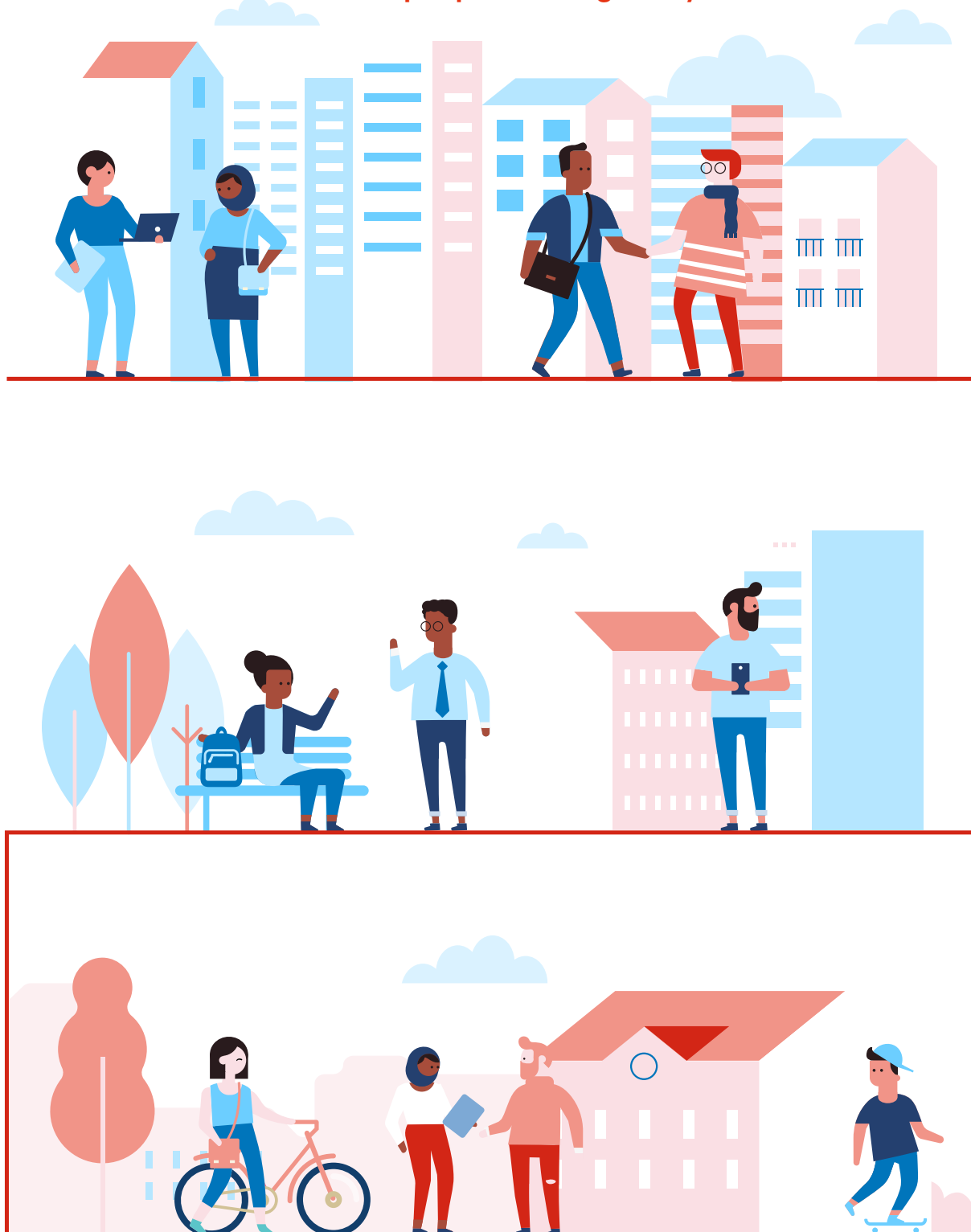


# The trail of involvement for immigrant youth

Handbook for people working with youths



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**Leverage from**  
**the EU**  
**2014–2020**

# The trail of involvement for immigrant youth

Handbook for people working with youths

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# Contents

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<b>1</b>	<b>The trail of involvement for immigrant youth</b>	<b>5</b>
	Background organisation	6
	Key concepts	7
	Description of the target group	9
<b>2</b>	<b>Approach to working with youths who speak foreign languages</b>	<b>11</b>
	The intensity of the working relationship between the youth and the coach will evolve throughout the coaching period	13
<b>3</b>	<b>Dimensions of network work</b>	<b>15</b>
	Networks around the youth	15
	Strength in networks – joint development and action perspective	15
	Prerequisites for successful network cooperation	17
	Cooperation with business	20
<b>4</b>	<b>Cultural interpretation</b>	<b>21</b>
	The youth's role	22
<b>5</b>	<b>Utilising expertise by experience to reach out to youths</b>	<b>23</b>
	I am an immigrant – shared experiences bring people together	23
<b>6</b>	<b>Group activity as an element to promote inclusion</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Verifying the impact of activities for youths who speak foreign languages</b>	<b>29</b>
	Abilitator	31
	Subjective wellbeing and client satisfaction survey	33
	Outcomes Star	34
	Vamos statistics and follow-up data from the ESF personal information system	36
	Interviews	37
	Assessing the impact of the project	41
	References	43
	Appendix	45

## 1.

## The trail of involvement for immigrant youth

**Katri Angeria, Marika Puurtinen**

Work with immigrants is strategically important to the Helsinki Deaconess Institute, and the project entitled “The trail of involvement for immigrant youth” has been a significant tool for development in this work. The project entitled “The trail of involvement for immigrant youth” (ESF 2016–2019) contributes to supporting the social inclusion of population groups experiencing exclusion and disadvantage in Finland. The aim of the project was to develop a form of work for use between different actors where youths with an immigrant background and the highest risk of experiencing exclusion can be reached and provided with the services they need. A further goal of the project was to reinforce social inclusion among youths with an immigrant background and promote their access to education and employment. On a practical level, the project involved work in three localities – Helsinki, Kuopio and Turku – and offered individual and group coaching to youths.

As a result of the project, connections were made with 477 youths with an immigrant background, and their level of social inclusion improved significantly. With the help of comprehensive support, 66 % of the youths became engaged in education, employment or training and rehabilitation measures for education or employment within one year. They also became engaged with other social, health and rehabilitation services intended to strengthen social inclusion and the ability to study or work, accessing these services at the right time in accordance with their needs. The project has resulted in a new form of work that makes it possible to reach out cost-efficiently to youths

who are aged from 12 to 29, have an immigrant background and are in the most difficult position, and to meet their needs in a customer-oriented way.

This manual describes the best practices implemented during the project and makes use of the professional growth of employees. In truth, there were challenges along the way, and the best practices are described in the manual in a way that provides maximum benefit for the reader. Chapter two describes the approach used on the project and the typical customer pathway. Chapter three describes the network-like approach of the working method. The phenomenon of cultural interpretation – a major factor in this project – and practical implementation are described in chapter four. Chapter five describes a new type of job description that developed for the organisation during the project, expertise by experience. Chapter six describes the importance of group activity in strengthening inclusion, and chapter seven substantiates the impact of the project and compares the effectiveness of different methods with the target group.

The book is based on work done at the Helsinki Deaconess Institute, mostly as part of the project entitled “The trail of involvement for immigrant youth”. During the project, a position for a social advisor was created in one of the target cities with the intention of following the project workers’ job description. The aim of this manual is to share information on the best practices found on the project with other parties.

