

## **Old and new approach to fighting unemployment – co-operation**

**Country:** Finland

**Project Name:** “Development”

**Total budget:** 2 898 000 Euro

**ESF support:** 1 282 000 Euro

**Contact:** [ritva.malinen-parkkinen@mol.fi](mailto:ritva.malinen-parkkinen@mol.fi)

Traditional methods of directing the unemployed back to the labour market have not always been successful, both in the case of the long-term unemployed and persons already starting to look for a job. The Juva commune in south-eastern Finland created a new model of supporting the unemployed, based on service networks for clients.

Although the unemployment is relatively low (11%) in the Juva commune, not all persons can be assisted by traditional labour market services. Thanks to the ESF support, a new model of motivating the unemployed to return to active professional life is tested.

“We are working with the long-term unemployed and the youth from rural areas who cannot see an opportunity of finding a job” – says Ritva Malinen-Parkkinen project coordinator in the labour office in Juva. “Our objective is to find a job or to facilitate further education for 500 persons. Some of our clients suffer from diseases, including mental diseases. They need support to restore their self-assessment and become again responsible for their own health and living.”

An individualized network of services for clients forms the basis of the project. This means that assistance is provided by many different organizations depending on individual needs. The partners include social care, local NGO's, health clinics, schools, life-long training centres, employers and labour market institutions. Another innovation is the introduction of professional counselling including not only job finding, but also adaptation in work environment. A counsellor may accompany a client during the first few weeks or months of employment and help him/her to survive the difficult adaptation period.

Since 2000, 290 persons have participated in project, 204 of which enjoyed a full support. Over 70 person, i.e. 35% of the project participants have found a stable employment, ca. 40 persons enjoy subsidized work, further vocational trainings or continues education (22%). 50 persons are still receiving unemployment benefits. 35 persons have not completed the programme offered by the project. “The project, apart from facilitating return to employment, improved the quality of life of the clients. It also helped to improve co-operation between organizations and institutions operating in that region.” says Ms Malinen-Parkkinen.

The second half of the project includes preparation of developed solutions for application in other communes. The programme will be broadened by social entrepreneurship in order to enable employers to receive additional funds for the employment of socially exclude persons.