

Leverage from the EU

2007–2013

Social Fund

From projects to good practices

Examples of projects financed by Labour Administration:
structural fund period 2000–2006



European Union
European Social Fund

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| To the reader----- | 3 |
| TOLAB – Operational Control Laboratory----- | 4 |
| Tidal Wave in the learning organisation----- | 6 |
| Naturpolis attracted returnees to Kuusamo ----- | 8 |
| Model and indicators for systematic development of well-being at work ----- | 10 |
| Keeping employment in sight throughout studies ----- | 12 |
| Setting immigrants on the path to enterprise ----- | 14 |
| Encouragement at grass roots level ----- | 16 |
| Regional foresight service to meet a need in Southwest Finland ----- | 18 |
| Welcome to the fells of Lapland!----- | 20 |
| New programme period 2007-2013 ----- | 22 |

Leverage from
the EU
2007–2013

To the reader

ESF funding is used to support those who are disadvantaged in some way or another by providing them with opportunities to succeed, promoting equality and creating the conditions for entrepreneurship. In Finland ESF funding can help to improve employment and employment opportunities and to promote the creation of new jobs.

Projects financed within the ESF programme include projects aimed at re-training the long-term unemployed and those with reduced working capacity, enabling them to return to working life. Other goals are to promote employment, to encourage people to stay on at work and to prevent marginalisation.

The ESF provides funding for projects that support entrepreneurship and developing enterprises, improve the effectiveness of work organisations and increase productivity in a sustainable manner. Also financed within the ESF Programme are structural projects that affect a large number of people over a long period.

ESF funding activities began in Finland when the country joined the European Union at the beginning of 1995.

By November 2007 more than 9,400 ESF projects had been financed in Finland. These projects have offered training amounting to over 34 million person workdays as well as providing employment and development services. In addition to those who have participated in the projects, ESF activities involve co-operation partners working in steering groups and staff from the implementing organisations. Over 12 years, the amount of ESF funding made available to Finland has been about EUR 1.1 billion. Together with national co-financing the resources have totalled EUR 5.1 billion, which includes an estimate of private funding used in the projects.

Labour Administration funded nearly 1,700 ESF projects in the structural fund period now coming to an end. The main themes were:

- 1. Entrepreneurship and personnel development in enterprises**
- 2. Promoting employability and equality**
- 3. Developing employment services and foresight**

In summer and early autumn 2007 about fifty examples were collected of projects from the structural fund period 2000–2006. Nine of them are presented here. You will find these and the other examples at: www.rakennerahastot.fi

Case 1

New ways of organising work

TOLAB – the Operational Control Laboratory project

Operational control is the “in thing” for growth-oriented enterprises

The TOLAB project executed by the School of Information and Communication Technology of the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences had an ambitious objective: to create a networked centre of competence in operational control in South Ostrobothnia and to develop the region’s training and research for the benefit of SMEs in the region. And great progress has been made!

Operational control is usually understood as a “heavy-duty” tool for big companies, but regardless of the application area, TOLAB makes it accessible to SMEs for use in management decision-making and daily routines. There are two different approaches available for enterprises. The application can either operate on the customer’s own server or via

a browser by a remote access connection, which means that the customer need not worry about software and server maintenance or use.

An evident need

There is a clear need for more efficient operational control in many SMEs. “If an SME wants to grow, a square-ruled exercise book is no longer enough,” TOLAB manager **Heikki Siltala** states. SMEs usually concentrate on their core competencies, and issues relating to management and control very often tend to be neglected in the pressure of everyday work. It’s a pity, because a successful operational control system would save time, money and work and would allow the company to grow without running into the feared difficulties of information management etc,” he points out.



Tailor-made training on neutral territory

TOLAB offers companies tailor-made coaching and support in defining, purchasing and using an operational control system, the opportunity to test the control system in the laboratory and multimode training in different areas of operational control. "We build a decision-making platform for companies, but we do not interfere with business transactions concerning the systems," Siltala stresses.

Companies can test, develop and train personnel on neutral ground in the TOLAB operational control laboratory, which operates in the premises of the ICT School at the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. They can also find out about different operational control systems by studying case material. The facilities can be used for training, courses and presentations by educational institutions, companies and software suppliers.

According to Siltala, maintaining the professional skills of adults working in SMEs is a challenge.

"In the past, one trade or profession lasted through three generations – now one generation needs to learn three trades or professions. The most successful and economical method of study is training tailor-made for the company, on the job and through examples relating to one's own work," he sums up.

Three-way benefits

TOLAB brings together information on the operational control system procurement processes of growth-oriented enterprises of different sizes operating in different sectors, at different stages of their life cycle. The companies participating in the steering groups were Similan Oy and Hilamet Oy; the case companies were Mecakone Oy, Preseco Pomiltek Oy, E.S. Lahtinen Oy, Centaurea Oy and Alajärven Steely Oy.

Since the project objective was to create a joint centre of competence for enterprises, software suppliers and educators, it made sense to look at the benefits from all three perspectives.

"Growth-oriented SMEs gain a competitive edge by learning effective control models right from the start. For software suppliers we can deliver information gathered during the project, which will help them to develop new solutions for the differing needs of companies. The project implementer, the ICT School, also benefits as it can offer teaching that is up to date and in tune with the everyday needs of companies," Heikki Siltala concludes.

Project: Operational Control Laboratory TOLAB

Duration: 1.7.2004–31.3.2007

Implemented by: Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences

www.tolab.fi, www.seamk.fi

The University of Applied Sciences – a regional force

R&D Co-ordinator **Jari Rajamäki** says that the ICT School has several different R&D projects underway that link up with working life. Many of the projects are related to the School's teaching, and they stress one of the University's basic tasks, to influence the regional economy.