## Background organisation

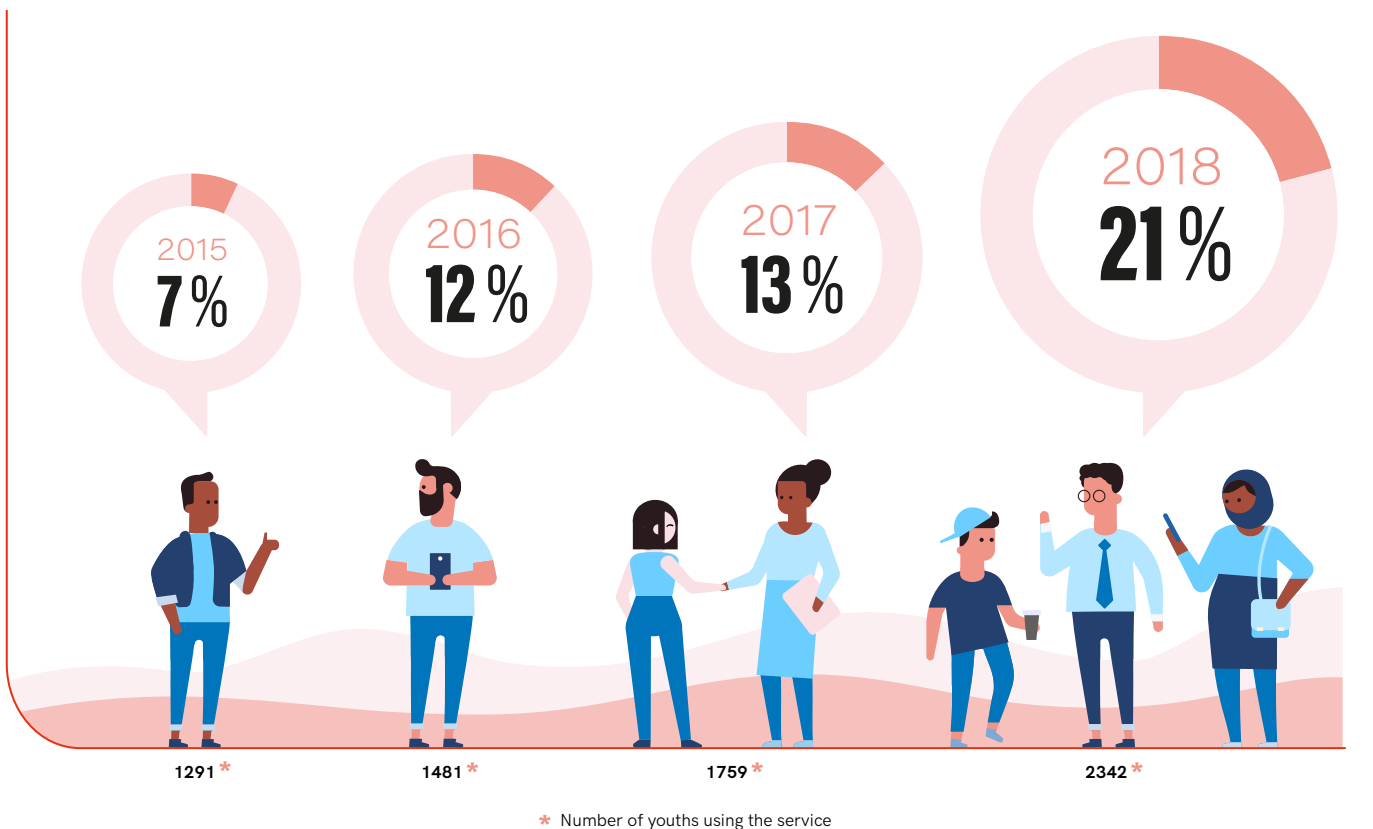
The Helsinki Deaconess Institute Foundation sr is an expert in social problems and a trendsetter in its field. For more than 150 years, it has been involved in creating new solutions to enable people to engage with services and communities instead of being left on the outside.

The Vamos services for youths were introduced in Helsinki in 2008, and there are now related activities run

by approximately 80 employees in eight localities. Vamos has reached out to an estimated 10,000 youths over the last ten years. The proportion of young immigrants using the service is increasing. In principle, the services offered by municipalities and other organisations are integrated into the Vamos activities.

The project was financed by the European Social Fund.

## VAMOS SERVICES 2015-2018 / MOTHER TONGUE NOT FINNISH

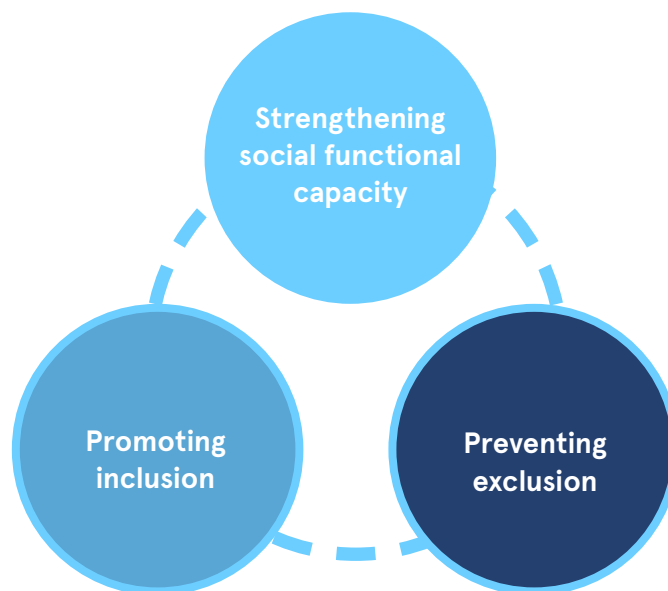


## Key concepts

The project can be considered to cover two key concepts: social rehabilitation and inclusion. Social rehabilitation broadly refers to work to prevent exclusion and boost functional capacity, increase inclusion and support life management (Romakkanniemi et al. 2018). Social rehabilitation can be understood as an investment in the future of individuals, so society also benefits when the use of social benefits and services decreases, and trade and industry receive new workers (Piiirainen 2018).

According to the Social Welfare Act (Sosiaalihuoltolaki 2014/1301), social rehabilitation means enhanced support provided through social work and social counselling in order to strengthen social functional capacity, combat exclusion and promote inclusion.

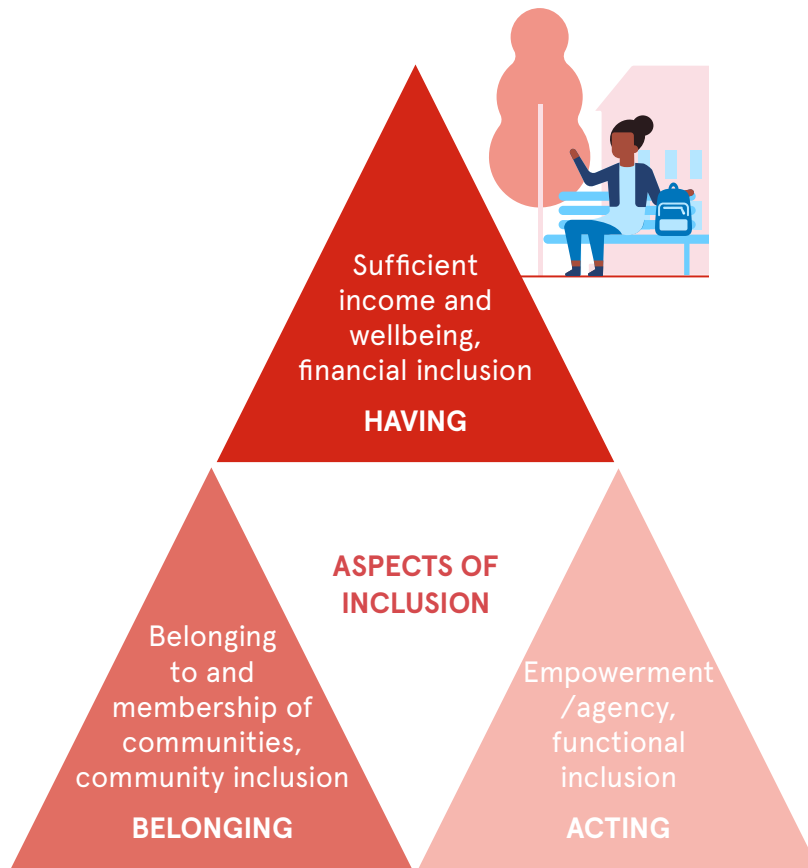
In many ways, the social rehabilitation service remains unstructured, particularly in terms of services to promote employment (Böckerman 2018). Social rehabilitation may include coaching on the performance of everyday functions and life management, group activity and support for social interaction. Social rehabilitation for youths supports the placement of youths in employment, work trials, education, workshops or rehabilitation and prevents them from dropping out of these activities (Ibid.). The foregoing description is suitable for describing the individual and group coaching implemented on the project.



