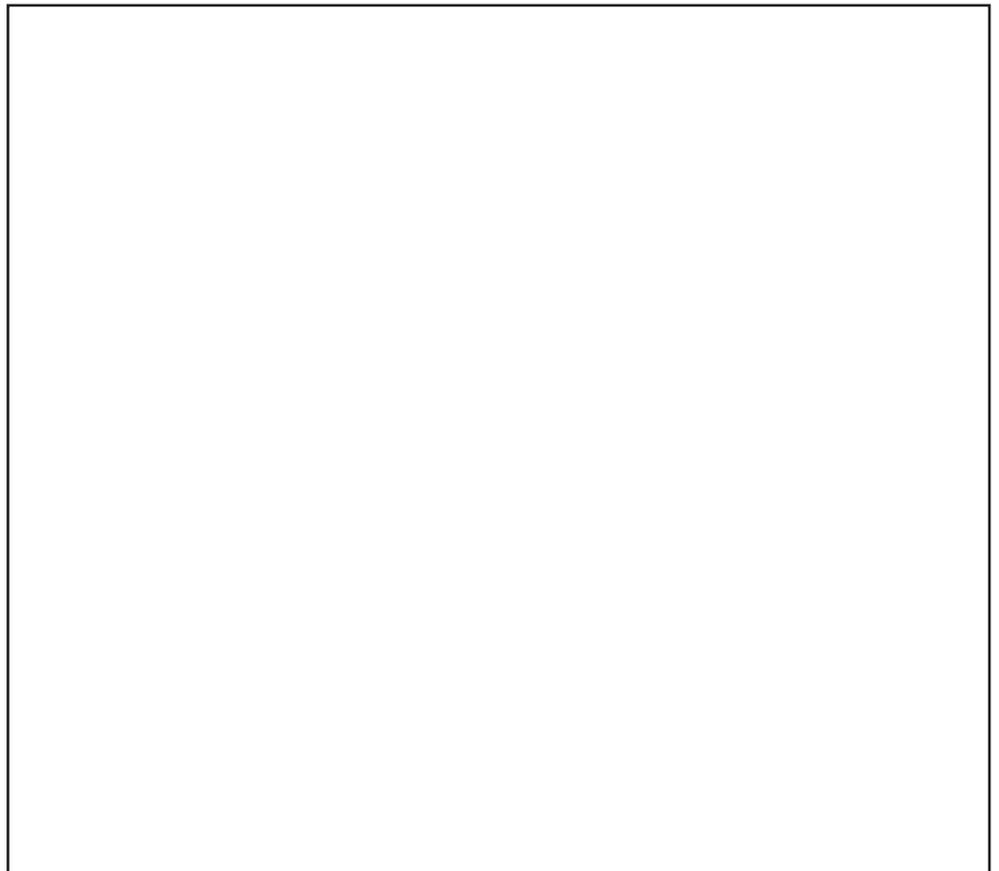


# Active inclusion of young people with disabilities or health problems

## *National report – Finland*



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**Research project:** Inclusion of young people with disabilities

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## Current status of the target groups

The situation of young people in the labour market in Finland worsened during the recent economic recession. It has subsequently improved, but these positive changes don't cover all job seekers, for example young people with health problems or disabilities. The employment rate of people with disabilities remains low, and the trend seems to be that the number of subsidised workplaces has decreased, while vocational training and similar activities have increased. There have been some improvements recently, but many young people with health problems or disabilities are still not part of the labour force.

About 1% of 16–24-year-olds and 2% of 25–34-year-olds receive a disability pension. Although the number of people with mental health problems has not changed significantly, the number of people retiring early because of mental health problems has increased, especially among 16–24-year-old women. Mental health problems are the reason for 75% of disability pensions among 25–29-year-old recipients, and depression is one of the most important reasons for early retirement. Mental and behavioural disorders are the most common reasons for claiming disability pension among 16–29-year-olds.

Disability benefit rates among disabled young people aged 16–19 years have fallen during recent decades. In the 1980s they entered the disability pension system almost automatically after comprehensive school, with a resulting disability benefit rate 43% higher than 20 years later (Finnish Centre for Pensions). In the 1980s young people with severe disabilities had no possibility of education, whereas nowadays every young person, including those with severe disabilities, has the right to education.

Access of people with disabilities to employment has also been broadly accepted. The number of students with special needs in vocational education and training (VET) institutions has increased by more than 50% during the last 10 years. The primary places of study for special needs students are regular vocational institutions. For students with the most severe disabilities, special vocational education institutions are responsible for providing education and training. The number of people in sheltered jobs has also increased during the last 10 years, and one reason for this is that new groups of people with disabilities have emerged.

The more severe the degree of disability is, the lower is the participation in the labour force. Particularly at risk are uneducated young people with health problems or disabilities. Many of them belong to a 'hard core' of the long-term unemployed population. Young people who are outside the labour force are also at a higher risk of poverty, especially if they have left the labour force at a young age and have therefore not accrued any earnings-related unemployment allowance or earnings-related pension or benefits.

Education increases a disabled person's opportunities in the labour market, but even educated young people with disabilities face difficulties gaining employment.

About 20% of people with disabilities have permanent jobs, and about 50% have worked during the last 24 months, at least in temporary, subsidised or voluntary work. Nevertheless, young people with health problems or disabilities represent a significant employment resource when every young person's labour contribution is needed. Recent studies have shown that 30% of working-age people with disabilities have an excellent or good working capacity. Every third person with a disability is willing at least to take up part-time work. Willingness to work is shown to relate to education level, work ability and a young age.

## Overview of how societal and individual needs are being met

The current social situation in Finland is considered to be relatively good. It ranks rather highly in terms of living conditions in comparison to other EU Member States. Social and health services, social security benefits and other public services covering the entire population have contributed to the fact that poverty and social exclusion are relatively uncommon.

In Finland every young person, including those with severe disabilities, has the right to secondary education. In addition equal access to employment for people with disabilities has been accepted broadly as a principle. The numbers of students with special needs in secondary education have increased over the past 10 years, but young people with health problems or disabilities still have a higher risk of having a low level of education.

Young people with disabilities have access to the normal range of employment services provided to the general population, including, for example, vocational guidance and career planning. These services are provided by employment offices and they are based on individual needs, at least in principle. In practice, the ethos of welfare is still based mostly on the idea that people with disabilities don't have to work and the welfare state attempts to compensate this disadvantage with a disability pension. Many people automatically assume that disability prevents a person from performing at work and that there is no need to employ people with disabilities because they already have disability pensions.

## Compensating for low incomes

Low income is more common among those who are, and who have been, outside the labour force. The risk of poverty applies especially to people who, as a result of ill health, become disabled for work at a young age. The aim of disability benefits (including disability benefits for adults, disability pension, care allowance for pensioners, rehabilitation allowance) is to support the self-sufficiency of people with disabilities and to improve their opportunity to live full and equal lives alongside others. The allowances are paid to compensate for any impairment, the need for assistance, services and special expenses caused by the disability. These benefits are not linked to employment and they do not include incentives for the recipients to take up work.

Employment is a vital factor in gaining an adequate income. People with health problems or disabilities have available to them the normal variety of employment services provided to everyone. In addition, special services and measures, such as vocational rehabilitation, wage subsidies and adaptation of working conditions, are offered where required. In recent years much attention has been paid to rehabilitation as a channel of improving the capacity for work, overcoming impairment and entering or returning to work after a period of disability. The number of participants who have entered or returned to work after rehabilitation has increased year on year. In spite of this, the employment rate of people with disabilities still remains low.

General municipal services have a primary role in providing services to people with disabilities in Finland. The objective is that primary services and support measures meet the needs of people with health problems or disabilities to ensure equal participation in society and the community to the greatest possible extent.

Special services such as personal assistance, interpretation services, transport services and individual housing solutions protect the equality of people with disabilities. The personal assistance system is a development that is particularly liked by the disability community. However, a substantial challenge for young people with health problems or disabilities is the lack of information about what services are available and their eligibility for them, which can lead to increased inequalities.

Across Finland the implementation of disability legislation is inconsistent, particularly in relation to disability services. As a result, the position and status of a person with a disability can depend on where they live.

## Status of active inclusion in national and sectoral policy

The active inclusion agenda in Finland includes a combination of employment activation, adequate minimum income and access to supporting services. Ongoing social security reform is aimed at increasing the incentive nature of income support in the inclusion process.

Public employment service centres have enhanced their employment services to try and reduce structural unemployment for those considered hard to employ. They have established a cross-administrative network to coordinate actions. The employment office, municipality social services and the Social Insurance Institution (Kela) provide special services in a one-stop shop to the long-term unemployed and to those who need multiprofessional support, including young people with health problems or disabilities.

Eligibility for support increases the longer a person is unemployed, and services become more intensive. Labour market support funding is shared equally between the state and the municipalities in order to incentivise local government to promote employment.

The use of intermediate labour market measures, such as subsidised temporary employment and social enterprises, promotes inclusion and creates work opportunities for individuals who are some way off joining the labour market. Work opportunities are offered by associations, vocational training and social service foundations, workshops and other organisations, such as social enterprises. Social enterprises are entitled to a wage subsidy for employing people with disabilities as well as the long-term unemployed, for a longer time than other companies. In 2007, 148 social enterprises employed around 750 people.

In parallel there is an ongoing social security reform, overseen by the SATA Committee appointed in June 2007. The population of Finland is ageing more rapidly than that of any other EU Member State, and there are fewer new labour market entrants than in the past. The number of people in retirement and in need of care is increasing, and the number of people paying taxes and social insurance is dropping. This poses problems for the social protection system and its sustainable financing. The social protection system in Finland is undergoing a thorough overhaul on the basis of the SATA programme.

The committee's proposals for the policy lines of the reform are based on an evaluation of the adequacy of social protection and foreseeable challenges. The main aims of the reform are to make it always worthwhile to choose the option of employment, to reduce poverty levels and to safeguard sufficient basic income security in all life situations. The goals of the SATA Committee can best be realised by lengthening working careers. People should enter working life earlier, retire later, fall ill or become disabled and be unemployed as rarely as possible, and people with partial working capacity should be employed. Work is a central means of enhancing inclusion and preventing social exclusion. Paid work is the most important way of gaining an average income. Work can also play an important role in advancing and improving one's mental health and well-being.

Yet the fact is that only a relatively small proportion of people with disabilities are working in Finland. This blocks them from working life and from full citizenship. Discrimination is common, particularly in job-seeking situations, even if it is forbidden by the law. Some people may automatically assume that a disability prevents a person from performing at work.