"This project has been a long one, with quite a sizeable budget. The main providers of funding, the Centre for Employment and Economic Development (TE Centre) of South Ostrobothnia and the Regional Centre Programme for Seinäjoki, believed in the project and gave provided excellent support for its implementation. The steering group has been active and

the representatives of the participating companies have been genuinely involved," says Rajamäki, who chaired the group.

According to Rajamäki, TOLAB provided an important additional resource for the teaching offered by the ICT School, creating a study environment that was close to working life. The competence in operational control systems now acquired will be transferred via courses and in other forms to curricular plans. In addition, in autumn 2006, the ICT School began a new programme in operational control systems leading to a higher university degree. The common thread behind all this is the concept of operational control,

one component of which is system integration. TOLAB has also generated several Master's theses on operational control.

"The chain continues when graduates from the School take their new competencies with them to the companies who employ them. As a matter of fact, the employment rate of our business graduates and engineers is exceptionally good," Jari Rajamäki points out.

As a result, the companies' operations gain more efficiency and the increased efficiency brings competitive advantages, making the region more attractive and thus creating new jobs locally.

Developing competence in work communities and personnel

Tidal Wave in the learning organisation

In the years 2002-2004 about 1,100 employment office staff members from 22 employment offices in the regions of seven TE Centres took part on the Hyökyaalto project ('Tidal Wave'). The aim of the project was to improve the quality and effectiveness of customer service. The idea was first to analyse the development needs and on the basis of the analysis to involve the whole work community in training and through training in development of the offices' operations.

The project was led by Project Manager **Elisabet Heinonen** from the Ministry of Labour, who saw training programmes tailor-made for specific employment offices and large seminars as the key media for implementing the extensive project. The large strategic seminars served to ground the labour policy strategy and to provide an insight into the challenges of the labour market. Top executives from the Ministry of Labour also participated.

First step: mapping out development needs

The project aimed at developing competence in three areas: methods of working with clients, knowledge of regional and local labour markets and functioning of the work community.

"This division into three areas is based on the focal points of employment services and on experience gained from national projects," Elisabet Heinonen states.

The Tidal Wave project did not offer the employment offices a ready-made model, but the training was tailored to suit each office. The tailoring took into account development needs identified by means of Excel-based competence surveys. In addition, various barometer, client and statistical codes were utilised as well as EFQM self-assessments.

"The principle applied to development was to focus on the client interface, and work with clients was to be developed where it is actually done. The frame of reference was the learning organisation," Elisabet Heinonen goes on.

Analysis of work processes for developing service models

The training for specific employment offices generally took about a year, and on average it comprised about 10 workdays. Outside experts were used as well as their own.

"We in Labour Administration have strong traditions of in-house training and development, but now and again it is healthy make use of outside experts as well. They are able to ask the right questions and introduce an element of 'wonder'", Elisabet Heinonen believes.

The service models for employment offices were developed by analysing work processes, particularly in the last year of the project, 2004. The timing was good, as a structural reform of labour policy was in progress at the time and employment service centres were being set up.

After the analysis phase, the offices assessed their service model in relation to the development needs that has arisen through learning and group work tasks. When the perception of development needs had become clear, work with the service model was integrated into the everyday routines of both management and staff.

The model, tying together training, development and execution, received excellent feedback from the participants, and the final report states that a decisive factor in terms of successful development of work processes is the extent to which the whole staff of the employment office can participate.

Good feedback on development staff training

The Tidal Wave Project organised training for the development staff of the participating employment offices and Labour and Employment Sections of the TE Centres, and in 2004 a development forum was organised in which about 40 developers took part. The motivation was the fact there had been very little co-operation and networking among development staff. The purpose of the forum was to share experiences gained during the project and compare good practices. Aspects of the training that received good feedback were the possibilities for interaction and learning from others, and benchmarking-type visits to other offices.



“You have to go with the flow”

Tidal Wave was an exceptional ESF project and its evaluation report is also exceptional (**Robert Arnkil** and **Timo Spangar**). Excerpts from the almost poetic foreword to the report:

“...Tidal Wave has been a project that is hard to define and equally hard to evaluate. Both the implementation method and the results have been moving, rolling and flowing all the time.

...We began to be interested in what this rolling motion really means, whether it tells us something important and interesting.

...The Tidal Wave project tells us something interesting about important about the changes that are taking place as we move from the ‘first modern era’, where strict division of labour, hierarchies, clearcut plans and top-down leadership are stressed, to the ‘second modern era’, where the emphasis is on surprising changes, uncertainty and crossing boundaries. In the second modern era a new type of co-operation across boundaries is needed, and this a challenge for leadership, competence and training. The Tidal Wave project has been in the midst of and forms a part of these changes. That is why we can say it ‘rolls’ or ‘flows’. We believe we have to go with the flow.”

“And we have gone with the flow”

Elisabet Heinonen sees it as one of the good experiences of leading the project that she could work together with the staff of employment offices.

“I’d like to do more of this,” she comments.

“If you allow for a little hindsight, I would increase the role and input of the Ministry, and especially of

Project: Hyökyaalto (Tidal Wave)

Duration: 1.1.2002–31.1.2005

Implemented by: Ministry of Labour, Staff Development and International Support Services Unit

the regions and networks. There were only two of us project workers, and we were responsible not only for steering the project but also for its co-ordination, the planning of training programmes and partly also for implementation and financial and administrative matters.

