos training sessions provided information on mental health as a resource, on the development stage of adolescence, communication skills, cognitive and emotional abilities, mental flexibility, active, presence of mind and acceptance (mindfulness), identifying and expressing emotions, taking a positive attitude towards life and growing as a human being, within the context of upper secondary level schools and teaching.

All practical exercises included in the Hyvinvoiva oppilaitos material are concluded together within a group. This creates a safe, positive atmosphere at the end of each session, even if the topic was difficult and evoked strong feelings. Training sessions and material were used to support the ability to adapt to various life situations, as well as the ability to avoid adapting to harmful circumstances. The presence of adults, and demonstration of a caring and supporting attitude, are vital to students' mental health. Adults always set the example in terms of respectful social encounters.

Understanding the development stage of adolescence is vital in teaching and, as the youth guarantee is implemented, the educational responsibilities of teachers will be further emphasised. A key element in carrying out this duty involves taking account of the basic aspects of mental wellbeing and deliberately applying them in teaching. For example, why do interaction, a safe group and group work, the ability to resist peer pressure, making choices and positive feedback work in teaching young people?

## Results

In a variety of ways, the project demonstrated that educational institutions can contribute to the promotion of mental health. Tools and materials for promoting mental health were developed under the project. This material for fostering wellbeing in educational institutions, titled Hyvinvoiva oppilaitos, is intended for professional use in upper secondary education. The aim is to integrate the promotion of mental health within teaching, and develop students' skills and knowledge regarding mental wellbeing. The training model Hyvinvoiva oppilaitos

includes training available nation-wide as well as training, consulting and preparation tailored for each school. The operating model Hyvinvoiva oppilaitos describes how mental wellbeing can be promoted in schools and provides a basis for measuring mental wellbeing. Experimenting with and evaluating tools and methods to promote mental health, and integrating them as part of teaching, has created an operating culture in upper secondary level education that promotes mental health. This project influenced the structures of participating schools in the sense that content on the promotion of mental health was added to their curricula and wellbeing plans. Also in the future, the new practices, services and products developed in the project can yield ideas for the development of the schools' wellbeing strategies.

### Best practices

The best practices include the tools and operating methods tried out and described in the Mielen hyvinvointi project, to promote mental wellbeing and safety in upper secondary schools. The key best practice in the project was the package formed by the Hyvinvoiva oppilaitos materials and training. Using this material, the teachers and instructors have been able to teach the students communication and emotional skills that play a key role in working life. Further best practices include the model solutions created for managing protective and risk factors.

A further way of promoting mental wellbeing in schools was to focus on what motivates students and helps them to cope. This has a supporting effect on the completion of studies, while increasing the students' satisfaction with the level of cooperation.

More information on the Mielen hyvinvointi project is available from the EURA 2007 system, under the project code S10931.

## 9. FURTHER READING

The Finnish National Board of Education has compiled the guidebook "Hyvällä mallilla – tukitoimien työkalupakki opettajille ja ohjaajille" (On a good track – a tool kit of support measures for teachers and instructors) for teachers, instructors, planners of education and others working with young people. This publication is intended as a guidebook and contains best practices and operating models for supporting the transition of young people in basic and upper secondary education from school to work. These practices and operating models have been developed and tested across Finland.

An electronic version of the publication is available (in Finnish) from

<http://www.koulutustakuu.fi/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/HyvallaMallilla.pdf>

The compilation of material titled Matkalla työhön (On the road to work) includes models developed by parishes and Christian organisations for improving immigrants' working life skills and language skills, and promoting encounters between different cultures. It provides concrete ideas for launching activities in your own location. This material is available for free download at [www.kirkkopalvelut.fi/yhdessa](http://www.kirkkopalvelut.fi/yhdessa).

## 10. CONCLUSIONS

Across Finland, important work is being carried out to prevent social exclusion and promote the employment of young people. Regional multi-professional networks

have been established, employers have participated in employment activities aimed at young people, and education paths have been made more flexible and provided with room for individual variation. Results gained through the projects and the campaigns presented above demonstrate that it is possible to promote employment and entrepreneurship among young people, and influence youth social exclusion.

What is required, in order to meet the goal of the youth guarantee, promote employment and prevent social exclusion among young people? We need flexible operating models and individually tailored solutions. We must also make education more meaningful to students, by increasing work-orientation and apprenticeship training, and encouraging creativity among young people. We need to create local and regional multi-professional networks and cooperate with employers. Services should be made easily accessible, from the point of view of young people and employers alike. We need active personal guidance and group activities. In addition, we need new operating models – challenge campaigns such as the Duunita mut (Give me a job) campaign, which bring employers and employees together and encourage young people to become active.