Goals of social rehabilitation

Karjalainen & Raivio (2013, 16) describe inclusion as a system consisting of various areas. Belonging to a community, sufficient income and functional inclusion are widely

recognised prerequisites supporting people's functional capacity and inclusion in society. .



The dimensions of inclusion according to Karjalainen and Raivio (2013, 16)

Good mental health consists of several things, including meaningful activities, good self-esteem and the ability to form satisfying interpersonal relationships. Mental health can be promoted in three ways. One is on the community level, where

the promotion of mental health is related to the individual’s social support and experiences of inclusion. (National Institute for Health and Welfare 2014. i.a. Promoting mental health.)



Levels of mental health promotion and means of strengthening factors that promote mental health (National Institute for Health and Welfare 2014. i.a.)



The studies on inclusion identify five key elements related to inclusion. It is often reflected in diverse participation in various activities: service development and evaluation, recruitment of employees, education, communication or research work. It is the customer's participation in decision-making, which brings with it a feeling of responsibility and control. Inclusion is active participation where the person takes an active role as an agent instead of being a passive recipient of consultation or information. Inclusion must be reflected in the cooperation between service users and professionals, where the customer must be seen as a partner. Services must make use of the information that experts by experience gain from their life experiences – information that is considered a new form of research information alongside the information produced by academic researchers. (Tambuyzer et al. 2011). The project involved promoting inclusion through group activity and working with individuals, through the work approach and expertise by experience.

### **Description of the target group**

The target group in this project were youths with an immigrant background belonging to the local immigrant groups with the highest risk of being left out and remaining excluded from education and working life. In Helsinki and Kuopio, the target group consisted of youths aged from 16 to 29, while in Turku, the ages ranged from 12 to 29. Selections were made according to different age groups with the aim of scaling the models developed on the project in such a way that they could, in principle, be suited to different target groups. The differing age structure also takes into account the differences between various Vamos cities. In practice, the project offered coaching to young immigrants who are both second-generation immigrants and youths who come to Finland with their parents in their youth or alone, without a guardian.

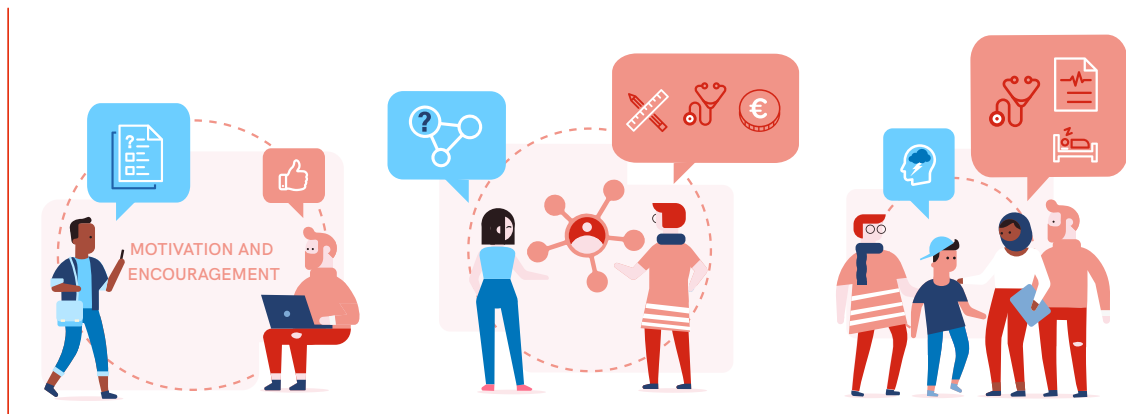
Youths with an immigrant background do not constitute a single, uniform group – there are significant differences between them due to the

diversity of their backgrounds. Young immigrants who were born in Finland or who came to Finland as children are often imagined to have received a good grounding at Finnish daycare centres and schools to enable them to continue studying or begin working. This general perception is often too optimistic. Families may have had traumatic experiences that affect the child's development. The parents may not be able to support their children's school education. The youths themselves often have an unclear picture of their professional competences and professions. They may also have learning difficulties and a lack of motivation.

Youths who came to Finland at an early age have often had traumatic experiences that are not taken into consideration and are rarely treated. Some are also unable to read and write in their mother tongue or have other clear shortcomings in terms of their lifelong learning skills. They may also experience difficulties with perception and learning such that they often do not have enough time before the end of compulsory education to acquire adequate language skills, learning capacities and the skills required for vocational education, such as an overview of various professions. Some youths have had highly traumatic experiences, either in their countries of origin, on the journey to Finland or in Finland. Some youths suffer from various health problems, and it can be difficult for them to manage everyday life. Moving to a foreign country, learning a new language, adapting to a new culture and building a social network in a new environment are very demanding prospects for youths. Among the customers of the project, a particular group of youths emerged for whom the present rehabilitation functions were insufficient and who need clearly more intensive, comprehensive and tangible support in order to integrate into our society. An effort was made to speak to customers in plain Finnish and engage in concrete work together with youths.

The support needed for youths involved in the project has been outlined on three levels. The majority of the youths involved in the project can be identified as belonging to a group requiring a medium level of support.

## THREE LEVELS OF SUPPORT



**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES AND BENEFITS**

**REINFORCING A SENSE OF AGENCY AND INCLUSION**

**THE NETWORK HELPS YOUTHS GET OVER BUMPS IN THE ROAD**

See the stories of the youths involved in the project on the [HDL YouTube channel](#).

## 2.

# Approach to working with youths who speak foreign languages

Hannu Laine, Marika Puurtinen



The Vamos approach, based on outreach youth work, was utilised when working with young immigrants (Alanen & Kotkavuori 2014). The intensive individual and group coaching sessions aimed to guide youths towards employment and education. The coaching was built around each youth's strengths and founded on the youth's needs and was

comprehensive within the limits set by the youth. The coaching involved supporting youths in everyday functions, life management, social relations and engaging them with the services they need.

On average, the youths on the project were involved in coaching for longer than the usual duration of Vamos coaching. In 2018, the average duration of Vamos coaching was eight months. (Vamos statistics 2018). During the coaching period, work was done to build and augment the youth's trust in the service system and society, and support comprehensive life management, which enabled some to become engaged with society, education and the labour market.

Unlike the other Vamos activities, the project involved identifying and meeting key people in each region's cultural communities. This made it possible to reach out to young immigrants who needed support but were not able to seek service for one reason or another.

In terms of the process and work, a few important factors impacting on the effectiveness of the activities can be highlighted. Firstly, it was possible to begin the work when the youth was ready and in a natural location for the youth. One key strength of this approach was the possibility to make contact with youths in other environments; indeed, the employees working on the project often worked outside the Vamos office. As regards youths aged from 12 to 15, the first meeting was often arranged at school. Secondly, the youths always specified which things they needed support for, and the targets and goals of the work were agreed with the coach. There was no limit to the duration of the work – this was determined according to the goals, and it could be adjusted along the way. The work was based on genuine encounters, caring, working together, inclusion of youths, working in networks and an approach centred around the youth. The key aspects of the work were dialogue, inclusion, social reinforcement and solution-orientation.

# CUSTOMER PATHWAY



## The intensity of the working relationship between the youth and the coach will evolve throughout the coaching period

At the beginning of the coaching, the youth is often aware that they are facing challenges and hopes to resolve the situation, but they are unable to resolve it independently. At the beginning of the coaching, there was often an individual challenge for which help was sought. The coach and the youth set out to build a service network for the youth through individual coaching. As trust increased, more turning points arose in the youth's life.