Elements of the Tidal Wave project have been used and evidently will continue to be used in many contexts. Examples include a national development and support project for specific employment offices based on the results and assessment of the project in four TE Centre areas in 2005, the development of competence mapping and the preparation of instructions for competence mapping for labour administration, and a training project for implementing an Employment Programme in 2006.

“I have often wondered how to bring the project to a close. Or can it and should it be closed? I haven’t found the answer yet. The important thing is, however, to avoid development fatigue,” Elisabet Heinonen believes.

Elisabet Heinonen and Jari Kettunen. Final Report on the “Tidal Wave” Project. Labour Administration Publication 352. Ministry of Labour 2005. The Final Report also includes the above-mentioned Evaluation Report.

Promoting business enterprise

Naturpolis attracts returnees to Kuusamo

The aim of the Naturpolis Kuusamo recruitment project was to find people with competencies for jobs where there is a shortage of labour. Around the year 2000, a shortage of qualified workers was noticed in North Ostrobothnia, for example in the high tech, health care and education sectors.

“Even though the region had a high level of unemployment, there was a shortage of highly qualified people. The demand and supply of labour did not match in the way they should,” says **Hannu Tikkanen**, who was in charge of the project. The Naturpolis Kuusamo project gave publicity to the region’s business and informed people about job opportunities. Another objective was to inform companies about competent workforce available in the region. Thus the target groups were both job seekers and enterprises.

Jobs on-line

One of the project’s most important tools was an Internet database that helped employees and employers to find each other. The rekry.kuusamo.fi website posted almost 400 job ads and had almost 200 visitors a day during the project.

“Some of those who found employment were from the region and some came from outside, including returnees. For them in particular the website made it was easier to find jobs in the region. By maintaining the region’s own recruitment website it was possible attract the right kind of highly qualified workforce,” says Tikkanen, pointing out the benefits of the site. The website also provided an important channel of communication.

“Through it we could give publicity to the whole region of Kuusamo. In addition to jobs, the site offered information on services, businesses and recreational opportunities in the area – everything that might be of interest to someone considering moving to the region.”

Hundreds of participants at the main event

Various events were organised in connection with the project, including the RekryRuka Fair in the years 2002 and 2003, as well as other events aimed at returnees.

“The biggest event was a ‘class of the 90s’ re-union for young adults who had completed their basic education in Kuusamo in the 1990s. Many of them had left

their home region and we could now tell them what opportunities Kuusamo has to offer today,” Tikkanen explains.

More than 400 people registered for the big class re-union. A questionnaire was compiled in collaboration with the University of Oulu, asking the young people who had moved away what they thought about Kuusamo now and, among other things, about their possibilities or willingness to return to their home town.

“The respondents thought highly of Kuusamo and were in principle willing to move back to their home region, but they saw the shortage of jobs and lack of opportunities for education as a problem.”

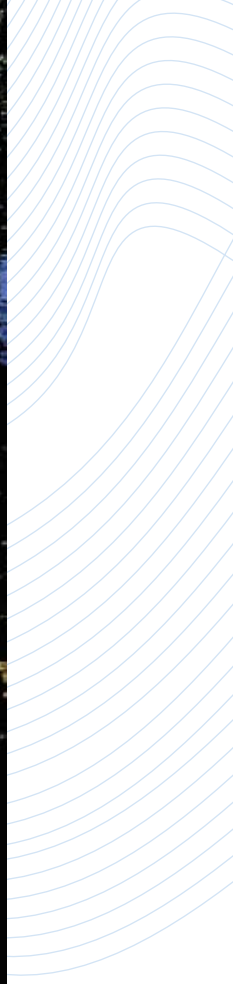
Regional development agency carries on the good work

The co-operation model developed during the project lived on, as companies gradually learned to take advantage of the different opportunities and it became easier to reach the available workforce.

The work is now continuing in the regional development agency, Naturpolis - Nordic Business Center, which is owned by the town of Kuusamo and the municipalities of Posio and Taivalkoski. It offers advisory, recruitment and development services in close co-operation with partners such as Labour Administration.

One of the problems today is the fact that the ‘baby boom’ generation are reaching retirement age. The Next Generation project started in 2006 is aimed at ensuring that there will continue to be competent workforce in the region.

“The project action specifically targets qualified people in their 40s. A head-hunter has been engaged to help companies in the region with recruitment. To support the work of the head-hunter a “competency bank” – an on-line meeting place for employees and employers has been set up,” says Marketing Manager Mia Lampela from Naturpolis.



Project: Naturpolis Kuusamo Rekrytointi -hanke
Duration: 1.5.2000–31.12.2003
Implemented by: Town of Kuusamo, business services
www.naturpolis.fi

“It’s all right here on our doorstep”

Anna Kristiina Lohilahti from Helsinki returned with her family to Kuusamo in 2004. Her former home town seemed to offer good opportunities for both work and recreation. For the price of a terraced house in Helsinki, the family could buy their dream home in Kuusamo.

“At first it was just a dream. We looked at a house on the net, and thought how nice it would be. But when we really started finding out more about it, we noticed that it would really be possible.”

Anna’s husband had his own business in Helsinki, and in Kuusamo there seemed to be possibilities for continuing in business. His building repairs firm now operates in Kuusamo as well as Helsinki, and in addition the family has bought a tanner’s business, Tannery Ay.

“We checked out the local possibilities, for example through business services, and asked where we could buy a good business. Then we found this tannery. The employment office helped us with

recruitment, and now the business employs three workers besides us.”

“After the decision to move had been made, we had to make the arrangements quickly. However, there was plenty of information available and everything went smoothly.”

“Services are excellent, and it’s all here right on your doorstep in Kuusamo!”