Many of the active inclusion measures are general measures and not targeted at a particular social group. Nevertheless, the employment of young people is considered to be a crucial social inclusion challenge. As a result, there are specific measures targeted at the employment of young people.

Prior to the current economic downturn, the employment rate for 15–24-year-olds had risen. Youth employment is supported by the social guarantee for young people and lifelong learning is underpinned by an education guarantee. Early intervention and enhanced service provision are central to the social guarantee. After three months of unemployment, those under 25 are entitled to a specific job search plan, which specifies the services to be offered, including job application training, a job or training place (training or vocational education), a work placement, on-the-job training, preparatory training for working life, a start-up grant or wage-subsidised work. A very relevant measure for young people with health problems or disabilities is the possibility of an assessment of their working capacity or state of health.

In 2007 an individual job search plan had been prepared for around 82% of young people within three months of their becoming unemployed.

Finland, as a Member State of the UN and the EU, is committed to promoting a society that is open to all citizens, including those with disabilities. The principle of non-discrimination of people with disabilities is enshrined in the national constitution. It is also one of the main principles in the Finnish disability policy programme.

However, in practice people with disabilities cannot exercise their rights or fulfil their responsibilities to the full and are often not equal to other citizens. Although accessibility and equality is being promoted in many ways, structural barriers and prevalent attitudes in society still restrict the independent living and social inclusion of people with disabilities. The risk of a young person with a health problem or disability leaving school with a low level of education is high, and the employment rate of working-age people with disabilities is low.

The overall aim of Finnish disability policy is to ensure that the services required by all residents of a municipality, regardless of their financial or social status, are readily available. Operational priorities include the removal of obstacles to the participation of people with disabilities, social support services and rehabilitation. The main objective is that primary services will meet the needs of people with disabilities as far as possible. At the core of this approach is access to social care services such as personal assistance and individual housing solutions.

The most significant development for the inclusion of people with disabilities is the introduction of personal assistance as a right for people with disabilities (Services and Assistance for the Disabled Act, 8§ 19.12.2008/981). New groups of people with disabilities have been included and assistance has been extended to work places. Hours are allocated according to the requirements for daily living in the home and outside, with 10 hours a month for pursuing hobbies.

### Indicative statistics

Compiling data on the population of people with disabilities is complicated by the fact that in Finland disability or health information is deemed as sensitive personal data and collecting such data is prohibited under the Personal Data Act (22.4.1993/523). Therefore there is little national statistical information concerning the prevalence of disability and the number of people with disabilities in employment.

Nevertheless it is possible to gain some insight into the activity status of young people with health problems or disabilities in Finland using data from Eurostat, which was based on self-reporting. The percentage distribution of the activity status of the target groups is presented in Table 1. The table compares the labour market status of those in age ranges 15–24 and 25–34, with the figures for all disabilities broken down by level of disability.

It is important to note when reviewing the labour market participation of people with disabilities that the unemployment rate is not the most useful indicator. This is because the figures only include those who are registered as actively seeking

work. Many people with disabilities who want to work are in receipt of disability pensions of various kinds and are therefore viewed for statistical purposes as being outside the labour market or inactive.

This is well illustrated by comparing the unemployment rates for people with and without disabilities with the inactivity rates for the same groups. Based on unemployment rates, one would conclude that an unemployment rate of 6.5% for all disabled in comparison to an 8.5% rate for those without a disability indicates that people with disabilities are performing better in the labour market than their non-disabled peers. In contrast if you examine the inactivity rate, it measures 33.8% for people with disabilities compared to 16.5% for the non-disabled, clearly illustrating the challenge facing people with disabilities in participating in the labour market.

Table 1: *Percentage distribution of activity status by severity of disability and age group (2010)*

Activity status	Employed			Unemployed			Inactive		
	16–24 years	25–34 years	All ages	16–24 years	25–34 years	All ages	16–24 years	25–34 years	All ages
<b>Total</b>	48.5	79.1	70.2	17.4	8.1	7.9	34.0	12.7	22.0
<b>Without disability</b>	48.6	80.7	75.0	17.5	7.9	8.5	33.9	11.4	16.5
<b>Light disability</b>	54.3	83.9	79.5	15.9	5.9	5.7	29.8	10.2	14.8
<b>Some disability</b>	47.0	75.8	72.3	21.8	11.9	9.5	31.2	12.3	18.2
<b>Severe disability</b>	41.0	63.3	51.6	*	13.6	8.2	47.4	23.1	40.2
<b>Very severe disability</b>	*	45.3	30.8	*	*	4.1	57.2	46.7	65.1
<b>Not classified</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	56.1
<b>All degrees of disability</b>	48.2	73.1	59.7	16.9	9.2	6.5	34.9	17.8	33.8

\*Not available.

Source: Eurostat, 21 October 2010.

From the perspective of level of disability, it is evident from Table 1 that young people with more severe disabilities face greater challenges. This is not so clear for those lightly disabled in the 15–24 years age group, where the disparity is relatively small. For this age group, a 48.6% employment rate for those without a disability compared to 47% for those with some disability and 48.2% for all degrees of disability represents a relatively small gap. This is partly due to the fact many of those who do or do not have a disability are still in full-time post-secondary education and are considered to be inactive, and partly due to a ‘discouraged workers’ effect. This phenomenon is represented in the inactivity figures for this age group. However, for those in the 25–34 years age group, the figures change dramatically: an employment rate of 80.7% for those without disabilities compared to 63.3% and 45.3% for those with severe and very severe disabilities respectively. This is higher than the average employment rate for all disabled people of working age (50.7%).

It can be concluded that the more severe the degree of disability is, the lower is the participation in the labour force. Only 30% of very severely disabled and 51% of severely disabled are active in the labour force, compared to 75% for those without a disability. In the 16–24 age group, differences between severely disabled and non-disabled are not as large because many under-25s are still in education or are otherwise engaged outside the labour force.

While there is ongoing social security reform in Finland, the current ethos and practice of the welfare system is still based on the idea that people with disabilities do not have to be at work, and the welfare state attempts to compensate for this disadvantage with a disability pension. Also the labour offices of many municipalities seem to think there is no reason for young people with health problems or disabilities to search for a job because they already get a disability pension. It may also be the case that many of these young people end up classified as being inactive because they believe they are

very unlikely to get a job and don't even attempt to engage in job-seeking. The long-term unemployed population includes people who through rehabilitation and restoration could develop effective working capacity for temporary work but are incapable of holding down a regular job on the open labour market.

Sickness allowance is intended to compensate for a loss of earnings during a period of incapacity to work because of sickness. The number of sickness allowance recipients is higher in older age groups than in younger ones (see Table 2). If incapacity continues for over a year, a person can claim a disability pension.

Table 2: *Number of young people in receipt of sickness allowance by age*

	2008	2009
16–19 years	726	610
20–24 years	2,601	2,468
25–29 years	3,532	3,451

Source: *Kela*.

In Finland, about 1% of those aged 16–24 and 2% of those aged 25–34 get disability benefit. Disability due to mental health problems in particular has become more common since the late 1990s, and mental and behavioural disorders are the most common reasons for claiming disability benefits among 16–29-year-olds (see Table 3).

Table 3: *Proportion of recipients of disability benefit by diagnosis and age group*

		Population	Intellectual disorders*	Physical and sensory	Mental and behavioural disorders*	Diseases of nervous system	All recipients
1999	16–24 years	593,792	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.9
	25–34 years	674,554	0.1	0.3	1.4	0.3	1.3
	16–64 years	3,396,198	0.4	3.4	2.3	0.7	6.9
2008	16–24 years	592,762	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.1	1.0
	25–34 years	662,199	0.1	0.3	1.1	0.2	1.9
	16–64 years	3,477,271	0.3	1.6	3.5	0.6	4.8

\*There is no exact information about how many people have intellectual disorders in Finland. The estimated rate of is 5.6 per million people, 6.5% of benefit recipients.

Source: *Kela*.

Although the number of people with mental health problems has not changed significantly and mental health problems still remain undiagnosed to a great extent, the number of people retiring early because of such problems has increased, especially among 16–24-year-old women (see Table 4). Mental health problems are the reason for 75% of disability benefits paid to 25–29-year-olds, and depression is one of the most important reasons for early retirement.

Table 4: Disability benefit recipients with mental and behavioural disorders aged 16–29 as a proportion of all disability benefit recipients, by age and gender

		1999	2009	% change
16–19 years	Male	59.2	71.0	19.9
	Female	54.4	68.3	25.5
20–24 years	Male	63.9	76.9	20.3
	Female	62.6	78.2	24.9
25–29 years	Male	67.4	77.1	14.4
	Female	64.7	74.5	15.1
16–29 years	Male	64.2	76.2	18.7
	Female	61.9	75.2	21.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>63.5</b>	<b>75.7</b>	<b>19.2</b>

Source: Kela.

There is no exact data about how many people in Finland are diagnosed as intellectually impaired, but it is known that almost every one of them receives a disability pension. According to Kela's yearbooks, a large proportion of people with intellectual impairments and many people with mental health problems receive a national pension, which provides a minimum income.

Young people with health problems or disabilities on early retirement pensions have rarely had an opportunity to work before retirement. Therefore, they are not eligible for a statutory earnings-related pension. The average income of people with disabilities is more than 30% lower than the average income of the working-age population, and it is estimated that 22% of people with disabilities lived in poverty in 2005.

Paid work is the most important way to gain an average income, and education is an important pre-requisite for getting paid work. Early retirement impacts on an individual's economic situation but also has an effect on the economics of Finnish society. Early retirement of a young person with a health problem or disability and their being economically inactive will cost society €1 million over their lifespan.

It is common for the employment of people with health problems or disabilities to be addressed by sheltered employment. The number of people in sheltered jobs has increased during the last 10 years (see Table 5). One reason for this is that new groups of people with disabilities, for example people with mental health problems, have entered the sheltered employment system. At the same time the aim has been to replace long-term institutional care with outpatient care and vocational rehabilitation services. The aim of the rehabilitation system is that people with disabilities do not remain in sheltered workshops, but will enter or return to the open labour market as soon as possible.

Table 5: Sheltered jobs in Finland

	1999	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Sheltered jobs for intellectually impaired	17,344	19,730				
Sheltered jobs for people with disabilities*			24,468	27,542	29,702	31,696

\*Intellectual impairment included.

Source: *Sotkanet*.

Individual services for people with disabilities are based on a service plan that addresses all their individual needs and documents the support they need in everyday life, such as transport services, personal assistant services, interpreter services and housing services. The largest numbers of clients use transportation services. The use of personal assistance has increased annually during the last few years and the number of people making use of individual housing services has increased (see Table 6).

