

VET Study visit Oulu, Finland, 22 - 24 February 2011

Visit details

1st day morning

Study visit participants:

- Mr Freerk Steendam, Dutch VET expert
- Mr René Stalder, Swiss VET expert
- Ms. Tarja Mänty, Director Luovi
- Ms Laura Vesajoki, European Agency staff member
- Mr Harald Weber, European Agency staff member

Visitor

- Ms Pirjo Koivula, National Board of Education



Tuesday 22nd February

Place:

Kasarmi, Lidovin sali
Address: Tykistökatu 2,
90100 Oulu

10.00 - 10.30

Welcome and introduction to program

Ms. Tarja Mänty, Director
Ms. Mari Kontturi, International Manager

10.30 - 11.30

The Finnish education system

Ms. Pirjo Koivula, Board of Education
(see file **1-finnish education system Pirjo Koivula.pdf**)

Currently, there are about 7000 pupils in about 130 special schools. However, a change towards placing the SEN classes in mainstream schools is going on. 25% of the SEN pupils are fully integrated into mainstream classes, >25% are partly involved in mainstream classes. SEN is considered also a status that is not necessarily permanent; e.g. in early school years about 35% of the pupils have SEN. Teaching is considered (still) a high-valued profession in Finland.

3-step support system:

1. general support (for everyone; remedial service, special teachers, extra groups, psycho-social support)
2. intensified support: different support, if general support is not enough > ILP
3. special support: if intensified support is not enough > IEP

20 000 students with SEN each year of which 4 000 are studying in special colleges (see PowerPoint presentation)

11.30 - 12.00

Introduction to Luovi Vocational College

Ms. Tarja Mänty

(see file **2-luovi in english.pdf**)

Tarja gave an introduction to Luovi (see PowerPoint presentation), which is the biggest one out of seven special VET colleges in Finland, out of 150 VET colleges in total. It was set up in 2007 when 3 colleges merged together and it is owned by the Pulmonary Association, Heli.

12.00 - 13.30

Lunch: Upseerikerho as a learning environment

Ms. Marjo Wallin, teacher and students

Special school for preparatory training.



13.30 - 16.00

From initial education to working life

Visit to preparatory training

Mr. Hannu Koivula, Ms. Marjut Huttunen, Ms. Raija Näppä

(see files **3-support services Raija Näppä.pdf** and

4-VET_Options and Transitions 7.2.2011.pdf and

**5-Quality of Life.pdf and
6-Mun Reitti.pdf)**

Hannu reported on the situation of students who apply to Luovi; per open place Luovi receives 2.6 applications in average. An important basis of their work is networking, e.g. with employers, associations etc. But also international co-operation is important. Per year Luovi sends about 50 students out and receives about 70 students from abroad. They stay for 2-5 weeks. But also about 40 staff members go abroad for a minimum of 1 week each. Furthermore, Luovi implements participative procedures to take staff on towards their vision. They also host VET try-outs/trials in the beginning of studies for students to see if they have chosen the right field. Students can have job coaching from the employer until after 3 months from graduation. Follow-up after 6 months of graduation.



Wednesday 23th February

Place: Nahkatehtaankatu 3, 90100 Oulu
Haapion kabinetti, 3 krs.

09.00 - 10.00

***Luovi's learning environments
Pikku Porstua, Pikku Putiikki***
(see file **7-Pikku Putiikki and Pikku Porstua learning environments.pdf**)

Mrs Tarja Sanila, the training manager with 20 years of experience in managing an enterprise, brings in her good network of companies for the benefit of Luovi. At the location the study team visited, vocational qualification in catering, household and consumer service, IT and business and administration is provided.

In the learning environment "small boutique" (*Pikku Putiikki*) students go through a three year learning path since 2007. In year 1 they learn to be a salesperson for 1-2 days per week. In year 2, they take part in the planning of campaigns, learn to be a purchasing agent and how to select the products. In year 3 they learn how to develop business operations and to do the back office. Some of the products sold are made by the Louvi students.

In the learning environment "Cafe Small Lobby" (*Pikku Porstua*) students learn while having a lot of customers each day. This is a learning environment for students from all vocational studies.

Teaching is mainly based on projects, there are a maximum of 12 students per classroom with one teacher and one assistant.

Many students find their future employment through on-the-job-learning.



10.00 - 12.00

Youth Workshops in Oulu/City of Oulu, Willamiina

Ms. Anneli Koistinen, Head of Services

Ms. Sirpa Alapiessa Planning Officer, Youth Affairs Department
(see file [8-Youth workshop Oulu 23.2.Anneli Koistinen.pdf](#))

The city of Oulu has about 200 youth workers. Youth is considered everybody up to the age of 25 years. The work is not social work, it is *preventive* work, implemented as long-term support to the growth of children and young people. The staff working at Willamiina mostly have a degree from a polytechnic.