Improving well-being at work

Model and indicators for systematic development of well-being at work

The DL-Työinto (Work Motivation) project implemented by the Pori Unit of the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (DIAK West) created a model by which a work community can systematically maintain and develop well-being at work. The underlying idea of the project, implemented in the period 2003–2005, was to encourage staff to participate in development work together with stakeholders.

“We drew up our first strategy, with a strong focus on personnel well-being in 2001. The strategic lines of action included well-being at work, occupational health care and occupational safety and health. In addition we highlighted our values: respect for human dignity and secondly personnel well-being,” says **Aku Keltto**, who heads the Unit, describing the starting points for the project. “The application for ESF projects came at just the right time for us, and another decisive factor for the success of the project was the excellent co-operation we had with the Satakunta TE Centre’s ESF co-ordinators, **Timo Aro** and Maija Saari.

“We were looking for a system for continuous and systematic development of well-being at work. This we achieved, and at the same time we gained indicators for measuring all of this,” Aku Keltto states.

Diak West operates according to a Christian set of values and produces social welfare and health services for different population groups, especially for the needs of the ageing. The Unit also seeks out new groups of people in need, raising awareness of their needs and developing new services.

Different focuses in different years

The DL-Work Motivation project for systematic development of well-being at work had different focuses in different years. In 2003 the main focus was on promoting leadership, in 2004 the main theme was increasing personnel well-being at work, and in 2005 the emphasis was placed on personnel and the immediate work community.

During the project a club called ‘Kokeneiden Klubi’ (Club of the Experienced) was launched. Its idea was to coach employees nearing retirement and keep in touch with those that had already retired. In this context Aku Keltto prefers to talk about respect for work and life experience rather than about the more fashionable ‘tacit knowledge’.

The project was a great opportunity

“The DL-Work Motivation project was a great opportunity for us. An actor on the field of social welfare and health like us can not normally try out as many different methods as we did now,” Aku Keltto points out.

“In addition to training, the methods we tried out during the project included art therapy, work guidance, retreats, themed events, family days and many other kinds of recreational activities.

“Diak West is a fairly big employer here in Pori with 250 employees and 14 units. During the project, even very small things helped to increase the spirit of communality, for example, conversations with colleagues in weight control groups and wearing sweaters with ESF and project logos. The feedback has been good and we will continue along this road. The best practices are still alive and doing well.”

Well being at work now the development group’s responsibility

“We also found the right indicators during the project. We used QPS-Nordic questionnaire as a tool for mapping well-being at work in order to target our methods of maintaining work capacity correctly and to assess the activities. The results were analysed and the personnel were given information both collectively and individually. Feedback was given in the form of collaborative learning.”

After the project the QPS-Nordic questionnaire will be conducted and analysed annually, and a broader survey will be carried out three times a year.

The project generated the Work Motivation model, which can be used by a work community to map the current status of its well-being at work, to utilise development methods and to assess their effectiveness.

Projekt: DL-Työinto (Work Motivation)

Duration: 1.3.2003–31.12.2005

Implemented by: SFoundation of the Diaconal Institute of Pori , now Pori Unit of DIAK West
www.pdl.fi

“The model is based on the theory of double-loop learning, and it functions in a circular fashion. Our check points were in November and May,” Aku Keltto mentions.

“We set up a development group whose responsibility it is to co-ordinate and monitor activities relating to well-being at work. Thanks to the Work Motivation model and the development group, developing well-being at work has become part of our everyday routine. The most important thing is that this work should be continuous and systematic.”

The Diak West development group also involves occupational health care, occupational safety and health staff and personnel representatives. This helps to increase the participation and interaction of personnel and stakeholder groups.

The greatest beneficiary – the client

Aku Keltto analyses the benefits of the DL-Work Motivation Project from the perspectives of personnel, management and clients.

“The project has increased the personnel’s understanding of their own work community, it has helped people working in the 14 different units to get to know one another and has lowered the boundaries between units. People have become more aware of the opportunities to influence their own work and life,” he states.

In assessing the impacts of the project, the personnel felt that it had improved their well-being at work and increased the interest of management in personnel. There was more confidence than before in the management’s ability to look after the organisation’s future.

“There has been development in the identity of immediate superiors. The management climate is more open and interactive than before and internal communication is felt to have improved. Even though the pace of work is increasing all the time in our field too, no significant increase in burnout has been observed.”

Aku Keltto stresses that the greatest beneficiaries of the project have nevertheless been the clients.

“The most important decisions are made when we meet the client. The project has created a good foundation and conditions for personal encounters. The client senses, recognises and certainly also appreciates the fact that the person he or she meets is totally involved.”



Paths to the labour market

Keeping employment in sight throughout studies

“The essential aspect of the Duuniverkko (Job Network) project is to increase the visibility of recruitment in educational institutions,” says Project Manager Marja Kaikkonen from Amiedu.

The model for career and recruitment services developed during the project is being established firstly for the use of Amiedu’s partner enterprises and students at Amiedu, but a work group is considering its expansion for the use of other adult education centres and co-operating parties.

The objective of the Job Network is to speed up the employment of students graduating from professional or vocational studies and those completing labour market training, and also to supply competent personnel to enterprises in the Helsinki metropolitan area suffering from a shortage of labour. About a hundred students have been involved in the project.

Electronic meeting point

“Companies have shown interest in the recruiting services model. Its expansion will go forward with the decision on how an electronic search service is to be financed. Plans are being made during the latter part of 2007,” Marja Kaikkonen states.