Table 6: Provision of disability services, institutional care and housing services for disabled people

Services provided under the Act on Services and Assistance for Disabled People	2000	2005	2006
Transport services for seriously disabled people	66,568	66,568	84,064
Personal assistance services	2,817	2,817	4,548
Interpreter services	3,137	3,530	3,791
Housing alterations	7,032	7,856	8,072
Sheltered housing for seriously disabled people	1,894	2,775	3,088
<b>Institutional care and housing services for disabled people</b>			
Institutions for intellectually disabled*	2,960	2,960	2,496
Home help: intellectually disabled	3,344	4,874	
Assisted housing: intellectually disabled	2,476	2,649	
Group homes for disabled people: 24-hour assistance			5,355
Group homes for disabled people: part-time assistance			2,341
Serviced housing and supportive housing for disabled people	1,510	1,861	1,758
Intellectually disabled in family care**	1,270	1,095	1,253

\*As of 2006, data has been collected on ‘institutions for the disabled’ including disabled people other than the intellectually disabled. Until 2005, data was collected separately on the intellectually disabled and other disabled. Here, the figures have been totalled.

\*\*As of 2006, data has been collected on those ‘disabled in the family care’ including disabled people other than the intellectually disabled.

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

Employment offices offer vocational rehabilitation and training and work solutions to people with health problems or disabilities, such as work placement, training try outs and labour market training. Between 2006 and 2009 subsidised work, labour market training and similar activities for people with disabilities decreased, possibly because of the economic recession. Between 2009 and 2010 they have increased again. Now they are almost at the same level as in 2006 (see Table 7).

Table 7: Subsidised employment in numbers

	2006	2008	2010	% change	
				2006–2009	2009–2010
Placement in the state	2,249	1,359	1,787	-39.6	31.5
Placement in the municipalities	10,948	7,387	9,069	-32.5	22.8
Placement in the private sector	26,545	23,859	26,053	-10.1	9.2
Labour market training	34,249	29,355	34,617	-14.3	17.9
Trainee work with labour market support/coaching for working life	13,214	11,120	12,162	-15.8	9.4
In-job alternation places	6,270	6,113	6,406	-2.5	4.8
Total of all above measures	93,475	79,194	90,094	-15.3	13.8

Sources: Employment Bulletin, September 2006, 2009 and 2010.

Disability benefit rates among disabled 16–19-year-olds have fallen during recent decades. In the 1980s these disabled youths retired almost automatically after comprehensive school with a resulting disability benefit rate 43% higher than 20 years later (Finnish Centre for Pensions). In the 1980s young people with severe disabilities had no educational opportunities. However, now every young person, including those with severe disabilities, has a right to education. The access of people with disabilities to employment has also been broadly accepted. The number of students with special needs in VET institutions has increased by more than 50% during the last 10 years. The primary places of study for special needs students are regular vocational institutions. Vocational special education institutions are responsible for providing education and training for students with the most severe disabilities (see Table 8).

Table 8: *Students with special needs in vocational education by place of provision*

		2000	2004	2008*
<b>In special vocational institution</b>		2,422	2,493	2,397
<b>In other educational institution providing vocational education</b>	In special group	1,414	1,557	1,605
	In general education group	4,118	8,401	12,460
<b>Total number of students with special needs in vocational education**</b>		7,954	12,451	16,462
<b>% share of the total number of students in vocational education</b>		5.0	5.4	6.0
<b>Total number of students in vocational education</b>		159,884	230,823	275,498

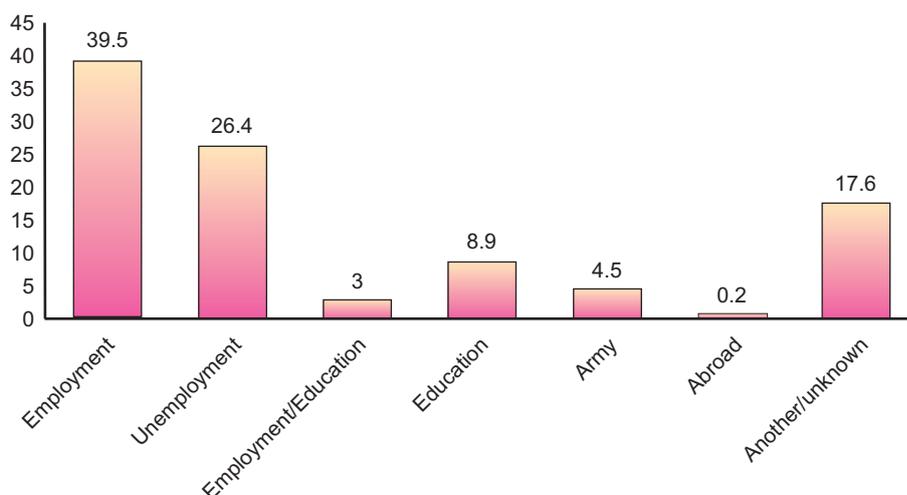
\*In 2008, out of all special needs students, 15,849 studied in school-based curriculum-centred education, 435 in education preparing them for a skills examination, and 178 in apprenticeship training.

\*\*Includes apprenticeship training and education preparing for a skills examination arranged elsewhere than in special vocational institutions.

Source: *Education 2009, Statistics Finland; Wera Web reporting service.*

An important objective of VET is finding employment. Students receive training in looking for jobs, and their employment opportunities are promoted through periods of on-the-job learning. Education helps students with special needs to find a job. In 2008 39.5 % of students who completed their studies in special VET institutions were employed (Figure 1).

Figure 1: *Placements of graduates from special VET institutions, percentage distribution by activity status (2008)*



Source: *Statistics Finland.*

Nevertheless, unemployed and inactive people with disabilities represent an important employment resource for Finland, especially given that every person's labour input is needed in society. Every third disabled person is willing to work, and about 30% of people with disabilities have an excellent or good working capacity. More than a fifth of people with disabilities have a permanent job, and 50% have worked during the last 24 months, at least in voluntary work. The Finnish disability authorities are interested in supported employment. Supported employees are also satisfied with their jobs, even if the payments are generally very small and there are seldom possibilities to get intensive and ongoing support, such as ongoing job coaching in the workplace.

### National policies and programmes

In Finland, people with health problems or disabilities have at their disposal the normal variety of social services, healthcare services, employment services, education services and supportive measures provided to the general public. In addition, they have the right to special services and supportive measures. The objective is that primary services and supportive measures meet the needs of people with disabilities and ensure their equality as far as possible, and the special services safeguard this equality. Individual services for people with disabilities are based on a personal service plan that includes all their individual needs and the support required for independence in everyday life. The details of the legislation and programmes relevant to the active inclusion of young people with disabilities are presented in the annex to this report.

#### Adequate income

There are no specific income support measures aimed at young people with health problems or disabilities. In general, low income is more common among those who are and who have been outside the labour force for an extended period. The aim of disability benefits, disability pension, care allowance for pensioners and rehabilitation allowance is to support the self-sufficiency of people with disabilities and improve their opportunities to live full and equal lives alongside others. The allowances are paid to compensate for any impairment, need for assistance, services and special expenses caused by the disability. These benefits are not linked to employment and they do not include incentives for the recipients to take up work.

Sickness allowance is intended to compensate those who have been in employment for a loss of earnings during a period of incapacity to work because of sickness. If a person returns to work on a part-time basis after a sick leave of several months, they can get a partial sickness allowance, which provides time for rehabilitation. If a person has been incapacitated for over a year, they can claim a disability pension. Before retirement they must have received sickness allowance for the maximum period of 300 working days and be unable to return to work on account of their illness.

Despite the improvements and general increases to the national pension in the last few years, early retired young people with health problems or disabilities are at risk of poverty. They usually receive a national pension, which provides a minimum income only. Early retired young people seldom have had the opportunity to work before retirement. Therefore they don't have an opportunity to gain an earnings-related pension either. The pensions guarantee is designed to answer this challenge by improving the income of people living on the lowest incomes. An Act on Guaranteed Pensions will take effect on 1 March 2011.

#### Inclusive labour market measures

Employment is a vital factor in securing an adequate income. People with disabilities have at their disposal the normal variety of employment services. Special services and measures, for example vocational rehabilitation, wage subsidies and adaptation of working conditions, are used as necessary. People with disabilities or health problems can also receive support for starting an enterprise and acquiring equipment. Nevertheless the employment rate of people with disabilities still remains low. Finnish employment policy is very traditional in terms of job search and has a very narrow range of partial benefits and targeted measures.

The employment policy for young people with health problems or disabilities is focused on those who are partly incapacitated. To qualify for job search assistance, they have to convince the authorities of their ability to work. In other words the issue of employment and disability employment has been partially medicalised.

In recent years, much attention has been paid to rehabilitation as a channel for improving the capacity for work and overcoming the impact of impairment in young people with health problems or disabilities. Vocational rehabilitation is a statutory right, and the decision not to provide it can be appealed. Young people with health problems or disabilities can get medical vocational and psychosocial rehabilitation, adapted training and therapeutic interventions including psychotherapy and neuropsychological rehabilitation. They are entitled to an assessment of their capacity to handle different job situations and occupations through work experience in real work settings, training try-outs, practical work training and rehabilitation examinations.

The number of participants in rehabilitation programmes who have entered or returned to working life has increased year on year. It is common that people with disabilities or health problems get support mainly when starting a job, though not on a continuing basis as there are few opportunities for intensive and ongoing support.

### **Lifelong learning**

In Finland every young person, including people with severe health problems or disabilities, has the right to a secondary education. Vocational rehabilitation can take the form of basic education, further training or retraining. Basic vocational education can help a young person with a disability train for an occupation that is suitable for them, taking into account any health issues that may restrict the choice of occupations. By means of retraining or further vocational training, a person can acquire a new occupation that helps them to minimise the impact of any health limitations they may have. If training makes it possible for a person with severe disabilities to find employment, they may be granted support for higher education studies. Financial support covers things such as study expenses, assistive devices and technology that is required because of the disability.

The first further education options for special needs students are in regular vocational institutions and higher schools. Special vocational education institutions are responsible for providing education for students with the most severe disabilities. The number of students with special needs and their opportunities in secondary and higher education have increased during the last 10 years, but people with disabilities are still at risk of having a low level of education.

### **Health and social care needs**

In Finland the general municipal services have the primary role in services for people with disabilities. The objective is that primary social and healthcare services meet the needs of people with disabilities and ensure their equality, as far as possible. Special services (for example transport services, interpretation services, personal assistance, individual housing and rehabilitation) are based on the individual needs and support requirements of people with disabilities. These services safeguard the equality of those with disabilities among their own group and the rest of the population.