Generally, at the beginning of the coaching, the coach played a significant role in moving things forward. The youth's responsibility for handling their own affairs increased throughout the coaching period, and the goal for the final phase was for the youth to get by without outside help most of the time or, alternatively, to have access to the necessary services and be able to use them independently.

### SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN WORKING WITH YOUTHS WHO SPEAK FOREIGN LANGUAGES

- The employee may have become like a relative or been the only link with society in the new environment. The "village elder" set-up made it challenging to maintain the employee role. It is important to highlight the fact that the coach does not know everything. Some things need to be worked out together.
- The motivation and desire for inclusion were often strong. Progress may be challenged by
  - different perceptions of time between the coach and the youth, the youth's poor local knowledge
  - the youth's challenges in terms of language, reading and writing skills, using an interpreter can weaken trust
  - the youth have a background of trauma and crisis
- The youth's commitment to the coaching can be intermittent, based on need
- Youths often wanted to get straight into paid employment quickly and not through training periods or work trials.
- Youths may have had an unrealistic understanding of matters such as taxation.



## INCLUSION PATHWAY FOR AN INDIVIDUAL YOUTH

R

**EFERRAL** A friend recommended contacting Vamos. The youth sent a message to the coach saying they needed help looking for work.

M

**AKING CONTACT** The first Vamos meeting is agreed. At the meeting, the coach talked about Vamos' activities and the youth was able to talk about the things they needed help with. As regards youths aged from 12 to 15, the first meeting was often held at school.

F

**IRST MEETING** The youth said that they wanted to find work but did not currently have a residence permit. They had come to Finland alone three years earlier and had once received a one-year residence permit. They were now awaiting a new decision. The youth stopped attending upper secondary education in another municipality after a few months of study. After discontinuing their studies, the youth moved to another municipality and was now living with a friend. The youth appeared tired and looked downwards while talking. The parties agreed to start individual coaching and make an appointment with a social worker which they would attend together.

Aims of the coaching: place of study, own home and a job

W

**ORK** The coach and the youth jointly sought a place of study, which would enable the youth to find a home of their own. The youth said that they were interested in becoming a chef. The coach attended a school interview and an apartment viewing with the youth. The youth has a place of study and a home.

Meetings took place once a week on average. The meetings involved going through post that had arrived since the previous meeting, paying bills, handling matters with the authorities and discussing everyday matters, such as cooking, daily routines and hobbies. While talking about something else, the youth said that studying in a foreign language is challenging. In addition to individual coaching, the youth is attending Vamos S2 lessons once a week, receiving help with homework.

After several meetings, the youth began to talk about themselves more. It transpires that they were having trouble sleeping at night and found it difficult to concentrate on things. The youth said that they were depressed, anxious and tired. It was difficult to get up in the morning when they had not slept at night. They also said that they had not been in contact with their parents since leaving their country of origin. Furthermore, the uncertainty surrounding the residence permit was causing anxiety. In light of the new information, the youth and the coach made a joint appointment with a school nurse and psychologist.

Additional goals: finding a party to provide treatment, independently handling matters related to money and the authorities. Building a service network

O

**NWARD PATHWAY** After months of waiting, the youth received some good news: a four-year residence permit.

The youth began handling matters more independently, and the coach's role became smaller. The meetings became less frequent when the youth was in education and attending appointments with the psychologist independently. The youth and the coach terminate the coaching sessions and agree to be in contact at a later date if necessary.

### 3.

## Dimensions of network work

Zahra Abucar, Hannu Laine

### Networks around the youth

Youths with an immigrant background need very diverse and intensive support for everyday life and integration. Many youths experience challenges in handling their day-to-day affairs. The image below shows the various bodies contacted by the youth and the coach during the project.

### Strength in networks – joint development and action perspective

There is no universal definition of network work; instead, there are many descriptive concepts, and these are used in different ways in different contexts. Network work refers to varying forms of cooperation between different actors or the reciprocal investment and utilisation of networks by actors. Network work is also described by the concepts of networking and network cooperation. Cooperation involving many professions, administrative branches and actors describes the structure of networking. (Alanne et al. 2016).

“Network” can also be used to refer to a structure based on social relations of different degrees and different forms of establishment between actors (Veistilä et al. 2011). Networks enable information to be distributed, experiences to be exchanged and expertise to be shared (Romppainen 2007).

Two concepts prevail in network work: trust and commitment. Mutual trust promotes the movement of information within a network and enables shared learning, new perspectives and solution development. Trust is needed in order for partners to commit to shared targets and actions. Trust and commitment are mutually reinforcing. When actors demonstrate trust, it encourages actors to commit (Network management manual 2010).

Network work refers to cooperation between different actors where the activity is open, the actors are free to make decisions and choose their own methods. The cooperation is continuous and success is based on mutual trust between the actors. Networks enable information, experiences and expertise to be shared.



## YOUTH AND COACH INVOLVED IN EVERYTHING

FORMS OF INTERACTION:



INTERNET



PHONE



SERVICE AND CONTACT POINT

### RESIDENCE PERMIT

FINNISH IMMIGRATION SERVICE, POLICE



### INCOME

KELA, SOCIAL SERVICES, TAX OFFICE



### EDUCATION

BEFORE STUDIES BEGIN

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS,  
TE-OFFICES, SERVICE PROVIDERS



### EDUCATION

DURING STUDIES

TEACHING AND GUIDANCE PERSONNEL,  
SCHOOL HEALTH CARE SERVICE



### HOUSING HOME

LANDLORDS, HOUSING ADVICE,  
LOCAL REGISTER OFFICE,  
POSTI



### PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

HEALTH CENTRE, SCHOOLS, CRISIS CENTRE,  
IMMIGRANT OFFICE

#### SERVICES INTEGRATED INTO VAMOS:

NURSE, SEXUAL THERAPIST  
AND HOUSING ADVISOR



### WORK

EMPLOYER, GUIDANCE CENTRE,  
TE-OFFICE



### LEISURE TIME AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

ASSOCIATIONS, PUBLIC SERVICES,  
SERVICE PROVIDERS, VOLUNTEERS,  
FAMILY, FRIENDS



### FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

PBANK, ENFORCEMENT AGENCY,  
LEGAL AID OFFICE, DEBT ADVICE,  
PAYDAY LOAN COMPANIES,  
MENTORS



### OTHER SERVICES

SERVICE PROVIDERS







**Joint development started out with targets and values.**

Joint development on the project created an equal opportunity for different actors to influence and experiment with new methods in an agile way.

## N O T E

- ✓ It is worth getting to know people in person
- ✓ Identifying common interfaces, making the form of cooperation tangible
- ✓ Maintaining interaction, creating a shared framework
- ✓ Agreeing on the roles and responsibilities of different actors: What is expected of each party?
- ✓ Responsibilities for coordinating networks to be agreed internally
- ✓ If there are no common goals, there will be no need for cooperation at this point. However, do not rule out cooperation in the future

## Prerequisites for successful network cooperation

According to studies and literature, the prerequisites for successful network cooperation and a shared goal, target state, attitude and interaction. The basis for goal-oriented cooperation is that the parties involved really know each other. It is important for network members to know, respect and trust each other and know the objectives. A positive attitude, systematic approach, dialogue and the achievement of mutual benefits contribute to successful cooperation. Cooperation is expected to involve sharing information and working closely together, improving the ability to cope with work, mutual trust and doing things together.

*"During the project, we have noticed that creating trust is not a matter of time but a matter of employees having the courage to show their human sides and knowing their own weaknesses and imperfections. Above all, network work is about rolling up your sleeves and getting involved." Employee*

The starting point for operating in networks was to link the coach's work into a larger entity. In order to avoid overlapping work, an analysis of the service offering in every city was prepared at the beginning of the project. If any services were lacking, the parties ran bold joint experiments.