The electronic search service is a meeting point intended for students of Amiedu and companies in the Helsinki metropolitan area, which will allow students to find on-the-job learning opportunities and after graduation, jobs. Employers can present their companies and advertise traineeships, on-the-job training and jobs. The search service is being launched by stages in 2007. The feedback from the 30 or so employers who have tested the service has been extremely positive, and students have found it easy to use.

Guidance in job seeking before studies begin

An important idea of the Job Network is that guidance in job seeking is spread over the whole study process.

“Since this object of studying is usually to find a job, this must be kept in sight all the time,” Marja Kaikkonen points out.

“We have tried out job application guidance in different forms and noticed that guidance is best started early, at the exploratory stage, when the person is applying for a study place. At that stage it is a good idea to consider whether the best option for that particular student would be an apprenticeship or whether he or she should gain some experience before the studies begin.”

“Especially for those who have an obstacle to employment, such as age, lacking language skills or work experience, individual guidance gives confidence and job seeking skills.”

Training for workplace counsellors

“During the early years of this long project we worked more with students and in the last few years more with employers. The employers often wanted common ground rules for co-operation with educational institutions.”

Well over a hundred people from about 45 workplaces have taken part in the workplace counsellor training. Together they have discussed and developed themes related to recruitment services.

“More and more companies are asking us for advice as more and more people are retiring. We have stressed a systematic approach of anticipating the situation and we have included the transfer of tacit knowledge in our workplace counsellor training. We have studied mentoring, for example, together with enterprises.”

“What could be a better result than if companies prepare for change and take on people graduating from Amiedu to replace retirees,” Marja Kaikkonen points out.



Project: Duuniverkko – Työelämälähtöinen ura- ja rekrytointipalvelu
(Job Network – a work-oriented career and recruitment service)

Duration: 1.2.2004–31.12.2007

Implemented by: Amiedu

www.amiedu.fi

Straight talk and plain Finnish

Amiedu is a multicultural adult education centre. Annually, of some 15,000 students, ten per cent are immigrants and the number is growing all the time.

“There have been about two hundred students involved in the Job Network project and we haven’t even counted how many of them are immigrants. The employment offices and TE Centre have also advised immigrants about the project,” **Marja Kaikkonen** states.

While building up the Job Network electronic search service, the language needs of immigrants have been kept in mind. A Finnish language teacher from Amiedu participated in the development work.

“At Amiedu we stress the use of plain Finnish to all target groups and in all activities. In practice one way towards plain language is to simplify sentence structures,” says Finnish language teacher **Anni Piikki** from Amiedu.

“Sometimes, however, a bigger threshold than language is getting immigrants accustomed to using electronic services,” she says.

Case 6

Equality and diversity on the labour market and in business

Setting immigrants on the path to enterprise

The project for promoting entrepreneurship among Russian immigrants has given business consultation to some 900 people, created 30 new jobs and led to the foundation of 21 new businesses. The project has served immigrants not only from Russia but also from Estonia, Somalia, Lithuania, Croatia, Serbia and Iran.

“Earlier our business service had many clients whose real needs were not to set up a business but lay elsewhere. The customer service was given in a language that was not their own mother tongue and this hindered and slowed down the process even more. All this was, of course, at the expense of other clients,” says **Alexei Kantanen**, Advisor on Entrepreneurship for the Russian service.

The Finnish and Russian administrative traditions are light years apart from each other. In Finnish society, administrative authorities are basically intended to help citizens, but in Russia the opposite is often felt to be true: if you are contacted by an authority, it is often taken as a sign that you have done something wrong, or at least that something undesirable has happened.

“It’s extremely important that, when an immigrant meets a Finnish authority for the first time, he or she gets a good impression of the system, because otherwise building trust takes too long and the person’s integration into Finnish society takes much longer,” Kantanen points out.

Advisory service builds confidence

According to Kantanen, by far the biggest obstacle to placing Russian and also other immigrants on the labour market is that the integration programmes offered are too similar, and no effort is made to thoroughly investigate what the immigrants’ competencies are and how well they match the needs of the Finnish labour market.

Jouni Mikkola is in charge of training for immigrants. He confirms that many of the problems preventing employment would be solved more quickly if communication were better and if business advisers and instructors had a better understanding of the immigrants’ cultures.

“I consider it really important that there are people involved in training and advising Russian immigrants who understand both Finnish and Rus-

sian culture, and who are able to pass on and interpret information. The role of the adviser for immigrants has been to level out cultural differences and to dispel unnecessary suspicions. This has without exception been my experience of all the courses for immigrants I have run,” says Mikkola, summing up the opinion of local instructors on these courses.

According to Mikkola, the number of immigrant instructors in the region is close to the minimum.

“For example, when advising entrepreneurs starting out in business, the best results are achieved by having sufficient time for each client; success is not measured by the total number of clients,” Mikkola stresses.

Fifty information campaigns, over a thousand participants

Good recipes for promoting the employment of immigrants are information campaigns and training events where entrepreneurship and the employment needs in various sectors are explained, if necessary in the immigrants’ own language, but certainly taking the cultural differences into account.

“In addition to information, the immigrants make new social contacts. In general, more efficient use could be made of ethnic networks, because in these networks word spread fast, for example, about where a new roof worker is needed. In addition, in these events an immigrant who doesn’t speak Finnish, but has the required skills, can find employment with an immigrant entrepreneur who has already adapted to Finnish society. This is to everyone’s advantage: the person concerned is off the unemployed list, pays taxes and becomes fully integrated into society,” Kantanen says.

Progress made by changing attitudes

In the Kotka-Hamina region, immigrants were offered suitable advisory services a few years ago, but they did not reach all immigrants, or they centred only on individual problems, not the whole.

