

Minutes

Meeting : 7th PLA meeting Promoting Adult Learning in Networks (PRALINE)
Date : 22nd and 23rd May 2023
Location : Helsinki

Day 1

Introduction to the Finnish Education System

Saku Lehtinen, Senior Advisor, AMKE

Taitotalo College (A member of AMKE)

- Taitotalo was a merger of two vocational education providers on 1st Jan 2020
- Most students are adults. Unemployment background. Age range?
- Train professionals, qualifications etc.
- Property maintenance and construction – biggest training area. It's rising at the moment. Key sector
- Industry (forestry, energy, technology etc.) Automotive, wellbeing and integration. Career guidance is connected to all services. Over 2050 qualifications last year (1 student per 1 qualification) and over 13,769 partial qualifications (1 student to 1 qualification) in these fields. A lot of students taking short courses, 2,205 (1 student to 1 qualification) Over 23,000 students and 453 staff members last year. Authorised to provide training for 88 vocational qualifications.
- Vocational – 1.5 – 2 years. Level 4 (Level 3 in the UK)
- Further vocational – 1.5 years Level 4 (Level 3 in the UK)
- Specialise – 1.5 Level 5 (Level 4 in the UK)
- Work closely with a range of companies (see PowerPoint in Padlet)
- Education all over Finland. Based on metropolitan area.

AMKE

- Compulsory education has risen from 16 to 18 in 2022
- Half of Uni students have a vocational background (Level 4/5)
- Preparatory education (secondary school? Level 3) Needed before level 4
- New Vocational Education & Training – more competence based, flexibility, customer-oriented and individuality.
- Can pick different modules based on skills need for equal one qualification. More broad-based qualifications (164 instead of 351). Some modules are compulsory, certain amount of credits required.
- Preparatory education – maximum 1 year qualification. (Level 3, UK Level 2)
- Performance based funding – qualifications made. Effectiveness – outcomes of students into employment, destinations.

- 70% core funding (how many students do you have per year) – performance funding 20%, Effectiveness 10%.
- Over 300k students, 70k graduates. Age range (see PowerPoint)
- Lowest child poverty in the world

VET as a solution for unemployment

Annikka Jamisto, Service manager, Omnia

Omnia skills centre for immigrants

Omnia is a vocational training institution.

- OKSE – omnia skills centre
 - Find sustainable solutions for the employment in immigrants
 - Existing services do not provide solutions to all the problems
 - Skills learnt on the job
 - 1 of 80 skills centres in Finland.
- 22% of residents are of immigration background, population of foreign-language speakers at the end of 2022 (16% 2017)
- Espoo is second largest city in Finland
- Immigrant population growing, Finnish population is aging. Skills gap.
- Immigrant integration
- OSKE produces labour market training – basic vocational training.
- Almost 260,000 unemployed people in Finland
- Open vacancies in the job market 30,000. Labour market shortages
- Programme is very localised, challenges with immigrants moving from local areas and getting employment, how does the information get transferred? Similar to UK?
- Immigrants have to learn to adapt to us in UK? Rather than adapting to Immigrants?
- Incentive for employers to engage with colleges and learning. Subsidised costs for employers to take on students.

Session 2: Youngsters and Adults Learning Together

Marika Koski, Lecturer and Matti Isokallio, Director of Education and Training Consortium Sataedu

- 2/3 of students are adults in the Finnish system.
- Continuation of competence development. More than half of VET students are 20-60 years old.
- Students only required to study missing competencies within their studies.
- 4 times per year that you can start your studies. Flexible start dates throughout the year.
- PD competence plan is created in collaboration with teacher/guidance counsellor with student – updated at least once a year.
- Apprenticeships can be used to acquire competencies for vocational skills. Studying at work can cover a degree, module or part of studies.
- Mandatory courses are the same all over Finland.

- Can have optional and local modules/courses.
- Each module can have work-based training, but not always necessary.
- Apprenticeships are similar to UK.
- Training agreements, students don't get paid.
- Training provided to mentor/supervisor to support the student.
- Sataedu Catering example - catering, youngest 16, oldest 59. Diverse groups
 - YP and Adults have different motivations for applying to study. Are adults more focused on learning, time investment into studies? YP life exploration, friendships, natural next step?
 - Personalisation increases group unity and team spirit. Plan studies from start to end, meets needs and wants of group and allows all to get the most out of their education by concentrating on topics they are interested in.
 - 180 points per degree. Can graduate earlier, when last test is done, degree is complete.
 - Study mandatory modules first.
 - Different ways of learning – learning from each other. Role models. Develop life experience.
 - Equal tasks between young people and adults. Development of more experienced students limited due to equality of tasks?
 - Diversity – reflects working life, builds confidence, opportunity to learn from others. Motivation to learn and develop.
 - Benefits of a smaller school – individualised plans, catered to the students, more support from leaning staff, more emphasis on personalised plans.
 - Done this for 5 years.
 - Education in Finland is free, will need to fund living costs. Depending on level (Level 4 and above) may be able to work a couple of days a week with a few days of study.
 - Does amount of money impact ability to teach personalised study plans?