## YOUTH AND COACH INVOLVED IN EVERYTHING

YOUTH'S EXPERIENCE:

### RESIDENCE PERMIT

FINNISH IMMIGRATION SERVICE, POLICE

"A youth had three separate residence permit applications pending, all filled in incorrectly."

### INCOME

KELA, SOCIAL SERVICES, TAX OFFICE

"I have received a decision from Kela. What does this mean?"

### EDUCATION

BEFORE STUDIES BEGIN

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, TE-OFFICES, SERVICE PROVIDERS

"Not everyone is good at school."

### EDUCATION

DURING STUDIES

TEACHING AND GUIDANCE PERSONNEL, SCHOOL HEALTH CARE SERVICE

"Typing is challenging."  
"What is a partial qualification?"

### WORK

EMPLOYER, GUIDANCE CENTRE, TE-OFFICE

"If you don't have a certificate, it is difficult to get a job."

### LEISURE TIME AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

ASSOCIATIONS, PUBLIC SERVICES, SERVICE PROVIDERS, VOLUNTEERS, FAMILY, FRIENDS

"How can I make friends with Finnish people?"

### FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

PBANK, ENFORCEMENT AGENCY, LEGAL AID OFFICE, DEBT ADVICE, PAYDAY LOAN COMPANIES, MENTORS

"How can I pay the bills?"

### OTHER SERVICES

SERVICE PROVIDERS

"I want a driving licence."

### HOUSING HOME

LANDLORDS, HOUSING ADVICE, LOCAL REGISTER OFFICE, POSTI

"It is hard to find a place to live."

### PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

HEALTH CENTRE, SCHOOLS, CRISIS CENTRE, IMMIGRANT OFFICE

#### SERVICES INTEGRATED INTO VAMOS:

NURSE, SEXUAL THERAPIST AND HOUSING ADVISOR

"I am having difficulty sleeping." "How can I get to see a dentist?"  
"What is anxiety?"



## The trail of involvement for immigrant youth, Vamos Turku, the Girls' House, Turku Arts Academy "Are you nervous about the job interview?" Presentation workshop for youths

The workshop was arranged according to the needs and wishes of youths. The youths said that they were anxious about talking and presenting in front of the class. The youths avoid appearing in front of an audience and are absent from lessons, and this has caused difficulties in progressing with their studies. We discussed the potential for cooperation with employees from the Girls' House in Turku. We noticed that the youths at the Girls' House and at Vamos experienced similar challenges when they had to appear in front of an audience. The youths were also nervous about interviews. We invited some students from the Turku Arts Academy to joint the cooperation and train the youths. The students received study credits for this. A further aim was to inspire and motivate the youths to believe in their dreams and actively participate in building their own lives. For this reason, we invited experts to join the training. On the day, they told their own stories and discussed their experiences of appearing in front of an audience and how they overcame their stage fright. We reserved a joint planning time and began planning the content of the workshop and the division of work. The goals of the training were overcoming stage fright, presenting oneself, preparing for job interviews and empowering the youths. The youths received a certificate of attendance for the training.

The training provided the youths with peer support and tips for overcoming stage fright, and they were able to hear about the experiences of seasoned performers.

P R O G R A M M E									
Noon-12:15 pm: Welcome									
12:15-12:30 pm: students from the Turku Arts Academy.									
Initial familiarisation									
Speed-dating: 10 minutes									
Practising introductions									
Speech and body									
Presenting body language									
Functional section									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Job interview: 20 minutes</li> <li>· Presentation of a traditional party: 20 minutes</li> <li>· Debriefing</li> </ul>									
2:00-2:20 pm: Break									
2:20-2:40 pm: Talk by an expert									
2:40-3:00 pm: Talk by an expert									
3:00-3:30 pm: Feedback and closure									

*The Turku Girls' House cooperated with the project entitled "The trail of involvement for immigrant youth" from 2016 to 2019. The cooperation was efficient and mutually beneficial. Events such as presentation workshops for young immigrants and city orienteering were arranged in cooperation.*

*The cooperation was flexible and rewarding, and it lowered the bar for Girls' House attendees to refer people to Vamos' services.*

*Adonika Ellä, Supervisor,  
Turku Girls' House  
[Turun Tyttöjen Talo]*

## Cooperation with business

With the exception of a few cases, the cooperation with employers on the project was mainly centred around the youths, meaning that employers were contacted on the basis of the needs and interests of individual youths. A designated coach is not necessarily considered an advantage in a job application setting, and the coach had no role to play in contacting employers, particularly when the youths requested this. Alternatively, the coach could be involved in the job interview if the youth so wished. There was often intense work and preparation with youths before they began a new job. Topics such as what to bring along on the first day of work and where to get a tax card were covered with the coach. There was close cooperation with the TE administration and the Ohjaamo service. The orientation material was also reviewed with the coach.

On occasions, youths have been subjected to inappropriate working conditions, and it has been necessary for the coach to emphasise their rights as an employee and to describe how things such as illicit earnings can affect pension accrual.

Helsinki Deaconess Institute deployed a customer relationship management (CRM) system in 2018. The tool made it possible to make the coordination and management of employer customer relationships more transparent and more coordinated throughout the entire Group. On future projects, the perspective of the employer customer relationship and the benefits of closer cooperation with businesses will take on a more significant role.



*Young immigrants who skipped the integration period provided by the Southwest Finland employment and economic development office were my customers in cooperation with the project entitled "The trail of involvement for immigrant youth". From the perspective of employment and seeking education, many barriers exist in youths' lives, and it is often impossible to get past these with ordinary TE services.*

*Taking into consideration an entirely new approach and customers' needs in a comprehensive and individual way enabled the effectiveness of our cooperation. Due to this, the youths moved further down the pathway of their lives. It would also have been possible to model the concept we worked with or incorporate it into ordinary methods. In the future, I hope that the target state of representatives of the authorities and third-sector actors will also enable flexible cooperation between different parties in the lives of youths while respecting youths.*

*Marco Mikkola, Expert, Southwest Finland employment and economic development office*

## 4.

# Cultural interpretation

Katri Angeria, Gürhan Bayramoglu, Miia Maaninen

During the project, a new working method was identified as part of the Vamos approach: cultural interpretation. Cultural interpretation may include acting as a conventional language interpreter, but it generally refers to more wide-ranging activities in support of youths and possibly also third parties. In broad terms, the cultural interpreter supports interaction between immigrants and Finnish society (Työväen Sivistysliitto, Cultural interpreter guide 2016). Cultural interpretation involves emotional support for youths, information exchange and service guidance. The coach operating in the role of a cultural interpreter is often responsible for asking additional questions and expanding on concepts and practices. The practices prevalent in Finnish society in areas such as the banking system may differ radically from the practices that youths are used to. (Heino et al. 2014).

*"The youth said that the bank was stealing their money during the night. After investigation, it became apparent that this was a service charge."*  
Employee

Cultural interpretation is a two-way process in which interpretation is provided to a youth and service providers are offered information about the impacts of the youth's culture and, if necessary, the youth's rights are defended. In the future, more attention will be paid to increasing the resilience of the service

system through education and information. Cultural interpretation helps experts in customer service roles to identify differences and increases their understanding of customers from other countries.

*"A youth went to open a bank account. It came to light that they were not issued with online banking credentials when the account was opened. I visited the bank with the youth, and the clerk again refused to issue the banking credentials. Neither the clerk nor the supervisor was able to indicate why the credentials could not be granted and, therefore, the youth received the credentials they needed."* Employee

At best, cultural interpretation promotes the customer's right of self-determination, reduces discrimination and unfairness, and increases respect for and understanding of diversity (Heino et al. 2014). The employees found it important that youths understand that the same rights and obligations apply to them as to the original population.