## 11. AFTERWORD

*From unfinished studies to completing a basic qualification in catering (the MAST project)*

With unfinished theoretical studies and practical training left to complete, a student was about to drop out of catering studies. The school's career counsellor contacted the youth workshop to arrange a place for the student to complete the practical training required for the qualification. The student visited the workshop together with the career counsellor, and was willing to complete the studies at the workshop.

After the visit, the student, study counsellor, vocational teacher and the workshop coordinator from the school collected information on the missing studies: studies worth 13 credits would be completed at the workshop, in addition to 6 credits' worth of theoretical studies. Before beginning the workshop period, it was agreed that the student would complete the missing practical training by working at the youth workshop for four days a week. The fifth day was reserved for theoretical studies at the school's own workshop, leading to the completing of the unfinished studies. At the workshop, a responsible instructor was nominated for the student, to take care of contacts with the school during the workshop period. In addition, a work instructor was appointed, responsible for supervising the work done in the kitchen. Based on the plan, it was estimated that the student would graduate in around two months.

The student's period in the workshop began with a slight delay due to illness. Agreed in advance, the regular weekly schedule on workshop days and days dedicated to unfinished theoretical studies worked well. From the workshop's perspective, it seemed that the day of theoretical studies in the middle of the week boosted the student's motivation to complete the kitchen assignments at the workshop. The theoretical studies also offered the student some rest from physically demanding work in the kitchen. At the beginning of the period, the student was uncertain and timid; this appeared in the form of absences, mildly aggressive behaviour and avoidance of assignments that had been agreed for the on-the-job learning. At the workshop, the student seemed to find taking responsibility for completing the unfinished study assignments a challenge, as the amount of work seemed too demanding. To resolve this, the responsible instructor went over the missing theoretical studies and practical training with the student, and divided these elements up into smaller sections. This helped the student, providing the motivation necessary to assume responsibility for one small section at a time. When the period was well under way, the student was surprised by how few study assignments were required. The work instructor supported the student in practical training and gave feedback on the student's strengths in the kitchen and on the completion of assignments. This intensive support boosted the student's self-esteem and belief in

her own abilities. A meeting was arranged during the period between the student, responsible instructor, career counsellor and workshop coordinator, to gather together the completed practical and theoretical study assignments, and review the study schedule. The student completed the missing assignments in three months and celebrated the newly obtained vocational qualification soon afterwards.

([http://www.mastohjaus.fi/pdf/MAST\\_loppujulkaisu\\_netti.pdf](http://www.mastohjaus.fi/pdf/MAST_loppujulkaisu_netti.pdf).)

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#### *First young person out of the workshop (the MAST project)*

Cooperation between the largest vocational education institutions in Southwest Finland and the youth workshop achieved its first win, when the first young participant received her vocational qualification diploma in February 2011, after completing her studies at the Kaarinan nuoret pajamestarit ry youth workshop. "You are a pioneer and a great example of learning outside the classroom," announced principal Terhi Hotokka of the Business Economics and Service unit of the Turku Vocational Institute, complimenting Taru Hilliranta, who obtained institutional chef qualifications. Taru is a genuine pioneer, being the first young person in the region of Southwest Finland to complete a vocational qualification via a workshop. For Taru, the opportunity to complete her vocational studies at a workshop arrived just on time. She was about to interrupt her studies, and was examining other options for completing her studies together with the study counsellor. "Then I was told about the MAST project and the possibility of completing my studies in a youth workshop, and was offered the opportunity to transfer to the workshop. In the beginning, I wondered what studying at a workshop would mean in practice," she recalls.

The change in the study environment had such a huge impact on Taru's learning and motivation that she is now holding a completed qualification. In Kaarina, Taru was presented with the opportunity to work in her own field of study in a small workplace community. Taru attended exams and skills demonstration tests at the Turku Vocational Institute, but otherwise her work tasks comprised "basic kitchen work". "I cooked, baked, worked at the cash register. Being here made me feel like I was in a real job, as the tasks were a part of normal daily work," she explains. Working in the workshop is no child's play. Study alongside working requires a great deal of motivation. For Taru, the support she received from the youth workshop made this easier. "At the workshop, I received plenty of guidance and support in my work. At college, we formed a large group and the teachers did not have much time to instruct each student," Taru recalls. As for the future, Taru has a clear wish: working in a small lunch-time cafe, either as a proper employee or trainee. ([http://www.mastohjaus.fi/pdf/MAST\\_loppujulkaisu\\_netti.pdf](http://www.mastohjaus.fi/pdf/MAST_loppujulkaisu_netti.pdf).)

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*A comment from a participant in the JA-YE Company Programme:*

*"My name is XX, I'm from Rauma and I'm 16 years old. I participated in the JA-YE Company Programme between the autumn of 2011 and spring of 2012. It is great that we have the opportunity to study entrepreneurship in Finland too. Among other things, I have learnt social skills, about financial issues, and that entrepreneurship is fun but hard. It would be good if more schools offered JA-YE activities, since they reduce social exclusion." "*