The personal assistance system is the development method preferred by people with disabilities. It has also been the main target of disability legislation reform in 2009–2010. In the reform new groups of people with disabilities have been included in the scope for assistance, and personal assistance has been extended to cover workplaces. It has also been recognised that a person who needs personal assistance may be capable of work.

In summary, current Finnish disability policy covers the most essential requirements to further the social inclusion and social protection of young people with health problems or disabilities, but the ways in which legislation is implemented varies according to the municipality in which a person lives, and thus some people with disabilities are in an unequal position. There is a great deal of variation between municipalities in how individual service plans are drawn up and put

into practice. Employment policy for people with disabilities is focused on those who are partly incapacitated. Finland has a very narrow range of partial benefits and targeted measures.

The services provided by NGOs and partnerships between government and organisations have a long tradition in Finland. These activities are important for the prevention of social exclusion and in offering opportunities for inclusion and participation of socially excluded people. Organisations have played an important role in meeting special needs in areas such as services for substance abusers and people with disabilities. In the limited numbers of voluntary organisations that provide support and services, special expertise has developed.

## **Social partner initiatives**

Labour law includes provisions forbidding discrimination against people with disabilities. Employers are also required to take reasonable measures so that people with disabilities can access work and cope at work. In the employment of disabled people, there can be a perceived dilemma between risks related to occupational safety and equality issues; however, employment is promoted by removing obstacles.

An employer hiring new employees must try to identify any barriers related to the job in question and remove them. An employer can also get certain financial aid for arranging working conditions suitable to an employee or a job seeker with a disability or impaired work capacity. Compensation may also be paid for a permanent loss of work capacity and productivity of a person with a disability. A pay subsidy may be up to 75% of the salary cost. Depending on the situation, the compensation may be paid at the beginning of the employment if the employee requires more support in learning the responsibilities of the job, or the compensation may be permanent.

The Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK), which represents all private industries and companies of all sizes, recognises that disability comes from the interaction between the individual and the environment as well as opportunities that are available for participation. It notes that in 2002, only about 20% of people with health problems or disabilities belonged to the workforce and 13.7% were unemployed. It acknowledges that depending on the degree of disability the biggest problem is getting into work, especially in an open job market.

It highlights the challenge posed by people's attitudes towards disability – disabled people are considered not to be always able to meet the demands of the workplace. EK recommends that the assumption should be that disabled employees can be as productive as other workers.

Disability should be seen as an illness that requires adaptations or a personal assistant. Workplace supports should be offered instead of asking the disabled employee to perform work tasks in the same manner as other employees. In terms of recruitment and selection, it is important that the employer knows what kind of arrangements or equipment are needed and whether the job applicant needs personal assistance.

EK emphasises that a person's impairment is not the limitation, but rather it is the environment that is poorly designed. Buildings should be designed so that they are accessible to wheelchair users, and IT solutions should be introduced to make it accessible to people with visual and hearing impairments. According to EK, employers should take note that in the same way as workers in general, people with disabilities should not be asked to undertake tasks that they cannot perform. The disabled employee knows best what they can do and what assistance may be needed.

In addition to responding to the issue of workers who develop or acquire health problems or disabilities, EK addresses the importance of reaching out to those who are looking for work. It recognises the importance of job coaching to assist people with intellectual disabilities get into employment by matching the person to an appropriate position, adapting the

job and supporting learning. It suggests that employers should utilise the expertise of organisations for disabled people in employment and vocational rehabilitation, to help and support employees with job-related disabilities.

Free work trials, offered by employers to unemployed people with health problems or disabilities, are highlighted as a good way of promoting the employment of people with disabilities by allowing them to explore their work options and to demonstrate their own skills and abilities.

One example of a partnership initiative between an employers association is profiled in Case Study 2. The main employer partners in the Leap to Labour! project are Finnish Business & Society (**FiBS**) and **Manpower Inclusive**.

FiBS is an enterprise network whose mission is to promote financially, socially and ecologically sustainable business in Finland. FiBS encourages Finnish companies to embrace corporate social responsibility in their strategic planning and day-to-day management. Its diverse network consists of over 130 companies and other organisations. Manpower Inclusive is one of the leading companies in the employment services industry. Manpower Inclusive is a recruitment and personnel leasing company that has social enterprise status and promotes workplace diversity and equality in the workplace. Its business is, in itself, socially responsible. The resources of the company are focused on special initiatives where they can have the most impact, helping to create a bridge to employment for disadvantaged individuals.

The approach to disability of the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) tends to be upon prevention of workplace accidents and in following up workers who have experienced a reduction in their work capacity as a result of occupational illness or injury. The focus on age is strongly weighted towards the needs of older workers, although there is a concern about recruiting younger workers as members. The Union of Salaried Employees (TU) has recently commented on the impact of austerity measures in Finland on young people. It notes the increasing number of school dropouts, youth not in employment or training, and those leaving school with no or low skills. The recommended focus is upon the quality of the basic education system, teacher qualifications, securing the health (especially the mental health) of students, and support and advice bodies for children, students and their families.

The development of supported employment has been slow in Finland. Employers need information about such measures and guidance on how to work with employees with disabilities, for example how to match the work available to the capabilities of the employee with disability. In fact this is the most crucial challenge for employers. Job coaches help not only the employee with disabilities but also the employer with the job interview, orientation and induction, salary negotiations, and the drafting of contracts. Job coaches also provide information about wage subsidies and other financial aids that employers can get when they hire a job seeker with a disability. However, job coaching usually lasts only a short period of time at the beginning of employment, and there are rarely opportunities to receive intensive and ongoing support in the workplace.

To be recognised as a social enterprise, a trader must be entered in the official register of social enterprises. An enterprise can call itself a social enterprise only if at least 30% of its employees are people with disabilities or long-term unemployed. A social enterprise may be granted pay support and more favourable conditions than other employers when it employs workers with disabilities or with impaired work capacity.



## Case Study 1: Job Bank

### Abstract

The purpose of the Job Bank trial programme, established in 2009, is to increase the participation of people who are vulnerable (such as the long-term unemployed, people who are difficult to employ, disabled people, young people and immigrants) in the open labour market. Job Bank is the employer and most of its employees are disabled; Job Bank's business is selling their work capacity to companies. For companies this is a risk-free, flexible and easy way to recruit new workers, and it offers a workforce for seasonal work and busy production periods. When business is slow, Job Bank arranges other work or training for employees. For an employee, Job Bank offers permanent, full-time employment and ensures employees are paid at least the collectively agreed wages. If work is interrupted, Job Bank offers training or coaching for the employee and offers assistance for coordinating salary and benefits.

### How the project started

Several factors motivated the launch of the Job Bank trial programme:

- previous projects had shown that companies have temporary labour needs, and employees needed something else to do between seasonal work periods;
- the **VATES Foundation** took this idea further in social enterprises;
- **Lubor Oy**, a social enterprise and one of the nationwide operators of the Job Bank trial, was established in 2007;
- the social protection system in Finland is undergoing a thorough overhaul on the basis of the SATA programme;
- the SATA Committee's proposals contained a range of measures designed to bolster employment, and one innovative model was the 'work bank'.

The project has demonstrated that better access to rehabilitation and effective occupational healthcare can enhance the readiness of employees to rejoin the labour market.

There are four nationwide operators selected to participate in the Job Bank project, and it is managed by **Edupoli Adult Education Services**. The responsibility for the national Job Bank project is shared by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is financing the project, and the Ministry of Employment and the Economy is responsible for wage subsidies when they are needed. Otherwise Job Bank works like any other enterprise.

Social enterprises have to be economically profitable, and to achieve this, Job Bank sells an employee's work contribution to client companies at the market price.

### Aims and objectives

The aims of the Job Bank trial are to:

- model methods to employ people who are long-term unemployed, have disabilities or are otherwise in a weak position in the labour market;
- create a one-stop shop for companies that need temporary staff;
- increase the level of contribution from people in a vulnerable situation (long-term unemployed people, those who are difficult to employ, disabled people, young people and immigrants) on the open labour market.

### Intended beneficiaries

Job Bank is the employer and most of the employees are disabled young people.

Benefits for employees include the following:

- a permanent, full-time employment relationship;
- getting paid at least collectively agreed wages;
- training or coaching offered when work is interrupted;
- assistance coordinating salary and benefits.

Client companies also benefit from the arrangement, which offers:

- a risk-free, flexible and easy way to recruit new workers;
- a workforce for seasonal work and busy production periods;
- other work or training for the employee (provided by Job Bank) when business is slow;
- a familiar employee immediately available when demand increases.

Hiring an employee with a health problem is a socially responsible act, adding value to a company and providing a human competitive advantage as an employer. This may also be a critical factor in terms of corporate image. At best, corporate social responsibility means that the public sector, enterprises and other organisations act responsibly and together promote responsible conduct by all organisations.

### Relevance to the target groups

The target groups of Job Bank are people in a vulnerable position in the labour market. About 80% of the employees are people with disabilities such as neurological disabilities, learning difficulties or mental health problems. About 50% of them are under 30 years old.

### Activities and processes

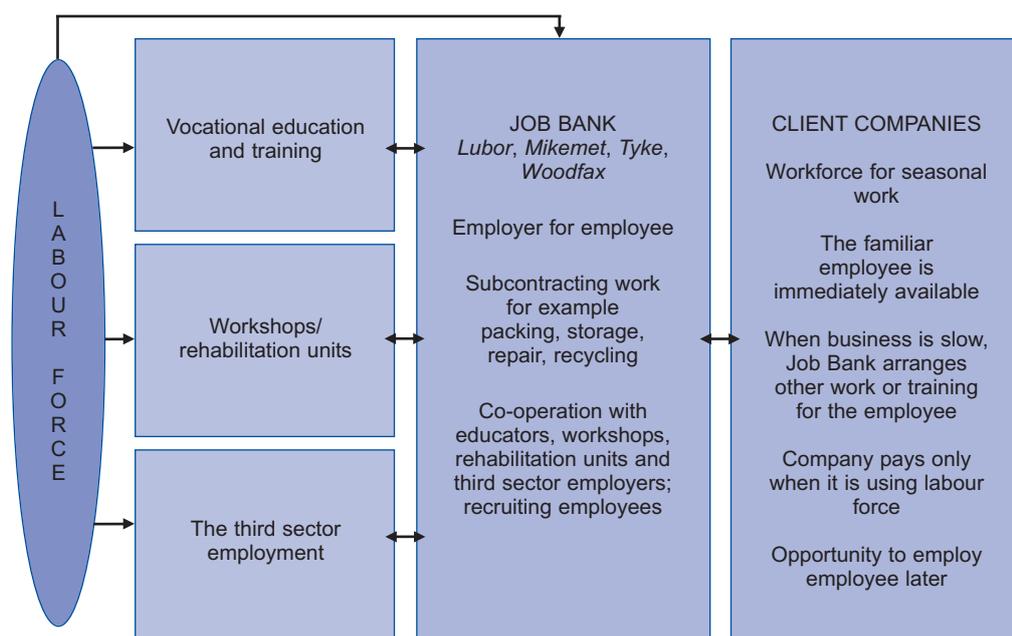
Four nationwide operators were selected to participate in the Job Bank project: Lubor (Helsinki), **Mikemet** (Mikkeli), **Tyke** (Satakunta) and Woodfox (Seinäjoki). All regional operators are social enterprises. The purpose of social enterprises is to create jobs, in particular for the disabled, long-term unemployed and other people who have difficulties finding regular jobs. Social enterprises sell employees' work contributions to client companies, and they pay the employee's salary under collective bargaining agreements.