*"A youth was living in accommodation rented from a private landlord with a sauna, garden and barbecue pit available for all of the residents to use. Although the landlord told the youth that it was permitted to use these things, the youth felt unsure and, in their own words, did not want to upset the neighbours."* Employee

## The youth's role

Several confidential and equal-footed dialogues took place between the project workers and youths to elaborate on cultural differences – in other words, to interpret culture. The youths were tasked with comparing what they heard with their own culture and their family's culture and identifying their own way of becoming part of the new culture and the associated habits without forgetting their own culture. Cultural interpretation was occasionally used with very youths being coached in order to build trust with parents.

*"Parents are not always very familiar with the habits and systems related to school, but they are very demanding, particularly with regard to girls being successful at school. This may cause youths to experience anxiety. Often, the methods for discussing things with parents are inadequate, and the role of parents is very authoritarian."*  
Employee

A culture as experienced by an individual consists of things that are the person's own and familiar things, which everyone internalises as a result of cultural socialisation. This determines what we consider familiar and what individuals approach with caution. Fundamentally, people only have what is theirs and what is familiar. Everything that is other is also unknown and gives rise to an experience of unfamiliarity. In every culture, the individual encounters phenomena and the concepts and meanings attached to them, which give rise to feelings of familiarity or unfamiliarity. (Matinheikki-Kokko 1999.) The purpose of cultural interpretation is to elaborate on the phenomena and habits that feel foreign in this new culture and, at best, to reduce the sensation of unfamiliarity as experienced by the individual.

*"A youth joined the group because the parents knew the group leader in person and the parents had no cause for concern when they made an introductory visit to the group. Generally, the youth went nowhere except school."* Employee

As an individual grows towards a multicultural nature and identity, it is as if they are placed in between their own culture and the foreign culture. It can be understood that growing into a multicultural actor requires the individual to specifically transition into the middle ground between their own and the foreign, the other or the different in order to understand and assess themselves and the other (Ibid.).

A person grows into their culture as a result of a long process of socialisation. Although people living in the same culture socialise into the same cultural framework, the culture nonetheless takes on different forms of expression on the individual level. It is significant that the employees recognised how culture manifests itself in their lives and work and how to articulate this. The work challenges employees to examine and question their attitudes (Haavikko & Bremer 2009), and working with youths also requires special sensitivity. It is important to ensure that the youth understands. A good way of doing this was to ask the youth to repeat the matters that were agreed. When working with youths, efforts were made to create an unhurried atmosphere to enable the youth to bring up the matters weighing on their mind (Alanen & Kotkavuori 2014). One of the conclusions of the project was that personal experience was useful from the point of view of building trust and making progress in the work.

*"I got the feeling that the youth immediately had the courage to say what was going on and ask all sorts of questions – good and bad."* Expert by experience

## 5.

# Utilising expertise by experience to reach out to youths

Rafik Ibrahim, Suldaan Said Ahmed

Cultural expertise and the ability to speak two or more languages are essential features of working as a cultural interpreter. From the outset, the project involved people from different cultural backgrounds. In its final year, the diversity of the project was boosted by recruiting two experts by experience in conjunction with personnel changes. In this context, “expert by experience” refers to people who have strong knowledge and personal experience of the habits and family culture in one or more foreign cultures. Cultural knowledge was considered so significant that any shortfalls in terms of education did not affect the selections. Instead, adequate Finnish language skills and an understanding of the Finnish service system, habits and family culture were the requirements for the job. The introduction of the new job description supports the project’s targets with particular regard to immigrants gaining a stronger understanding of Finnish society, the service system, education and employment. The experts by experience also helped to reach out and bring new youths into the project.

*“For two years, I tried to make contact with two youths, but they would not open up to me. They struck up an immediate connection with the expert by experience and things started to move forward.” Coach*

### **I am an immigrant – shared experiences bring people together**

In the views of the experts by experience on the project, trust between a youth and an employee can be built up more quickly if both parties share common experiences of adapting to a foreign culture and moving to the country. A common language is not an absolute necessity, but it naturally reinforces trust. It is important for employees to be capable of keeping their own integration processes separate and not to project their own experiences on customers.

*“You understand our culture.” Youth*

A unifying cultural background challenges the employee's role as a neutral professional. Employees are often seen as one of very few people – or the only one – who can genuinely be trusted in a new country surrounded by a foreign culture. A close trust relationship challenges employees to set professional boundaries, which is a typical element of the division of roles between the helper and the person receiving help. During the project, the employees built up their professional roles in the eyes of youths in the following ways:

- During the first meeting on the Vamos premises, there was a discussion with a youth about the employee's role in relation to the youth: "I am an employee and this is my workplace."
- No meetings outside of working hours. Turn off the work phone outside of working hours.
- Working with a partner
- Reflection and work supervision within the team
- Private social media accounts
- It is fine to say hello in public!

Leisure time and recuperation are also important parts of the work of experts by experience, just as they are in other roles.

All in all, the benefits of hiring experts by experience were so extensive on this project that the concept will be utilised in increasing amounts in the future. This trend is also supported by the Finnish Youth Research Society's study (2015). None of the experts by experience working on the project had previously been customers of the project. This option will also be developed on future projects.





## 6.

## Group activity as an element to promote inclusion

Ali Meriluoto, Hamda Muhumud, Iiris Savela

The group activities implemented on the project were planned by listening to the needs and wishes of youths. Efforts are made to see youths as independent actors and not the targets of actions. For this reason, the youths were allowed to determine the direction and pace of the work, and they received the support that they felt they needed from the coach. As such, youths had the opportunity to act in different roles – they were able to have an active influence when they had the capabilities for this, and they received

reinforcement in the areas where they still had things to learn (such as language skills). Every youth was able to participate in the activities with the intensity that they considered possible and important in their life circumstances. When the youth's functional capacity, self-esteem and skills were assessed, they had the opportunity to raise the intensity of their involvement and take a greater part in and responsibility for the activities by transitioning to the common development level of participation.



## GROUP ACTIVITY AS AN ELEMENT TO PROMOTE INCLUSION

Low-threshold, voluntary community activity free of charge

### Targets:

- Enhancing inclusion, cultural knowledge, wellbeing and agency
- Responding to the needs of youths and attracting new youths to join the activities
- Strengthening language skills
- Orientation onto education and working pathways
- Can also enable encounters between young immigrants and the original population

### Target group:

Youths participating in coaching and any new youths interested in the activities

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### Description

#### Finnish-as-a-second-language homework group

The youths on the project identified a need for help with their homework and practice speaking Finnish. The exercises were considered challenging to do alone, and the youths pointed out that they do not have anyone to speak Finnish with or to ask for help with the exercises in their free time. The decision was taken to create a group and recruit fluent Finnish-speakers, mainly volunteers from the same age group, to help the youths on the project with their homework. Participation in the group was voluntary for the youths on the project and for the volunteers.

The group met once per week for two to three hours at a time on the Vamos premises. A late afternoon time was selected to enable the youths on the project to participate after school. In addition to getting homework done, the youths spent time together with activities such as board games.

The low threshold for joining the group's activities offered natural encounters between young immigrants and fluent Finnish-speakers. As the volunteers were of the same ages as the youths in the target group, the group addressed the youths' wishes to meet Finnish youths in the same age groups. Overall, the group's activities increased the range of opportunities for youths to learn Finnish and experience inclusion. The group's meetings were occasionally attended by students studying social work and interpreting for everyday service interactions.

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### Events

Vamos and its stakeholders arranged various events during the project and invited youths to take the role of participants and organisers. The youths participated in events including the Kuvassa keskellä (Centre Frame) festival in Helsinki, which strongly highlighted diversity through various forms of artistic expression.

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### Different forms of art and expression, such as a YouTube workshop and yoga

In order to support spontaneous joint activity, it was important to give youths the opportunity to express themselves, their opinions and thoughts in the ways that are characteristic and present in young people's lives. The youths on the project had the opportunity to participate in a YouTube workshop arranged with the TSL union and YouTube star Hassan Mikael. During the workshop, the youths learnt to produce material for YouTube, providing them with an opportunity to make an impact and highlight themes that they found important. YouTube is a modern way of influencing things in local circles and more broadly in society. YouTube provides youths with a new communication channel, enabling them to leave a positive mark on their environments. Participation in the common good is most strongly realised when all of the youths in the weakest positions are given an opportunity to highlight their expertise in such a way that the activities are also noticed outside the reference group. YouTube represents one such opportunity to bring the voice and expertise of youths to the fore.