Session 3: Special support and individual learning paths

Minna Sandberg, International Coordinator, Specia, Vocational Special Education Institution

- 250,000 studying vocational courses, 10% SEN
- Specia is the second biggest SEN school in Finland. 6 colleges for SEN Finland with one Swedish speaking college.
- SEN students do most of studies at work. Learn by doing. Have many workshops.
- Influence to government for Vocational Special Education.
- PD plan, learning environment catered to need. Real life learning environments.
- Support for concentration and focusing – develop deep learning skills
- Support in finding employment.
- Provide training to teacher in other schools and act consultancy. Resource and competence centre – have to provide knowledge by law. Supports students when in employment.

- A continuous call for applications
- Can have trials – training experiments etc.
- 700 staff, 196 are teachers.
- Special needs assessments conducted at an earlier date.
- Students may complete one module at a time.

Reflections – day 1

- Presentations were interesting. Format was great, was good to be able to ask questions throughout and learn from others through discussions.
- Breaks offered time to discuss the presentations.
- Padlet works well, adding comments to the PowerPoints and easy to follow presenters.

Day 2

Session 4: Continuous Learning Reform

Saara Ikkelä, Senior Specialist, Ministry of Education and Culture

- Parliamentary group formed to look at reform.
- Continuous learning – referring to education throughout whole life.
- Number 2 in Literacy and Numeracy and number 1 in problem solving – PIAAC
- Biggest gap with low skills compared to those with high skills.
- System encourages participation in formal education with qualifications. Challenges with looking at competencies throughout working life, not always efficient. – report from OECD
- OECD recommendations - diversify education, tailored education programmes etc.
- Labour market changing rapidly, low skilled adults do not meet the requirements for the changing market.
- Upskill people
- Key vision and objectives – see PowerPoint in Padlet. Everyone has knowledge, competence and skills required for employment and meet the demand for the changing labour market. Everyone develops skills throughout working life.
- Implementation –
 - New targeted education and competence services
 - Outreach activities (current research pilot). Analysis of anticipation data, develops guidance.
 - Sustainable growth programme, funded by the resilience fund.
 - Financing and support measures
 - Developing identification of competence. Competence classification.
 - Digitalisation programme – foresight information. Anticipation of working life. Programme will help people understand what competences/skills gaps they are missing and where to go when

guidance services are required. Collaboration between different departments, culture, education etc.

- Increase the openness of higher education. Developing national strategies
- Developing VET qualifications.
- Increased opportunities for unemployed people to study – government proposal from last year. Can study part time
- Income limits for student financial aid has increased including those that work. From 25% 2022 to 50% 2023. Aid is for living costs, means testing, dependant on amount earned whilst studying.
- Challenges in older adults going back to training to support labour market. More work to be done with employers? Culture change?

Session 5: **Work-based Learning**

Keijo Honkonen, Deputy Principal, Taitotalo

- 80% of students at Taitotalo performing work-based learning as apprenticeship training. Paid training opportunity.
- Training agreement – not employed to train. Volunteering time for work based study. More flexible than the apprenticeship as you can do it for 1 day or 4 days e.g.
- Schools pay costs towards apprenticeship, monthly costs 50-300 euros. Will reimburse students for travel costs etc.
- Apprenticeship lasts 2-3 years. Minimum of 25 hours a week with the employee.
- Different paths to achieve the same qualification – no difference on path. Competence based system. Work based and school based?
- Taitotalo has to determine whether the pathway is suitable for higher education.
- Salary is paid by the employer. Under the average salary.
- If good feedback is received, VET provider is rewarded by funding
- Process:
 - Identifying students and company's competence needs
 - Workplace has sufficient learning conditions for providing the training to the student
 - Joint planning of development plan for the student
 - Implementation of workplace training and feedback required.
 - Assessments
 - Workplace training evaluation. Measuring the impact.
- Challenges – online based learning vs work based learning

Reflections – day 2

- Educating the VET education, incorporate learner voice to help shape VET education.
- Big reform, what happens when a new government comes in? How does the Education Provider adapt?