Preparation for work happens gradually at Job Bank. People come mostly from VET institutions, workshops or rehabilitation units, but associations and other third-sector employers also may send people there. The employees are employed by Job Bank, and they start at Job Bank's own premises doing subcontracting work. As their skills improve, they move on from simple assembly jobs to more challenging tasks and then from Job Bank's own premises to client companies.

Job Bank offers client companies a workforce for seasonal work and busy production periods. The project has a reserve of multiskilled employees, which enables it to quickly find the person best suited for any kind of job from the Job Bank register. At best, the employee is ready to start work as early as the next day. Employees can also start work through a month-long practical work training period, if preferred.

Companies pay for the hours worked only. The employment contract may be fixed term, for a minimum of one month. After this, both parties have the option of continuing the contract. When business is slow, Job Bank arranges other work or training for the employee; however, the employee and company are earmarked for each other. In practice this means that a familiar employee is immediately available when needed, and there is no need for reorientation every time the employment relationship recommences. This is a risk-free, flexible and easy way to recruit new workers for the company. The service concept also saves time, effort and money for everyone. The final target is for the employee to gain permanent employment with the client company.

Figure 2: Activities and processes in Job Bank



### Relationships with other service suppliers

Job Bank works like any other enterprise. It sells the employee's work contributions to client companies at the market price. Wage subsidies are used only when they are needed, because of an employee's lower work capacity, not as a competitive advantage. Otherwise it would distort competition between social enterprises and other enterprises offering the same products or services. The principle is that social enterprises also have to be economically profitable.

### Role of social partners

Vocational education and training institutes, workshops, rehabilitation units and third-sector employers work with Job Bank to recruit employees for the project. Job Bank also interacts with client companies, which hire workers from the project.

### Connection to policy or legislation

Job Bank conforms to proposals from the SATA Committee for reforming social protection. It also operates in line with policy programmes for employment, entrepreneurship and work life as well as the Act on Social Enterprises (1351/30.12.2003).

## Inputs

There are four nationwide operators selected to participate in the Job Bank trial project, and a couple of people work as supervisors for the employees in each social enterprise. Supervisors usually have a social education. Beside this, business skills are needed in social enterprises and the management of Job Bank. Managers of nationwide operators mostly have technical or commercial training.

## Outputs and evaluation

During the first couple of years of the Job Bank trial, 176 people who were in a weak position in the labour market found a follow-up placement. As of 2010 the situation is even more positive, with 189 people finding a follow-up placement. Two-thirds (67%) of them were employed in social enterprises involved in Job Bank and 33% in client companies. About 50% of employees are under 30 and 75% of them have mental or physical disabilities.

Table 9: *Follow-up placement of Job Bank employees (2010)*

Social enterprise	Employees				Placements	
	Long-term unemployed	People with disabilities	Others	Total	Job Bank	Open labour market
Lubor	8	25	23	56	38	18
Mikemet	13	32	-	45	27	18
Tyke	1	70	-	71	47	24
Woodfox	2	14	1	17	14	3
<b>Total</b>	24	141	24	189	126	63
<b>% Total</b>	13%	75%	13%	100%	67%	33%

## Good practice in active inclusion

For its employees, Job Bank offers a permanent, full-time employment relationship, other work or training during times of low demand, and at least the collectively agreed wage. It also offers individual pathways to the open labour market. For its client employers, Job Bank offers a risk-free and flexible way to increase a workforce for seasonal work and during busy production periods. This is also an easy way to recruit new workers.

Job Bank works like any other enterprise. It sells employees' work contributions to client companies at market price. Wage subsidy is used only when it is needed, because of employees' lower work capacity, not as a competitive advantage. People with disabilities don't stay in social enterprises, but they can move to employment in the client companies as soon as possible.

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Content	
Skill-building (including VET and further education)	In the future?
Job placement (e.g. supported employment)	√
Self-employment	
Activation	√
Condition relevant (including mental health difficulties)	√
Other:	
Approach	
Proactive: reaching out to the target groups	√
Focus on an individual pathways approach (open employment as the goal)	√
Targeting the individual and the community (including parents and employers)	√
Empowerment processes (e.g. decision-making, self-advocacy)	√
Partnership, networking and links (to other agencies and private companies) that assist in achieving the goals	√
Links to national policy or programmes	√
Training and support for staff	√
Social partner involvement	√
Monitoring and measurement (i.e. data on output, impact or cost effectiveness and individual benefits)	√
Regional or local sphere of activity	√
De-institutionalised and community focused	√

## Case Study 2: Leap to Labour!

### Abstract

Only a relatively small proportion of people with disabilities or health problems work in Finland. It is not easy for them to find a job, even if they are well educated. Leap to Labour! (Sisäänheitto työelämään!) is an employer service based on cooperation between 11 disability organisations and companies. The project is coordinated by the Muscular Disease Association and funded by Finland's Slot Machine Association. The target group of the project is well-educated job seekers with disabilities or health problems, such as musculoskeletal disorders and mental health problems. The aim of the project is to help this group find a job from the open labour market and for employers to find employees. At the same time the project increases the opportunity for young people with disabilities or health problems to access work experience or practice during their transition from education to the labour market.

### How the project started

The Leap to Labour! project started because disability organisations wanted to improve their members' opportunities in the labour market and society. As full citizens, people with disabilities have equal rights and are entitled to dignity, equal treatment, independent living and full participation in society. This includes equal access to employment. Previous projects had shown that mere information was not enough, but job seekers and employers have to meet each other. The project shares information on well-educated, disabled job seekers and job vacancies. Through this, the project also aims to influence attitudes towards disabled people.

## Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the Leap to Labour! project are:

- creating new pathways from education to the labour market for young people with disabilities;
- increasing opportunities for young people with disabilities to work or practise;
- helping trained job seekers with disabilities find a job on the open labour market and employers to find competent employees among disabled job seekers;
- sharing information on well-educated, disabled job seekers and open job vacancies;
- influencing attitudes towards disabled people;
- increasing the diversity in workplaces.

## Intended beneficiaries

The target group of the Leap to Labour! project is well-educated job seekers with disabilities or health problems, for example musculoskeletal disorders, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, rheumatism, visual impairment or mental health problems. Most are recently graduated and in transition from education to the labour market. This means that they belong mainly to the younger age groups. Almost everyone who has been employed with the help of the project has had secondary education or higher: vocational education, 30%; polytechnic, 30%; university, 35%; others, 5%.

The job seekers also get help finding a job and assistance for coordinating their salary and benefits when needed.

Leap to Labour! helps employers find well-educated employees. Registered job seekers have disabilities or health problems, but also knowledge, skills and work capacity. Disability organisations inform employers about wage subsidies and other measures when needed. Employers can also get guidance about how to match up an employee's qualities with jobs or how to arrange working conditions so they are suitable for a disabled employee.

## Relevance to the target groups

The target group of the Leap to Labour! project is young job seekers with disabilities or health problems. The aim of the project is to improve their opportunities to work or gain experience. The final goal is employment in the open labour market.

## Activities and processes

Leap to Labour! is an employer service based on cooperation between 11 disability organisations,<sup>1</sup> disabled job seekers and companies. Disabled job seekers get encouragement finding jobs and assistance for coordinating salary and benefits when needed. For job seekers it is easier to try out new things when they are receiving support from a familiar organisation. Disability organisations inform employers about wage subsidies and other measures.

The project organises events where job seekers and employers can meet face to face, and employers can obtain information on the employment of disabled people.

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<sup>1</sup> The Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities (FPD), the Finnish Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, the Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (FAIDD), the Threshold Association, the Muscular Disease Association, the Finnish Central Association for Mental Health, the Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired (FFVI), the Finnish CP Association, the Finnish MS Society, the Finnish Rheumatism Association and the VATES Foundation.

The project shares information on well-educated, disabled job seekers, job vacancies and the employment of disabled people on its website. It influences attitudes towards disabled people, emphasising that disability is only one feature among other features of a disabled person. In addition they may have lots of knowledge and skills, and their work capacity can be good or excellent. At the same time it increases the diversity in workplaces.

### **Relationships with other service suppliers**

Instead of replacing the employment services, this project complements them. It cooperates with recruitment and employment agencies.

### **Role of social partners**

The main partners of Leap to Labour! are FiBS with its cooperation networks and Manpower Inclusive. Leap to Labour! also cooperates with employers, who can access information about measures such as wage subsidies and subsidies for making adjustments to working conditions, and guidance in how to work with employees with disabilities, for example how to match the work available to an employee's abilities.

### **Connection to policy or legislation**

Leap to Labour! complies with the following policies:

- the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- the government programme of Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's first cabinet;
- the government programme of Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's second cabinet;
- the Finnish Disability Policy Programme, VAMPO 2010–2015.

### **Inputs**

Leap to Labour! is a lightly resourced project with only one full-time employee. Another employee was employed seasonally while the full-time employee wrote the project report at the end of the first couple of years.

### **Outputs and evaluation**

In the first years of the Leap to Labour! project, 76 young people with disabilities or health problems found a job as follows:

- 18 as permanent employees;
- 31 as temporary employees;
- 5 as freelancers;
- 10 at work practices;
- 12 at job try-outs.

Statistics show that 42% of the people who took part in work practice or job try-outs became employed afterwards. The project is continuing.