When an immigrant starts up a business, the same rules apply as in any sound business proposition: he or she must have competence in the field in question, a sensible business idea and marketing skills.

“Earlier at least, advisory services for immigrants did not primarily encourage immigrants to become entrepreneurs, even though they might have had the necessary capabilities,” Kantanen says.

“During the past one and a half years, though, the situation has improved greatly in the Kotka-Hamina region. Helped by the TE Centre and Cursor

Oy we have been able to produce advisory services and teaching material in plain Finnish that have managed to dispel cultural reservations and speeded up the process of immigrants becoming entrepreneurs or otherwise entering the labour market.”

“There have been significant changes in the attitudes of immigrants themselves, by encouraging them to go from a wage-earning job into starting their own business or into jobs that better match their training, even if they already had a secure income from wage-earning employment,” Kantanen concludes.

Project: Promoting Entrepreneurship among Russian Immigrants

Duration: 1.9.2004–30.11.2007

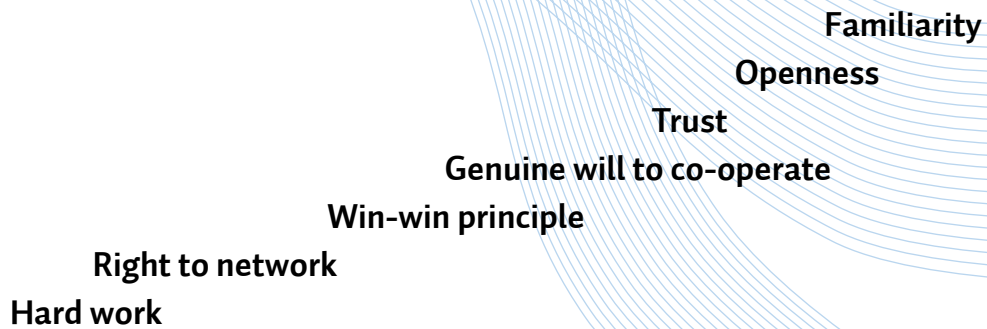
Implemented by: Amiedu

www.cursor.fi



Case 7

Gender equality



Encouragement at grass roots level

The Ilona project promotes entrepreneurship, co-operation and networking among businesswomen, women interested in becoming entrepreneurs, unemployed women and all active women in general. Ilona focuses on working at grass roots level, encouraging women to be active and develop their abilities. The project's main functions are to improve employment and entrepreneurship among women and to establish these activities as part of a women's national resource centre model.

An especially good practice has proved to be practical networking organised with the help of project funding. One of the things necessary for its success was familiarity with the field.

"The actors, organisations, social structures and entrepreneurs were all familiar. By familiarity we mean even personal friendships or acquaintances that have been formed earlier and to some extent also trust," says Project Manager **Vuokko Jaakkola**.

Ilona notebook an essential tool

For a network professional a thick notebook is a very good tool. Jaakkola makes notes on all the people she meets in the same notebook. This makes it easy to go back to past events and meetings.

"My Ilona notebook has been an invaluable help in problems relating to founding and developing businesses," she laughs.

"You have to open your mouth – there's no use sitting quiet at meetings. If you have something to give it's worth giving it. But at the same time, you have to be able to take in information and apply it

to practice. It's hard and creative work," Jaakkola stresses.

Data bank for women entrepreneurs

The project has played an active role in work groups, multisectoral negotiations, steering groups and co-operation meetings, where there it has been possible to tell people about the field of activities, that is the development needs of women and small businesses. Out of the shared experiences and views of different parties a practical databank was developed for women entrepreneurs.

"Setting up a business is no bed of roses. It was an incredible relief to get all the help I needed from one and the same place: where to apply for a business start-up grant, in what order to deal with the different authorities and, of course, where to get encouragement to start up in business," says **Sari Härkönen** (42) enthusiastically. Sari has been running her own relaxation therapy business for a year. She also praises the businesslike, motivated approach of the project.



Project: Pieksämäki Region Women's Networking and Entrepreneurship Development Project

Duration: 1.5.2005–31.12.2007

Implemented by: Town of Pieksämäki

www.pieksamaki.fi/ilona (in Finnish)

Services tailored to needs

A good example of what can be achieved by the strong background work and co-operation of the actors involved in the project is the joint Pieksämäki business coaching calendar. The content of business coaching has also been tailored to match needs. For an active network practitioner, an interview with fifty course participants proved to be valuable fieldwork.

"All those who had applied for business coaching were interviewed in depth, which made it possible to tailor training to needs. We were introduced to the secrets of founding a business, marketing, drawing up a business plan and using information technology," Härkönen comments.

Successful co-operation is in principle very simple, but in practice many pieces of the puzzle have to fit into place. A successful end result can be reached when everyone knows why they are working and what the objective is. It is also important for everyone involved to feel that they are benefiting from the co-operation.

"Open exchange of experiences and knowledge among partners and actors in the field has generated services and products that serve the needs of the field well."

"All this sounds easy but without the elements of the heading – encouragement at grass-roots level – we would have had no chance of success," Jaakkola concludes.

Case 8

Foresight

Regional foresight service to meet a need in Southwest Finland

“Foresight is preparing for the future. In other words, plan ahead, and you won’t be caught unawares.” This is how **Juha Pusila**, project manager of the foresight project run by the Labour and Employment Section of the TE Centre for Southwestern Finland, defines foresight.



Project: Developing a regional research and foresight service

Duration: 1.2.2002–31.12.2007

Implemented by: TE Centre for Southwestern Finland, Labour and Employment Section

www.luotain.fi (in Finnish)

The research and foresight service of Southwest Finland is an expert service set up by the TE Centre and the Regional Council of Southwest Finland in 2002 to analyse and disseminate information on trends in trade and industry and the labour market in the region.

