

All you need to know to open the door to the labour market

Finland – Aspa Foundation

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The goal of the project is to help students with learning or other disabilities to find sustainable employment. Specifically, the project targets students who are in their final year of special vocational schools. The main product of the project is the website "www.oikeitaitoita.fi" ("decent work"), a database that provides advice on writing a CV and job application, on group coaching methods, etc. The materials were collected and developed to help teachers, other educators, and job coaches on training students with special needs. "The working life competence" has been legislated to be an obligatory course on the vocational studies curricula in Finland.

QUOTE

"The project helps young adults with disabilities or other special needs by providing them with learning materials and information on how to get into the open labour market."

— Ms. Paula Toukonen, Aspa Foundation

FACTS & FIGURES

- 14,142 people visited the project website from March to October 2015.
- To date, 47 students have received the "working life competence" courses of the project.
- About 500 professionals and students have participated network meetings, conferences, trainings or other functions of the project.

PROBLEMS TARGETED

Without proper support, many students with disabilities who have completed their vocational studies cannot find employment, and thus remain dependent on public support. This project provides such individuals with the necessary information for their entrance into the labour market as well as with a supportive network for persons with disabilities.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

The material offered on the website can be used by teachers, job coaches, or individuals, and is suitable for supporting a variety of special needs, including people with learning disabilities, social difficulties, etc. "Networking days" have also been established, whereby professionals have the

occasion to exchange good practices and share their knowledge on supporting their students with disabilities.

The project has also developed and tested a programme of seven courses for developing employment skills, which has already involved 47 students. The courses include personal support, group training, job application training, and training of social skills. In addition, employers have been instructed on how to adjust their working conditions to better meet the needs of these new workers; and a programme has been implemented by which employees can work as coaches to support persons with disabilities at the beginning of their employment.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

The materials created and gathered in this project are easy to use in any vocational school or other institution that trains people to find employment, though it is especially targeted for people with disabilities or special needs. The website is freely available and easy to use. To date, the website is only available in Finnish, but it is planned to translate parts of it in English.

Photo: Yes

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