In Oulu there are currently 1857 young persons unemployed. But Oulu is a young town with about 47000 people younger than 25. The workshops address young people aged 17-24 years who are registered as job seekers. Oulu has 6 workshops in total as part of their social empowerment services, which also provide information and counseling (outreaching youth work, personal and group guidance, multi-sectoral cooperation). In average they stay for 6

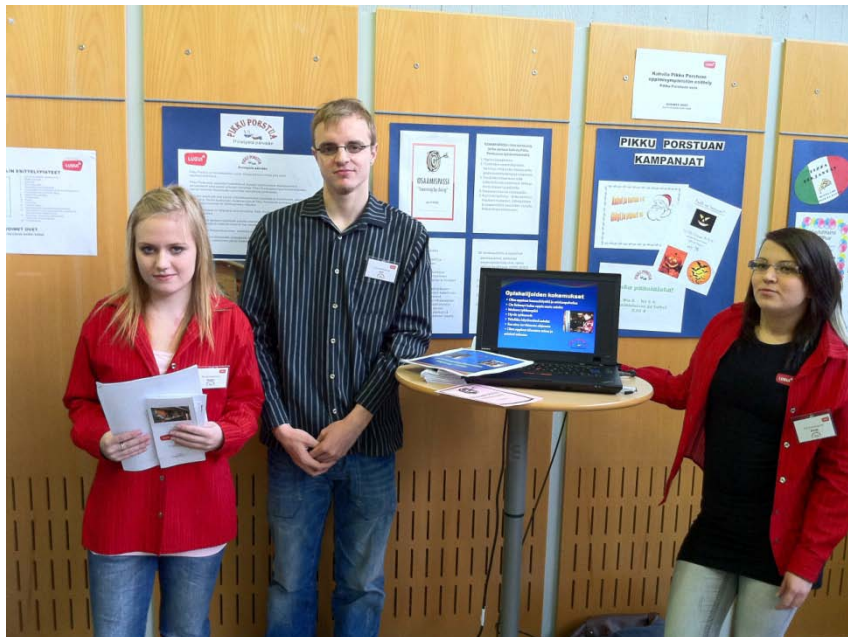
months. Work is mainly a means to achieve plans for their future. During their stay they can practice in an enterprise for short periods, but they can also raise their grades of their comprehensive school time.

The workshop the study team visited has about 60 places for young people, used by 209 persons in 2010. A follow-up showed that 62% of them were either at school or at work within a year after their stay at the workshop. The workshop closely cooperates with local networks, with Luovi and the Oulu vocational college. The workshop period is accepted as a part of the vocational studies. The cooperation with the other institutions is based on the knowledge about their offers and methods, but also on personal links and trust build upon a co-operation since 12 years. Unfortunately, these workshops are not that well recognised in the market sector, although their work is seen qualified.



13.30 – 14.00

Open doors event



14.00 – 14.45

VET SEN partnerships and development

Ms Tarja Mänty, Ms Riina Karvonen, Ms Marjut Huttunen

Marjut reported on a EPR project on quality of life measurement. It is an impact measurement and feedback of services based upon students' feedback. It has 55 questions in total. It measures performance and success of the VET institution and provides the basis for a benchlearning approach.

Riina reported on *Mun Reitti*, a coaching method on empowerment for students' participation and working skills. It is funded by the ESF and the National Board of Education. It develops guidance and counseling methods and tools and will be used as a self-evaluation tool (60 questions). The results are reviewed together with the teacher to decide on methods and exercises.

15.00 - 16.00 **Teacher Training in Finland**
JAMK, University of Applied Sciences
Teacher Education College
Ms. Leena Kaikkonen, R&D Manager
(see files [9-VET_TeacherEducation_in_Finland_23022011_LK.pdf](#) and
[10-Summary_of_research_on_VET_SENteachers_Kaikkonen23022011.pdf](#))

Leena highlighted in her presentation the strong points of Finnish education from her point of view. Equal opportunities is according to her the key factor, there are no dead ends. Teaching aims at teaching for all instead of teaching for SEN. Education builds individual paths for all pupils independent whether they have SEN or not. Also de-centralisation is considered a strong point: schools are obliged to implement school curricula. There is also a history of VET institutions cooperating with the working life.

There are five teacher education colleges in Finland, placed within Universities of Applied Sciences. All together have an intake of 1500 students per year. In two years all of them will also provide further education in SEN. The mean age of teacher students is 40 years.

Competence areas of VET teachers are: facilitating learning; development of an education environment; continuous learning; and cooperation and interaction. The last two points are of growing importance / relevance recently.

Leena provided insights into a survey that asked about 1000 teachers about their current work and also about their future, of which 500 answered.

16.00 - 17.00 **Special needs students at mainstream VET**
Oulu Vocational College
Ms Seija Lehto
(see file [11-Special needs students at mainstream VET.pdf](#))

Seija reported that SEN students can apply to the mainstream college. They are integrated if possible, or placed in special needs groups, or both. Currently, they have about 11% students with SEN. Each class has about 16-18 students. Schools can make the decision that SEN students need 1 or 2 years longer, provided that this is written in the IEP. The IEP can also be cancelled if it is seen not to be needed anymore. Seija highlights that every teacher should have some knowledge of SNE. 22% of SEN students change school or leave altogether. The drop-out rate is fortunately only 3%.