“The foresight service operating within the TE Centre collects, analyses, processes and disseminates information on various sectors of industry to those who need it. The main partners in the project are the Regional Council of Southwest Finland, the employment offices, regional development centres, the City of Turku, educational institutions, the Turku Chamber of Commerce, various professional organisations and enterprises,” Juha Pusila explains.

“Information management, flexible and swift service and a networking approach have been the prerequisites for the project to succeed,” he says.

Electronic service attracts many users

The project began in 2002 and will end in April 2008, but the service model developed during the project will continue after that date.

“Until 2005 our activities mainly involved building up the infrastructure. We collected databases and developed an electronic service for disseminating information as well as building up expert and actor networks. During the past two years we have we have applied our expertise in foresight to the service of regional and local economic, employment and educational policy,” Pusila explains.

The www.luotain.fi service developed during the project and launched in 2005 has been well used and has links to all the most important websites relating to foresight.

Information and interpretation

The Southwest Finland Foresight project outlined clearly what it is and what it is not.

“We do not want to be a statistical centre to replace existing ones. What we offer is up-to-date figures on the principle that we are a public service - but we don't only offer figures. We mainly gather the information ourselves but we also analyse it. We have good expert network to help us with interpreting the figures,” Juha Pusila points out.

“We produce sector- and client-based as well as regional information, covering Southwest Finland with the sub-regions of Turku, Salo, Vakka-Suomi, Loimaa and Turunmaa.

“Of the key sectors in Southwest Finland we monitor the engineering, ICT, food, health care and well-being, construction, logistics and tourist industries, and also business services relating to these sectors.”

Three-step time span

Juha Pusila describes the time span of foresight as a three-step process.

“You have to know the history, so that you can understand how we have arrived at the present situation. Accurate knowledge of the current moment is important, because you have to know what your starting point is. From the point of view of our partners, the future usually means a year or two ahead.

“Behind this foresight into the near future there is of course a vision of what the years beyond will look like in the light of current understanding and knowledge,” Pusila states.

“Thanks to our networking mode of operation we also have access to foresight material produced on different time scales, which we use to assess alternative future development trends in expert groups,” he explains.

Sub-regions taking a more active approach

The expertise of the Southwest Finland research and foresight service is known and recognised in the region.

“We have received praise for having created this service through our own development activities,” Pusila says.

Through the project, cluster-based foresight processes have been started in the sub-regions, with the aim of linking existing foresight information (and methodological expertise) with regional development. Changes in the operating environment of the clusters have been mapped out, regional impacts assessed and the necessary actions worked out in a broad networking co-operation process. The work will continue in 2008.

“I am very happy that the sub-regions have become more active in the area of foresight and that they have resourced their own foresight activities. For example, we have participated in developing Salo's, Loimaa's and Turku's foresight processes. From the feedback received from the sub-regions, the regional foresight service provides crucial support for their own forecasting activities,” Juha Pusila concludes.

Developing employment services

Welcome to the fells of Lapland!

With the dramatic growth of winter tourism in Fell-Lapland, the enterprises in the region have suffered from a continuous shortage of competent workforce. Since no solution was found in the region itself, it was decided to fish in waters farther afield.

Tourism enterprises in Fell-Lapland employ more than 2000 people, well over half of them on a seasonal basis. The tourist industry is characteristically seasonal and this makes recruiting more difficult.

“The idea behind the ‘Workforce Fell-Lapland’ project was to create an opportunity for people in the tourist industry to be employed seasonally, yet all the year round. In winter, there is plenty of work at skiing centres, in summer on ferries, boats and other tourism enterprises in the islands of Southwestern Finland,” says Director of the Fell-Lapland Employment Office, **Heino Vasara**.

From the fells to the islands and back

The aim of the ‘Workforce Fell-Lapland’ project was not only to offer skiing centre employees the possibility of year-round work, but also to attract competent people from the southern growth centres to the north of Finland. As the tourist industry becomes more international, the demands on employees become more stringent in terms of both professional and language skills.

“When we were considering solutions to the labour shortage here, we first of all carried out a detailed survey and thought about where workforce would be available and how to get it. We noticed that most of the seasonal workers came from Turku and Southwest Finland, so we had to go there to sound out the situation,” Vasara explains.

At the same time, Turku was struggling with the same kind of problems. In the island communities, the tourism enterprises were somewhat similar, but workers were only needed in the summer. So the employment offices of Kolari and Kittilä agreed with the Turku employment office on an ‘exchange programme’ for tourist industry workers.

Jobs first on the agenda

Among the most important tasks of the project was to actively disseminate information on the tourist industry vacancies in the Ylläs-Levi area. In this context many events were organised.

“In Turku a mini-fair was held in three autumns. In addition we made about twenty trips to spread the

message in Lapland and Northern Ostrobothnia. At recruitment fairs held in Ylläs and Levi various entrepreneurs presented their operations and gathered employees from all over Finland.”

Part of the project involved further developing a model created by the Kolari employment office for surveying tourist industry workforce. The model enables information to be gathered, e.g. on the employment effect of the tourist industry, and in what kind of jobs and employment relationships people are employed.

“The information will be utilised in drawing up investment plans for the municipalities and creating visions for the future. In addition the information will have great importance for planning the training of workforce.”

From migration loss to gain

According to Heino Vasara results were achieved by co-operation between employment offices.

“The whole project was managed by collaboration between the employment offices. This was done on the level where services were needed and where they were developed,” Vasara explains.

