



Young Adults' Skills Programme

Personalised upskilling programme for young adults

FINLAND

Title of the practice (in original language)

Nuorten aikuisten osaamisohjelma NAO

Who is implementing the practice?

Ministry of Education and Culture

Which other organisations are involved in the practice?

- About 60 local VET providers and their local networks.
- Public Employment Services (PES)
- Training workshops/organisations
- Third sector organisations

What are the main objectives of the practice?

To help young adults without an upper secondary qualification to achieve, at least, parts of a vocational qualification, up to a full qualification.

When was the practice implemented?

2013 - 2018

Which groups are targeted by the practice?

Young adults aged 20-29 years without an upper secondary level qualification.

What activities are carried out?

- The creation of a "learning network" with the involvement of VET providers:
 - VET teachers and NAO guidance counsellors working as pairs.
 - Workshops with orientation courses are delivered as part of the programme.
 - Group work activities on specific skills and confidence-building.
 - Involvement of entrepreneurs in certain skills courses.
- VET providers (with their local networks) develop new outreach strategies to encourage young adults to start a NAO course and offer new supportive methods including emphasising self-esteem, orientation courses in studying and skills needed in the workplace.
- The Ministry of Education supported local VET providers in their work, organised 11 national workshops and shared the results and good practices between VET providers.

What were the sources of funding?

EUR 187 million from national funding.
Around EUR 200 000 EU funding (Grundtvig and Erasmus +) for coordination and support.

What were the outputs: people reached and products?

People Reached

- As of September 2017, about 14 100 young adults without qualifications started a NAO course (16 000 target).
- As of September 2017, over 11 800 vocational programme parts were completed (equivalent to units towards a qualification¹).
- As of September 2017, 3 200 full qualifications were obtained (no target set).

Products

- New methods were created to better reach young people without secondary level qualification.
- New methods to support young people in the “crucial point”, at the beginning of their studies.
- New methods to support young people during their studies (cutting the training schemes into smaller parts, extra resources for the individualisation of the studies, focus on language skills for foreign language speakers, focus on peer support between students).
- Changes inside local VET providers include introducing multi-professional teams, teacher / NAO-guidance counsellors working as a pair and supplementary education for the trainers.

What were the outcomes: medium-term results or effects?

- Before taking part in the programme, 80 % of the participants were registered as unemployed (half of these long-term) while the remaining 20 % were in employment. The measure therefore successfully targeted NEETs.
- The Ministry of Education and Culture started two similar skills programmes: the “Strengthening the skills base of adults” programme (“Aikuisten osaamisperustan vahvistaminen” – known also with the nickname “the Skills Programme for the formerly young” – targeting 30-50 year-olds without secondary level qualification, 2015-2016) and the Skills Programme for Immigrants MAO (2017-) using the NAO as model.
- Work done in the Skills programme has also helped shape the new law on vocational education (2018).

What were the lessons learnt and success factors?

Lessons learnt

- To tackle bad experiences from school (e.g. bullying or learning difficulties), it is repeatedly emphasised that NAO is adult education and training carried out by means of work-based, rather than “school-like”, methods. Resources are available for support, guidance and counselling; applying a “business as usual” approach to this type of students increases drop out, according to feedback from VET providers.

Success factors

- The study programmes are personalised, enabling previously obtained knowledge and skills to be identified and recognised. They provide opportunities for young people to identify the right future career direction and for the most appropriate adult education orientation courses to be offered.
- The NAO courses provide exactly the same proficiency and competence-based qualifications as any other comparable study programmes.
- Students themselves have in surveys emphasised that the increased feeling of being a part of society is the most important by-product of NAO courses.

¹ Secondary level qualifications in Finland consist of 5 or 6 different parts.

**What are key source(s)
of information?**

EPALE website: <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/blog/good-practices-young-adults-skills-programme-finland>

Evaluation report: http://www.oph.fi/download/184319_NAO-arvioinnin_loppuraportti_owalgroup.pdf (in Finnish only)

Presentation on the results of the practice: http://www.oph.fi/download/179778_nao_eno_tilannekatsaus.pdf