### **Good practice in active inclusion**

Attitudes to disability form the major challenge for the employment of people with disabilities. In many cases, disability is regarded as an illness, and a person with disabilities as the opposite to a healthy person. Discrimination is common,

particularly in job-seeking situations, even if it is forbidden by the law. Some people may automatically assume that a disability or health problem prevents a person from performing at work. Leap to Labour! aims to eliminate these kinds of barriers to employment and promote the employment of people with disabilities in a way that is encouraging to both employees and employers. There are a lot of unused employment resources among people with disabilities, but being disabled doesn't mean a person is completely incapable of any work. A person with a disability is often fully capable of work if the work environment is adapted to meet their needs. Disability is only one feature of a disabled person – they may have lots of knowledge and skills and their work capacity can be good or even excellent.

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Content	
Skill-building (including VET and further education)	
Job placement (e.g. supported employment)	√
Self-employment	√
Activation	√
Condition relevant (including mental health difficulties)	√
Other:	
Approach	
Proactive: reaching out to the target groups	√
Focus on an individual pathways approach (open employment as the goal)	√
Targeting the individual and the community (including parents and employers)	√
Empowerment processes (e.g. decision-making, self-advocacy)	√
Partnership, networking and links (to other agencies and private companies) that assist in achieving the goals	√
Links to national policy or programmes	√
Training and support for staff	√
Social partner involvement	√
Monitoring and measurement (i.e. data on output, impact or cost effectiveness and individual benefits)	√
Regional or local sphere of activity	√
De-institutionalised and community focused	√

## Case Study 3: Bridge Production School

### Abstract

Bridge Production School is a work-based vocational education and training unit organised by the Bridge Coaching Association (Siltavalmennus yhdistys) in cooperation with **Luovi Vocational College**. All students at Bridge Production School have some special needs, and without special support they would be at risk of dropping out of school and, as a result, social exclusion. The most common causes of special needs are ADHD, ADD, mental health problems, alcohol abuse, intellectual disorders and criminal behavior.

The production school is an alternative model of vocational education and training for young people with difficulties integrating in school, or other difficulties in coping with school. At Bridge Production School students learn by working in the school's own companies: Bridge construction services (Silta -rakennuspalvelut), Bridge lunch restaurant (Silta -lounasravintola) or Bridge garage (Silta -autokorjaamo). The focus of the studies is on the practical side, with study subjects integrated into practical tasks. There is a special vocational teacher and two or three job coaches in every company. Students receive support also from their individual coach and from each other. The aim of the training is to remove barriers to student learning and develop their professional skills. The final goal is open employment.

### How the project started

The Finnish education system is of a high quality and every young person has the right to education in Finland. Nevertheless, there are young people who have difficulties integrating in school or other difficulties coping with ordinary school, for example young people with a history of criminal behaviour or alcohol abuse.

Bridge Production School is an alternative model of vocational education and training for young people who learn best by doing. It started in 1995 and is managed by the Bridge Coaching Association in co-operation with Luovi Vocational College. It is financed by the Finnish National Board of Education.

Rehabilitation can take the form of education. Vocational education can help a person with disabilities or health problems train for an occupation that is suitable, taking into account any health issues that may restrict their choice of occupation. By means of retraining or further vocational training, young people with health problems or disabilities can acquire a new occupation that helps them to minimise the impact of any health limitations.

### Aims and objectives

The aims of the Bridge Production School are:

- employment on the open labour market;
- alternative vocational education and training for young people who have difficulties integrating in school or other difficulties coping with school;
- providing individual pathways to the labour market;
- removing barriers to learning and developing professional skills;
- access to alternative vocational education and training;
- an opportunity to learn in their own learning style;
- non-stop student recruitment;
- individual study plans;
- everyday life skills and professional skills.

There can be 30 students at the school at the same time and they obtain essentially the same vocational qualifications as they would in a VET. The scope of the studies is 120 credits (three years).

### Relevance to the target groups

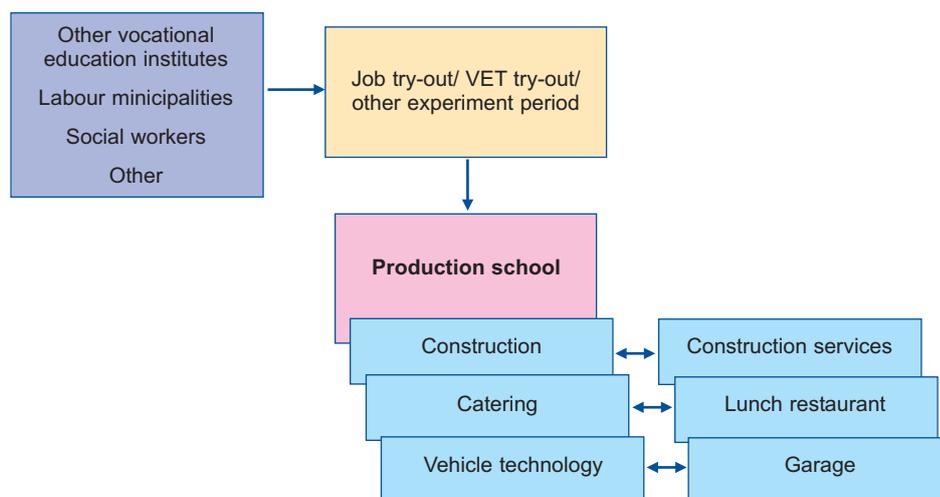
All students at Bridge Production School have some special needs. Many of them belong to the most challenged groups. Without special support they would be at risk of dropping out of school and also at risk of social exclusion. The most common causes of student special needs are ADHD, ADD, mental health problems, alcohol abuse, intellectual disorders

and criminal behaviour. Many students have dropped out of vocational education and training at least once. Only a couple of students have gained a secondary school diploma or had work experience before studying at the school. Most of the students (75.8%) are under 25 and the rest are 25–34 years old.

### Activities and processes

Bridge Production School is an alternative model of vocational education and training for young people with difficulties integrating in school or other difficulties coping with school. Many of them have dropped out of school or are otherwise outside secondary education.

Figure 3: *The activities and processes of the Bridge Production School*



Before starting at Bridge Production School, students always have a work or VET trial, or a probationary period. This is important because it is the only way to get to know if a student is ready to start studies. Students learn by working in the school’s own companies, with the focus of the studies on the practical side, integrated with subjects to be studied. Students can adopt their own learning styles.

Studies are based on each student’s own abilities and objectives. Each student is provided with an individual educational plan (IEP), which covers an assessment of their initial situation, teaching, guidance counselling and further plans, as well as an assessment of their required support services. The plan is based on the young person’s own goals, strengths and developmental needs. The plan is monitored and its implementation assessed and supplemented throughout the period of study. The aim of training is to remove barriers to learning and to develop the professional skills of the students. The final goal of training is open employment.

Job coaching is guided work carried out at the Bridge Production School in accordance with the young person’s individual goals. The starting point of job coaching is the young person’s own potential and needs, and it aims to support their ability and capacity to work. During development discussions, the young participants are given feedback on the work process and on their progress as it relates to their own goals. The idea is that work skills develop as a result of learning by doing, and young people learn new skills and gain new insights through work. The work is done entirely by the young person from the beginning to the end. Through coaching, young people also learn the rules of working life and how to function in a work community. Continuous, constructive feedback helps them recognise their own strengths and developmental needs.

### Relationships with other service suppliers

Bridge Production School organises VET special education. It does not compete with other vocational institutes, but offers special services for students with special needs.

### Social partners

Students have on-the-job learning periods outside the school's own companies.

### Connection to policy or legislation

The Bridge Production School initiative is linked with the following policies and legislation:

- the proposal for Special Education Strategy to Secondary Vocational Education and Training 2002;
- the Act on Vocational Education 630/21.8.1998;
- the Act on Vocational Rehabilitation 566/15.7.2005.

### Inputs

There is a special vocational teacher and two or three job coaches in every company, and students receive support from the individual coach and from each other.

Table 10: *Professionals working at Bridge Production School*

	Teaching Luovi Vocational College	Job coaching	Individual coaching
Bridge construction services	Special teacher	Vocational teacher	Individual coach
Bridge restaurant	Special teacher	Two job coaches	
Bridge garage	Special teacher	Three job coaches	

### Outputs and evaluation

Seventeen students found a job immediately after leaving education, regardless of whether they had completed their studies at the school or not. Only four students remained unemployed after graduating and two of them started practical training at a workplace after graduation. Thirteen interrupted their studies at the school but continued studies in apprenticeship training or in another vocational institute, and 12 students needed rehabilitation or other measures instead of education and training; at least four of them intended to continue studying at a later date. Four students went into the army, and four students had a child. Almost every one of them intended to continue studies at Bridge Production School at a later date (see Table 10).

Table 11: Follow-up placement of Bridge Production School students\*

	2007		2008		2009		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employed	5	26.3	9	42.9	3	15	17	28.3
Unemployed	1	5.3	1	4.8	2	10	4	6.7
Education**	4	21.1	2	9.5	7	35	13	21.7
Other measures***	3	15.8	3	14.3	6	30	12	20
Other status****	6	31.6	6	28.6	2	10	14	23.3
Graduated	7	36.8	9	42.8	5	25.0	21	35
Early school leavers	9	47.4	8	38.1	13	65	30	50
Break in studies*****	3	15.8	4	19.0	2	10	9	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Early school-leavers included; \*\* further education, apprenticeship training, studies at other vocational institute; \*\*\* alcohol or drug abuse, health problems, rehabilitation, prison; \*\*\*\* army, maternity, etc.; \*\*\*\*\* intending to continue studies at a later date.

The main objective of the school is student employment; graduation is secondary. Dropping out of the school can be seen as a positive thing, especially if a student gets a job before graduation or if they continue their studies somewhere else. Only one student dropped out of the school without a further plan.

### The case study as good practice in active inclusion

Production school offers young people with difficulties integrating in school or other difficulties coping with school a chance to use their own learning style. Otherwise many of them could be at risk of dropping out of vocational education and training and even at risk of social exclusion. Real work and the community of the Production School offer them a chance of social inclusion.

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Content	
Skill-building (including VET and further education)	√
Job placement (e.g. supported employment)	√
Self-employment	
Activation	√
Condition relevant (including mental health difficulties)	√
Other:	

Approach	
Proactive: reaching out to the target groups	√
Focus on an individual pathways approach (open employment as the goal)	√
Targeting the individual and the community (including parents and employers)	√
Empowerment processes (e.g. decision-making, self-advocacy)	√
Partnership, networking and links (to other agencies and private companies) that assist in achieving the goals	√
Links to national policy or programmes	√
Training and support for staff	
Social partner involvement	√
Monitoring and measurement (i.e. data on output, impact or cost effectiveness and individual benefits)	√
Regional or local sphere of activity	√
De-institutionalised and community focused	√

## Case Study 4: Resiina

### Abstract

In Resiina (Trolley) the target group of the project’s job training is young adults in contact with mental health services who have an interest in participating in vocational rehabilitation. They are trained for a job either in a workplace or in a rehabilitation unit with the support of a job coach. Job coaching provides personalised support and guidance to trainees. The aim of coaching is to improve the young adult’s skills to cope with and adapt to a job and maintain their working and earning opportunities. The final objective of the training is the young adult’s placement in the open labour market. In Resiina job training usually takes 6–12 months according to the young person’s individual needs. Resiina is managed by advocacy and advisory group **Friends of the Young** and is financed by the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela).