By co-operation between the municipalities, entrepreneurs and Labour Administration it proved possible to resolve issues relating to the availability of workforce and, for example, obstacles preventing people from moving to the area. Special employer panels discussed needs and also ground rules, as well as agreeing on employment contract issues. During the past few years migration loss has turned into migration gain in the municipalities of Kittilä and Kolari.

“The fell resorts attract many young people to work, but also older people wanting to move to the area and those who have been affected by labour market changes. The season has been prolonged to more than half a year, so many of them are looking for a place to live in the region.”

The model created by the project can be applied to any centre where there is seasonal work. The Turku office developed their own ‘Employment Bridge from Turku to the Fells’ project, which continues the work with tourism enterprises in Southwest Finland and Western Lapland.



Project: Tunturin työntekijät (Workforce Fell-Lapland)

Duration: 1.7.2001–31.3.2004

Implemented by: Kolari Employment Office

www.mol.fi/toimistot/tunturi-lappi/ (in Finnish)

Lapland captivated Pirkko and Reijo

Pirkko and **Reijo Kairimo** found their way to the fells in summer 2001. The couple, who have versatile skills in the restaurant business, had wound down their own business and were looking for new challenges. The contact with Levi Center Hullu Poro (Crazy Reindeer) was forged at a recruitment event held in Turku.

“Lapland captivated us years ago. We used to visit here a lot with the children for skiing. As old hands in the restaurant business, we wanted to see what the busy tourist trade in Lapland is really like,” they say.

The decision to go to Levi was made very quickly. As competent professionals they found work right away at restaurant Kammi.

“At first we only intended to stay one winter, but in January the boss said: ‘You’re not going anywhere – just hire a removal van and bring your belongings here,’” Pirkko laughs. And they are still here.

Pirkko and Reijo are seasonal workers at Hullu Poro on a monthly salary. During the winter rush, they do overtime, which goes into a

working hours bank, ensuring that they can have a longer summer holiday.

Lapland-mania has not waned – quite the opposite.

“The quality of life here is quite different. In winter we do downhill skiing and tobogganing, and this autumn a golf course was opened at Levi, where we spend a lot of time in summer. And the work community here is absolutely great. Adding all this together, we certainly don’t want to go back!”

Upcoming programme period 2007–2013

Five lines of action

The ESF programme for Continental Finland in the structural fund period 2007–2013 consists of five lines of action (TL 1–5). The purpose of having these lines is to facilitate the allocation of funding. The lines of action are based on the national structural fund strategy and on the ESF Regulation.

The first line of action is to develop entrepreneurship and enterprises and to improve personnel competence and work organisation. A special objective is to improve the ability of SMEs and of personnel to adapt to the structural changes arising from the global economy and ageing of the workforce. The aim is to ensure that employees stay on at work and that competent workforce is available. Another aim is to promote non-discrimination and gender equality in working life.

The second line of action aims at reducing structural unemployment, especially long-term unemployment and its consequences. However, the line of action also aims at reducing the number of young people dropping out from education and preventing marginalisation. Subsidies will be used to prepare for changes in the age structure of the work force and to ensure the availability of labour.

The objective of the third line of action is to improve the degree to which education corresponds to the needs of the labour market, to facilitate the move from education to working life and to provide competence that is relevant to labour market needs. The main emphasis is on developing various

systems, such as employment service, information, guidance and counselling systems, and on developing new learning models.

The fourth line of action focuses on co-operation between Member States and regions on ESF activities. The main objective is to increase European co-operation on labour, education and economic policy and to promote immigration based on employment possibilities.

The fifth line of action is to provide technical support for activities relating to preparation, administration, monitoring, assessment, information and control. The subsidies will also be used to improve administrative capacity for implementing the ESF Programme.

Jobs to the fore

In addition to the European Social Fund, the state, municipalities and the private sector are involved in financing the programme. The EU's ESF funding amounts to a total of approximately EUR 615 million. In addition some EUR 799 million of national public funding has been reserved for the programme.

ESF Programme funding by line of action (EUR million)

| Lines of action | ESF funding | National public funding | Total | Total percentage of EU-financed funding |
|--|-------------|-------------------------|-------|---|
| 1: Developing work organisations, the workforce in employment and enterprises and increasing entrepreneurship | 194 | 249 | 443 | 44 % |
| 2: Promoting employment and encouraging people to remain at work, preventing marginalisation | 193 | 255 | 448 | 43 % |
| 3: Developing expert, innovation and service systems that promote labour market activities | 167 | 213 | 380 | 44 % |
| 4: Promoting co-operation between Member States and regions on ESF activities | 37 | 49 | 86 | 43 % |
| 5: Technical support | 25 | 32 | 57 | 44 % |
| Total* | 615 | 799 | 1 414 | 44 % |

*) Due to rounding up of figures the sums in the table do not work out evenly. The figures have been indexed.

ESF action started in Finland at the beginning of 1995 with accession to the European Union. By November 2007 over 9,400 ESF projects had been funded in Finland. These projects have offered more than 34 million person workdays of training and other employment and development services. In addition to those who have participated in the project actions, ESF projects involve partners and personnel from the implementing organisations working in the steering groups. ESF funding amounting to some EUR 1.1 billion has been offered in Finland over 12 years. Together with national funding, the resources used have amounted to a total of EUR 5.2 billion, which includes an estimate of the amount of private financing in the projects.

For the new programme period 2007-2013 a total of EUR 1,414 million is reserved for implementing the five lines of action

This publication presents nine ESF projects financed by Labour Administration during the structural fund period 2000-2006.

More information on activities supported by the European Social Fund is available at www.rakennerahastot.fi

Leverage from the EU

2007-2013