## Yoga

During the project, the networks and the youths themselves requested sporting activities dedicated to women. It can be difficult to take up a sporting hobby as many sports are open groups that also include men. The cost of hobbies may also be a barrier. The decision was taken to set up a dedicated yoga group for women. Many of the youths participating in the yoga sessions have problems with their backs and want to boost their fitness while spending time together with their friends. Yoga also provides the opportunity to relax and learn stress management methods. Some women also have children at home, so yoga offered them an opportunity to spend some time alone and listen to themselves. The aim was to encourage women to get involved in yoga outside the group.

The yoga class began with the basics so that there would be no barriers to participation. Alternatives for different yoga positions were always offered during the lessons to ensure that everyone could engage in movements of a suitable difficulty level while also learning to listen to their own bodies. All of the yoga activities were also voluntary and, at the start of the lesson, the youths were told and shown a rest position that they could take to relax if it felt difficult to participate in the guided series of movements.

The aim of yoga was to teach the participants to listen to their own bodies and reserves of strength, strike a balance between rest and activity, and strengthen the physical body while maintaining basic fitness. Yoga offered an opportunity for individual exercise in the company of others. The teaching took place in Finnish, so the yoga sessions also helped to boost language skills.

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### **Girl club – a group for girls aged from 12 to 15**

The Girls group was for girls aged from 12 to 15 living in Lauste, Turku, and the surrounding area. The aim of the group was to support the healthy development of the girls and strengthen social skills and self-esteem through group activity. In addition to the pleasure of spending time together, the group aimed to inspire discussion on matters related to the everyday lives of youths and offer a safe group environment. The girls were also offered a healthy snack every time.

When the group was first set up, joint rules were drawn up with the group members. The aim of the rules was to create a permissive and equal atmosphere for the group. The rules were written down, and each participant verifies that they are adhered to. As the group's activities progressed, the girls and occasionally also the coaches reminded others of the common ground rules.

The girls named the group the Girl club. The group met a total of 27 times and there were 5–8 people in attendance on average.

The commitment of the girls was strongly influenced by the fact that one of the coaches had an immigrant background and was already familiar to most of the families. The efficiency of the cooperation between the group and the school was also supported by the school's welfare officer and teachers.

### **Basic IT course for people aged 16–29**

This group was created at the request of youths and to address the need for IT skills in different situations. According to the PIIAC study, first-generation immigrants have particularly poor IT skills. During the course, the youths were able to practise the basics of using computers with guidance. The youths learnt the basics of using computers for word processing, searching for information and interacting with the authorities.

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### **Workshops concentrating on job applications**

The workshops related to job applications highlighted the importance of interaction skills for job applications. Young job applicants are expected to be bold enough to hold a conversation and to bring up their own expertise and capacities.

For example, the need and request for a homework group came from youths themselves. The youths in the yoga group participated in a one-off yoga lesson instructed by a coach and, after the lesson, they asked the teacher to continue the yoga sessions. They also needed a space and venue for sports that were only for women. The special cultural needs and operations were centred around the youths. In the homework group, the youths who had been involved in the work for longer were offered the opportunity to become deputy directors of the homework group. This procedure offered an opportunity to work as an active member of the community and pass expertise on to people who are not yet at the same point in their lives. When a youth is able to share their expertise with others, they may experience a greater feeling of meaningfulness. For example, for youths who are taking their first steps towards learning Finnish, it was encouraging to see that it is possible to learn the language and that it can be beneficial in adapting to a new culture and society.

The aim of the voluntary activities was to provide a forum for the experiences and voices of youths by working together. The youths on the project were often not engaged in services, and they had not necessarily become integrated into society due to a lack of language skills and feelings of inclusion.

The work sought to enable youths to experience inclusion gradually – in their own lives first. This is achieved by progressing the work on the basis of voluntary contributions at the youth's own pace and in accordance with their goals. This made the youths involved in the activities into actors rather than targets of the activities. Youths were assisted in engaging with the services they required and, if necessary, in understanding the intention and objective of the services.

Once a youth had been assigned a dedicated worker, they were offered opportunities to become a part of society by joining the Vamos group activities or other suitable group activities, studying or working. The most important aspect was for the youth to operate as an active agent in their own lives, and the work progressed towards their desired activities.

Inclusion in group activities requires youths to feel that they belong in a meaningful activity or community where they have the opportunity to express their own needs and views. It was important for the youths to feel that the worker trusted them and that they were listened to. This makes youths feel that they are valued and treated as equal and that they have an opportunity to influence matters. Strengthening inclusion is one way of preventing radicalisation and a cycle of social exclusion.



## 7.

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### Verifying the impact of activities for youths who speak foreign languages

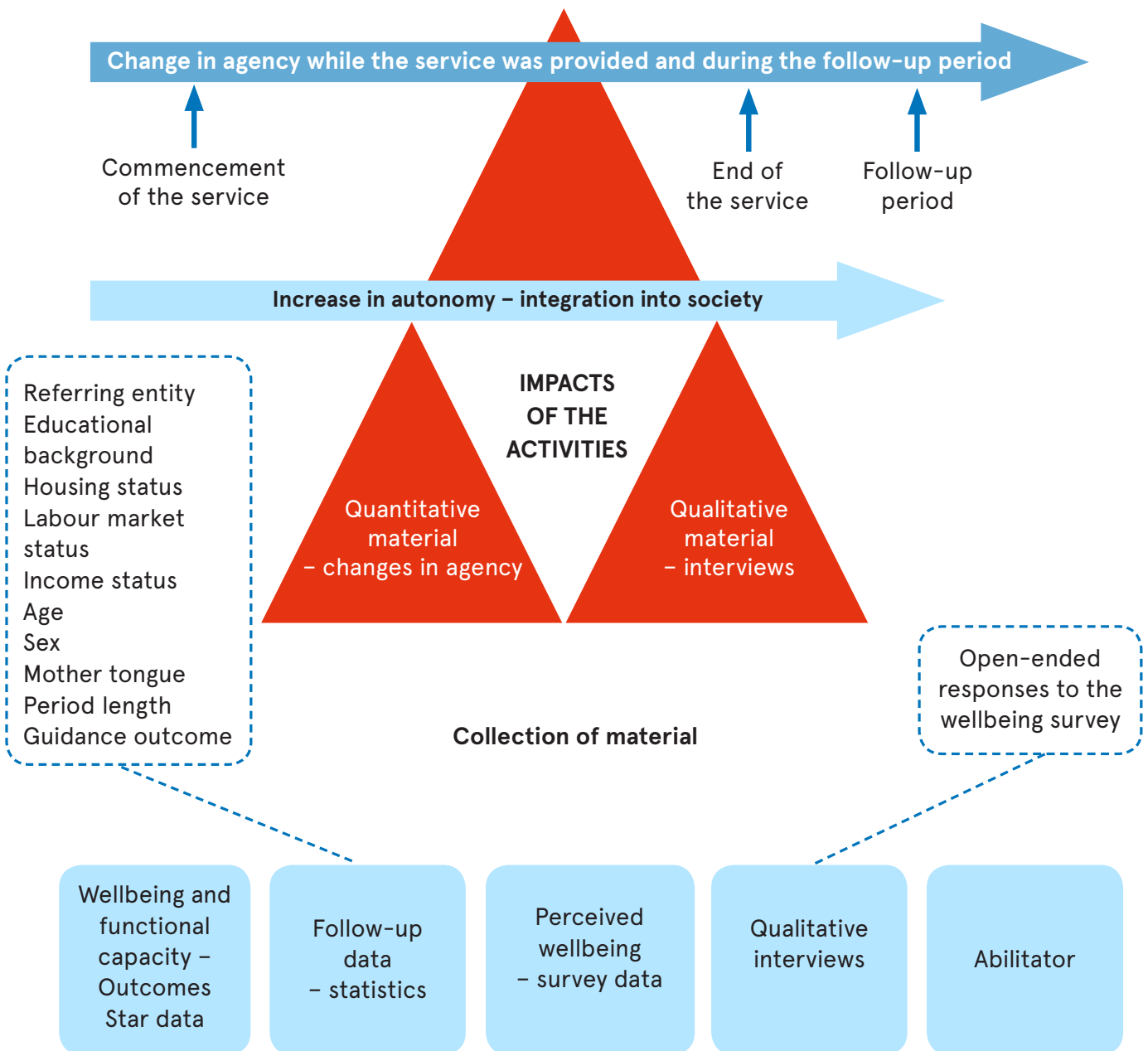
Vesa Sarmia

It is considered challenging to assess the impacts and societal effectiveness of activities directed at young clients with an immigrant background. The significant variation in the background factors affecting the participants makes it challenging to design functional services based on information. Under the project entitled “The trail of involvement for immigrant youth”, Vamos tested various means