### How the project started

Resiina started as a trial project in 2004. There was a group of young adults with mental health problems among the clients of Friends of the Young’s social services. The existing ways of offering social services, including sheltered employment, didn’t seem to be the best choice for these young adults, so there was a need to find a new way to work with them. Supported employment with job training in the open labour market was found to be a suitable alternative.

Friends of the Young is a specialist association and advocacy group on social services. It has several operating units and development and pilot projects all over Finland, striving to offer a better tomorrow for people with health problems and disabilities, as well as for people recovering from substance abuse or mental health problems. One of the main focuses of development projects is social employment.

Resiina, together with the Friends of the Young service network, provides and develops rehabilitation services for young adults who have been in contact with mental health services. The purpose of these services is to prevent social exclusion and strengthen coping strategies. Mental health rehabilitation is always based on the individual needs of the client, and it draws from the multidisciplinary expertise of Friends of the Young’s employees as well as from cooperation with various liaison groups, taking advantage of other services provided by Friends of the Young whenever necessary.

## Aims and objectives

Resiina aims to:

- improve the capacity for work of young adults with mental health problems so as to help them to cope with the demands of work;
- help young adults with mental health problems overcome impairment and enter working life or return to work after a lengthy absence or find another individual pathway to inclusion (for example education);
- prevent young adults with mental health problems from becoming progressively more socially excluded;
- develop supported employment as a method of employing young adults with mental health problems.

## Intended beneficiaries

The beneficiaries are young adults in contact with mental health services, and Resiina's target group are those who are personally interested in vocational rehabilitation. It caters for about 30 people a year. In practice this means that every young person who has participated in the project between 2004 and 2009 has had a diagnosed mental health problem (see Table 12).

Table 12: *Resiina project participants by diagnosis*

	2004–2006	2007	2008	2009	2004–2009
<b>Schizophrenia</b>	30	17	13	10	70
<b>Personality disorders</b>	11	1	1	7	20
<b>Psychosis</b>	7	4	1	1	13
<b>Depression</b>	12	8	9	7	36
<b>Bipolar disorder</b>	2	1	2	4	9
<b>Other</b>	5	1	0	7	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>161</b>

A qualified job coach works directly with young adults with mental health problems and provides one-to-one training at a training site. The job coach:

- gathers employment information by doing job analyses in order to match a person with a position;
- helps the young adult to learn the specific requirements of the job;
- helps them with work-related activities and requirements such as time and attendance rules;
- helps them with appropriate work-related (including social) behaviour when dealing with supervisors and co-workers.

Job coaches inform employers about wage subsidies and other measures, and employers can also get guidance about how to align the employees with jobs or how to arrange working conditions that are suitable for particular employees.

### Relevance to the target groups

All young adults at Resiina have diagnosed mental health problems. They are in contact with mental health services, but are also personally interested in vocational rehabilitation. Many of them (70% in 2007–2009) have a temporary disability pension certificate, but they are willing to enter or return to working life.

### Activities and processes

Together with its service network, Friends of the Young provides and develops rehabilitation services for young adults who have been in contact with mental health services. The purpose of these services is to prevent the client's social exclusion and strengthen their coping strategies. Mental health rehabilitation is always based on the individual needs of the client, each one of whom has their own individual rehabilitation plan. There are three main areas in rehabilitation: individual options, group features, and network cooperation. These are described below.

Individual options:

- personal discussions, individual counselling and doing things together;
- job coaching;
- practising previously learned skills that were forgotten because of illness.

Group features:

- peer support;
- practising social skills and expanding social networks;
- group activities (movies, sports, crafts, visits and trips).

Network cooperation:

- networking between the young adult, job coach and other interested parties;
- aims, methods and contracts of the rehabilitation, monitoring the progress of rehabilitation;
- family meetings, network meetings and contact by telephone or e-mail.

In Resiina young adults with mental health problems don't start their rehabilitation at social enterprises or in sheltered employment. They are trained in workplaces in the open labour market. Job coaches support both the young adult with mental health problems as well as the employer. These are the primary customers for a job coach. However, they will interact and provide consultation services to parents, community funding agencies and other community support programmes.

### Relationships with other service suppliers

Resiina networks with others working in the field of vocational rehabilitation, with social partners, employers and employment offices (at the end of vocational rehabilitation).

### Connection to policy or legislation

Resiina's work is guided by the Act on Vocational Rehabilitation 566/15.7.2005.

## Inputs

There are three job coaches at Resiina: one responsible for social education and job coach education; one responsible for nursing education, social education and job coach education; and one responsible for psychiatric education.

## Outputs and evaluation

Resiina submits annual reports to the Social Insurance Institution of Finland every year. These contain information about the activity status of young adults with mental health problems after vocational rehabilitation.

Table 13: *Activity status of young adults with mental health problems after vocational rehabilitation with Resiina*

	2004–2006	2007	2008	2009	2004–2009	%
<b>Employment</b>	15	6	2	5	28	41.8
<b>Unemployment</b>	4	0	2	2	8	11.9
<b>Education</b>	8	3	4	4	19	28.3
<b>Sheltered job</b>	3	1	0	0	4	6.0
<b>Rehabilitation</b>	0	2	0	2	4	6.0
<b>Other</b>	2	0	1	1	4	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100</b>

## Good practice in active inclusion

People with mental health problems are one of the most challenging groups to employ. Supporting them with the skills needed in working life and with rehabilitation are important factors in increasing their capacity to work.

Long-term, intensive and individual job coaching seems to be the reason why Resiina is such a successful initiative. Job coaches not only help employees with disabilities but also help employers with job interviews, orientation and induction, salary negotiations and the drafting of contracts. Job coaches also provide information about wage subsidies and other financial aids that employers can get when they hire a job seeker with a disability.

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<b>Content</b>	
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Job placement (e.g. supported employment)	√
Self-employment	
Activation	√
Condition relevant (including mental health difficulties)	√
Other:	
<b>Approach</b>	
Proactive: reaching out to the target groups	√
Focus on an individual pathways approach (open employment as the goal)	√
Targeting the individual and the community (including parents and employers)	√
Empowerment processes (e.g. decision-making, self-advocacy)	√
Partnership, networking and links (to other agencies and private companies) that assist in achieving the goals	√
Links to national policy or programmes	√
Training and support for staff	√
Social partner involvement	√
Monitoring and measurement (i.e. data on output, impact or cost effectiveness and individual benefits)	√
Regional or local sphere of activity	√
De-institutionalised and community focused	√



## Future policy directions and plans

The social protection system in Finland is undergoing a thorough overhaul on the basis of the SATA programme (the Comprehensive Reform of Social Protection). The aim of the reform is to make it always profitable to accept a job offer, to reduce poverty, and to ensure an adequate basic income for everyone, regardless of their situation. These goals can best be realised by lengthening working careers and eliminating barriers to the employment of people with disabilities and partial work ability. People should enter working life earlier and retire later; they should fall ill or become disabled and be unemployed as rarely as possible; and those with partial working capacity should be employed. The SATA Committee underlines the importance of measures to encourage people to accept short-term and part-time jobs.

The reform is being carried out with the overall aim of ensuring that social protection has a sustainable funding base in the long term. Paid work is the most important way of achieving an average income. Work is also a central means of enhancing inclusion and preventing social exclusion. For people with disabilities, work means an opportunity for meaningful social interaction, the improvement of one's financial situation, and the strengthening of self-esteem. It can also play an important role in advancing and improving one's mental health and well-being. Currently, Finland has the narrowest range of partial benefits and targeted measures.

Another proposal of the committee is a guaranteed pension as a model for improving the income of people living on the smallest pensions. The risk of poverty among people living on national pensions has been a challenge, despite improvements and general increases to the rate of the basic national pension over the last few years. It has estimated that 22% of people with disabilities lived in poverty in 2005, and the gross income of people with disabilities was 60% lower than the working population. Early retired young people usually get a national pension, which provides a minimum income only, because they have seldom had the opportunity to work before retirement, so they don't gain an earnings-related pension. The guaranteed pension tries to answer this challenge, and the Act on Guaranteed Pensions came into effect on 1 March 2011.

Also Finnish disability legislation was reformed during 2009–2010. The objective was to combine the Services and Assistance for the Disabled Act (380/1987) and the Act on Special Care for Mentally Handicapped (519/1977). The aim of the reform is to develop the system of personal assistants for people with severe disabilities, in order to guarantee their equality and promote their social inclusion. Every person with severe disabilities has a right to have personal assistance. In this reform new groups of people with disabilities, for example people with mental health problems, are included for assistance, and assistance has been extended to work places. It is also recognised that a person who needs personal assistance may be capable of working.

## Conclusions and key messages

In Finland current disability policy includes the most essential points to ensure the active inclusion and social protection of people with disabilities, but ways of implementing disability legislation are inconsistent. In regard to services, they vary widely according to where people live.

Access to individual services is based on a service plan that includes all the individual needs and supports needed in everyday life. There is a great deal of variation between municipalities in how these plans are drawn up and put into action, and individual service plans are not made as often as they are required by people with disabilities.

To get disability services, a personal service plan is drawn up, but very often it is impossible to put it into practice due to a lack of services or resources. The development of the plan should be based on a dialogue between a service user and the authority, but usually authorities simply list the aspirations of service users and calculate the cost of the wish list.

After that authorities decide about the content of the plan. A problem with this is that services aren't based on the person's individual needs, but on the availability of resources. The greatest problem is the lack of information about services and about people's rights to access them. This can also lead to increased inequality.

Finnish labour policy is underdeveloped in terms of disability and employment. People with disabilities face many difficulties convincing authorities of their ability to work. The strongest critique focuses on lack of advice, guidance and counselling. Employment policy for people with disabilities is focused on the partly incapacitated person. The ethos and practice of welfare is based on the idea that people with disabilities do not have to be at work, and the welfare state attempts to compensate this disadvantage with a disability pension. Because of this ideology, there is no real will to employ people with disabilities. Authorities seem to forget that a person with a disability is often fully capable of work if the work environment is adapted to meet their needs.

Work orientation guidance is a most important first step in placing a person in a position to clarify their realistic work options and a career path. However, the availability and quality of guidance services varies from one local authority to another. Basically the standards for work orientation and guidance are well understood, but there is a lack of money and personnel to realise them.

Services provided by NGOs and the partnership between government and such organisations have a long tradition in Finland. Organisations have played an important role in meeting special needs in such areas as services for substance abusers, people with disabilities and other rehabilitees. The case studies above provide examples of the kind of expertise and innovation the Finnish NGOs bring to the active inclusion process.

Social enterprises have become increasingly important in the effort to bridge the gap between inactivity and employment for young people with disabilities. By providing employment contracts to participants and placing them as workers in open employment, the Job Bank project removes many of the barriers that employers perceive in employing people with disabilities and ensures a productive life for its beneficiaries. Bringing employers and qualified people with disabilities together face to face overcomes the challenges that employers' attitudes can create for young disabled job seekers. Using real work as a learning opportunity provides learners who are at risk of dropping out of training or education with opportunities to develop work skills and capacities that they otherwise would not have acquired.

At the core of three of the case studies was job coaching. Job coaches help not only young people with disabilities but also employers with job interviews, orientation and induction, salary negotiations and the drafting of contracts. Job coaches also provide information about wage subsidies and other financial aids that employers can get when they hire a young job seeker with a disability, and guidance on how to recruit and retain employees with disabilities, for example how to match work to the employee's strengths and needs.

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## Interviews

Heli Hirvasmaa, individual coach, Bridge Coaching Association; telephone interview, 29 November 2010.

Taina Härmä, job coach, Friends of the Young; interview, 1 December 2010.

Aarne Kuusi, Trial Director, Edupoli (Adult Education Services); telephone interview, 25 November 2010.

Sari Loijas, Senior Officer, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Department for Promotion of Welfare and Health; telephone interview, 5 November 2010.

Lea Nikula, project manager, Friends of the Young; interview, 1 December 2010.

Timo Peltovuori, executive director, Finnish Central Association for Mental Health; telephone interview, 10 November 2010.

Jyrki Rinta-Juoppi, job and training coach, Finnish Central Association for Mental Health; telephone interview, 9 November 2010.

Antti Teittinen, research manager, FAIDD (Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities); telephone interview, 11 November 2010.

Marjatta Varanka, managing director, VATES Foundation; interview, 3 November 2010.

Liisa-Maija Verainen, planner, Muscular Disease Association; telephone interview, 25 November 2010

# Annex: Legislation and programmes

Table A1: Policy and legal framework for young people with disabilities or health problems

Policy area	Title of legislation	Date	Reference	Responsible authority	Purpose	Intended beneficiaries	Short description
<b>Access to quality health &amp; social care services</b>	Services and Assistance for the Disabled Act	380/3.4.1987	574/1988 1071/1988 676/1989 743/1992 101/1995 1117/1998 69/2002 1267/2006 981/2008 1545/2009 1718/2009 134/2010	KELA (Social Insurance Institutions of Finland)	Individual services Personal support Income support	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health  A close relative or another person caring for a disabled person	Aims to improve the ability of a disabled person to live and act as an equal member of society and to prevent and eliminate the disadvantages and obstacles caused by disability, by providing reasonable transport and related escort services, interpretation services and service accommodation, and personal assistance and equipment needed in order to manage daily affairs.
	Act on Special Care of the Mentally Handicapped	519/23.6.1977	386/1979 952/1980 702/1982 484/1983 26/1984 140/1984 299/1988 797/1988 259/1989 96/1991 739/1992 1099/1992 1369/1996 124/1999 816/2000 414/2001 672/2008 1022/2008 1539/2009 1717/2009	Dept of Social Services  Dept of Health	Individual services Activation  Promote and maintain health  Personal support	People with a developmental disability	Special care to promote the performance of daily activities, to guarantee the livelihood and social integration of people who are mentally disabled, and to secure therapy and other care that is needed.
	Act on the Position and Rights of the Customers of Social Services	812/2.9.2000	412/2001 1135/2002 428/2003 1361/2003 386/2007 657/2009 657/2009	Dept of Social Services	Individual services Personal support	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health	Strengthens the rights of people with disabilities as users of social welfare services.
<b>Support for adequate income</b>	Act on Disability Allowances	570/11.5.2007	1153/2007 1050/2009 1228/2009 706/2010	KELA	Income support	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health	Supports disabled or chronically ill people coping with everyday life to participate in work or education, as well as supporting living at home, rehabilitation and care.

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Policy area	Title of legislation	Date	Reference	Responsible authority	Purpose	Intended beneficiaries	Short description
Support for adequate income	Act on National Pensions	568/11.5.2007	986/2007	KELA	KELA	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health Unemployed people	A national pension at the full rate is payable if a person has an illness, injury or impairment that prevents them from earning a reasonable living and they receive no earnings-related pensions, or their combined income is less than the amount allowed to qualify for the smallest national pension.
			1151/2007				
			172/2008				
			586/2008				
			985/2008				
			194/2009				
			934/2009				
			1204/2009				
			1223/2009				
			358/2010				
704/2010							
917/2010							
Inclusive labour market measures	Act on Social Enterprises	1351/30.12.2003	409/2007	Dept of Labour	Activation Vocational training	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health Long-term unemployed Employers	Provides employment opportunities, particularly for disabled people and the long-term unemployed. At least 30% of all employees in a company are disabled or have been long-term unemployed. Pay is agreed in a collective agreement.
	Act on Vocational Rehabilitation	566/15.7.2005	902/2005	KELA	Activation Personal support Individual services Vocational training	People with a developmental disability Long-term unemployed	A person may qualify for vocational rehabilitation services if their work capacity has deteriorated or is at risk of deteriorating over the next few years. The purpose of the rehabilitation is to assist in coping with work demands, to promote a return to work and (for young people) to facilitate entry into employment.
			1118/2005				
			200/2006				
			1305/2006				
			579/2007				
			788/2008				
			995/2008				
			533/2009				
856/2009							
1200/2009							
1562/2009							
1562/2009							
711/2010							
874/2010							
Act on Promoting Disability Pension Recipients' Return to Work	738/7.10.2009	715/2010	Dept of Labour KELA	Activation	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health People in receipt of an early retirement pension	Promotes a return to work for people receiving disability pension.	

Policy area	Title of legislation	Date	Reference	Responsible authority	Purpose	Intended beneficiaries	Short description
Inclusive labour market measures	Act on the Public Employment Service	1295/30.12.2002	925/2003	Dept of Labour	Activation Individual services	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health  Long-term unemployed	Requires the employment authority to provide employment services, labour market training and other services for vocational development as public employment services and to promote the employment of unemployed people through an employment subsidy.
			944/2003				
			1352/2003				
			1369/2003				
			306/2004				
			364/2004				
			1050/2004				
			458/2005				
			1216/2005				
			47/2006				
			463/2006				
			547/2006				
			932/2006				
			1062/2006				
			1095/2006				
			345/2007				
			410/2007				
			455/2007				
			1177/2007				
			1285/2007				
367/2008							
909/2008							
1052/2008							
464/2009							
1198/2009							
1526/2009							
1595/2009							
312/2010							

Table A2: Programmes for young people with disabilities or health problems

Policy area	Title of programme	Type of intervention	Eligibility criteria	Funder	Service providers	Short description
Adequate income	Disability benefits for adults	Financial benefit	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health People aged 16+ years, whose ability to function remains diminished for at least a year People with an impairment, in need of assistance and/or having additional expenses	KELA	Statutory agency	Aims to make it easier for disabled people to manage their everyday activities and cope with their work and studies. The allowance can be awarded to people over 16 years who have an illness or injury that will reduce their functional capacity for a period of at least one year.
	Care allowance for pensioners	Financial benefit	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health People whose ability to look after themselves is weakened, in regular need of assistance, guidance and/or costs	KELA	Statutory agency	Is intended to make it possible for pension recipients with an illness or disability to live at home, as well as to promote home care and to reimburse pension recipients for extra costs caused by illness or disability.
	Rehabilitation allowance	Financial benefit	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health	KELA	Statutory agency	Provides people with a disability or health problems with an income while they participate in rehabilitation aimed at helping to remain in, return to or enter working life.

## Active inclusion of young people with disabilities or health problems: National report – Finland

Policy area	Title of programme	Type of intervention	Eligibility criteria	Funder	Service providers	Short description
Adequate income	Disability pension	Financial benefit Anti-poverty	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health	KELA	Statutory agency	A person can apply for a disability pension if they become disabled at age 16–64 years. The national pension at the full rate is payable only if a person receives no earnings-related pensions or their combined income is less than the amount allowed to qualify for a full national pension.
Inclusive labour market	Vocational rehabilitation	Social inclusion services Return to work	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health	KELA	Government administration	Aimed at people entering or already in working life whose work capacity has deteriorated or is at risk of deteriorating over the next few years.
	Pay subsidy	Social inclusion services	Unemployed People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health	Dept of Labour	Government administration	A subsidy aimed at promoting the employment of an unemployed job seeker, which can be granted out of employment appropriations to an employer for pay costs.
	Subsidy for the arrangement of working conditions	Social inclusion services	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health	Dept of Labour	Government administration	Employment of a disabled person and their staying at work can be subsidised through a subsidy for arranging working conditions granted to the employer.
	Special VET	Social inclusion services	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health People with special educational needs	Dept of Education Dept of Social Services	Local government/ municipality	Intended for students who need special support with their studies. The primary places of study for special-needs students are regular vocational institutions. Vocational special education institutions are responsible for providing education and training for students with the most severe disabilities. Special VET can be also a part of vocational rehabilitation.

Table A3: Current status of the target groups from a national perspective

Policy area	Title of programme	Type of intervention	Eligibility criteria	Funder	Service providers	Short description
Access to quality services	Personal assistant services	Social inclusion services	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health People with special educational needs	Dept of Social Services	Local government/ municipality	People with disabilities who cannot manage to do everyday activities due to their disability are entitled to a personal assistant. The disabled person contacts a social worker in their local area, who then evaluates whether there is a need to provide a personal assistant.
	Transport services	Social inclusion services	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health People with special educational needs	Dept of Social Services	Local government/ municipality	Free transportation services for work, study, running errands, social participation and recreation arranged by municipalities. Allocated on the basis of individual service plans.
	Interpretation services	Social inclusion services	People with a developmental disability, acquired disability or ill health People with special educational needs	Dept of Social Services	Local government/ municipality	People with severe hearing, hearing and sight, and speech disabilities are entitled to receive free interpretation services.