of measurement by collecting data on the changes in the subjective wellbeing and functional capacity of the youths, monitoring the transitions of youths onto education and employment pathways, and forecasting the economic impacts of the service. This section presents the tested evaluation methods and analyses their suitability for this field of activity.



IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT ENTITLED  
 "THE TRAIL OF INVOLVEMENT FOR IMMIGRANT YOUTH" 2016-2019



Methods used to evaluate the impacts of the project's activities 2016-2019

## Abilitator

The Abilitator is a method enabling self-assessment of work ability and functional capacity. It is provided to all people of working age free of charge. The Abilitator helps the respondent to determine their own status, key strengths and areas for development. If the evaluation is repeated, the Abilitator also enables changes in working and functional capacity to be examined. It takes the form of a survey completed on paper or online. The abilitator provides an approximate evaluation of the respondent's subjective working and functional capacity, inclusion and wellbeing. If the measurement is repeated, this method also enables changes in working and functional capacity to be examined.

The Abilitator method is developed under the Social Inclusion and Change in Work Ability and Functioning (Solmu) co-ordination project of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, which is funded by the European Social Fund (1 October 2014 – 30 September 2020). The Abilitator development work has been conducted together with the Priority 5 projects funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), which are aimed at members of the working-age population who have a weak position in the labour market.

## Results

In this context, the results of the measurement can be treated as a description of the person's status at the end of the service period, as there is no monitoring information available between the initial and final statuses.

Source: [kykyviisari.fi](http://kykyviisari.fi)

### GROUP DETAILS

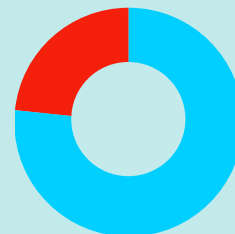
Group size



Average age



Gender distribution



- Men 76 %
- Women 23 %
- Others 0 %

## Results of the wellbeing section

Group average

### B1. Satisfaction with life

21 respondents



### B2. Perceived health

21 respondents



### B3. Perceived functional capacity

21 respondents



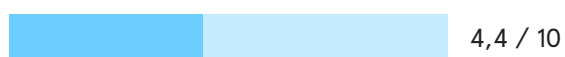
### B4. Perceived working capacity

21 respondents



### B5. Relationship with working life

21 respondents



## Overall status and results for specific sections

Group average

### Overall status

17 respondents



### Inclusion

18 respondents



### Mood

19 respondents



### Everyday life

17 respondents



### Skills

18 respondents



### Body

18 respondents





## Analysis

The Abilitator was tested at the start of the project when the tool was in the initial phase of development. Due to feedback from the project employees and clients, the use of the Abilitator was discontinued as the usability was found to be problematic. When client surveys were conducted (21 people) in the final phase of the project, the experiences were positive among youths and coaches alike. The method was felt to be easy to use, and the fact that different languages were available was considered helpful. However, it was not possible for clients to complete the survey on their own initiative – coaches provided active support in realising the surveys. The use of this method for measuring the changes in wellbeing and assessing the overall status of the target group can be recommended in future processes.

### Subjective wellbeing and client satisfaction survey

Changes in the subjective wellbeing of youths while the service was provided were measured using a survey based on a sociological wellbeing framework. The survey was developed in 2013 in conjunction with a wellbeing study of Vamos youths (Alanen et al. 2014). The results are obtained via a web-based survey supported by the project workers.

Youths respond to the survey anonymously using a computer. The survey contains three sections: background information, experience of the support offered by Vamos (4 structured questions) and experience of the life changes that have occurred (11 structured questions). The first set of questions includes the following: I trust the Vamos employees, and the Vamos employees listen to me. These questions provide information about the relationship between employees and youths and answer an important question in terms of studying the impact: why did the intervention help? The wellbeing survey was completed by 1,025 youths between 2015 and 2018.

## Results

The web-based survey conducted when the service has ended received 25 responses from people receiving coaching on this project. The responses were received between June 2018 and April 2019. Previously, the responses on the project could not be distinguished from the other city-specific Vamos material. Of the respondents, 24 % were women and 76 % were men. The respondents were aged between 19 and 30 years. The majority had received coaching for over six months, while 12 % had been in coaching for less than two months.

The respondents answered questions on a form on the five-step Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree). In the future, grades 4 and 5 are considered positive scores.

The survey was used to evaluate the subjective change in wellbeing, and client feedback was received as follows:

- 86 % would recommend the service to other youths in similar circumstances
- 81 % felt that their life had changed for the better while the service was provided
- 76 % felt that their mental health had improved while the service was provided
- 62 % felt that their physical health had improved while the service was provided
- 74 % felt that their use of time and meaningful activity had improved while the service was provided
- 66 % felt that their relationship with their family had improved while the service was provided
- 66 % felt that their relationship with friends had improved while the service was provided
- 80 % felt that their impression of themselves had changed for the better while the service was provided
- 92 % felt that their ability to use services outside of Vamos had improved while the service was provided
- 76 % believed that their circumstances would be better in the future.

## Analysis

This survey has been used by the Vamos services since 2013. Depending on the year, the web-based survey has received responses from 25–47% of the people who had finished the service, and response data had been collected from 1,025 youths by the end of 2018. The response rate for the project under review was very low, and several reasons can be identified for this. The survey was found to be challenging to complete online without help, and the wording of the questions was too complex for some of the people in coaching. Responding to the survey should have been integrated into the coaching and the survey should have been completed in cooperation with the coach; this would have led to a higher response rate. However, this would have conflicted with the nature of the survey and distorted the results of the feedback sections.

We do not recommend using this survey in its current state for comparable activities.

## Outcomes Star

Vamos introduced Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd.'s Outcomes Star tool for measuring functional capacity and agency at the end of 2017. Vamos uses the Recovery Star version of the Outcomes Star. The Outcomes Star is used to collect data in the following areas: the mental health, physical health, life skills, friends and social networks, work and education, interpersonal relationships, addictive behaviours, homes, identities, self-esteem, trust and aspirations of youths. The grading system is a scale from 1 to 10. Youths fill this in together with their coaches at the start and end of a process of social rehabilitation at Vamos. The results can be analysed by means such as connecting the Outcomes Star wellbeing data with background information about the youths.

Factor analysis can be performed on the Outcomes Star data to identify hidden variables. Cluster analysis can be performed to reveal how youths can be divided into groups depending on their initial state of agency.

Regression analysis can be performed to explain how changes in background variables affect the wellbeing data, and how changes caused by the wellbeing data can affect the youths' guidance outcomes.

## Results

During the project, Outcomes Star evaluations were conducted for 32 participants. The material includes data for the initial and final statuses. The data shows that the overall wellbeing of 25 of the participants (78%) improved during the activities, while it remained the same for four (12%) and decreased for three (10%).

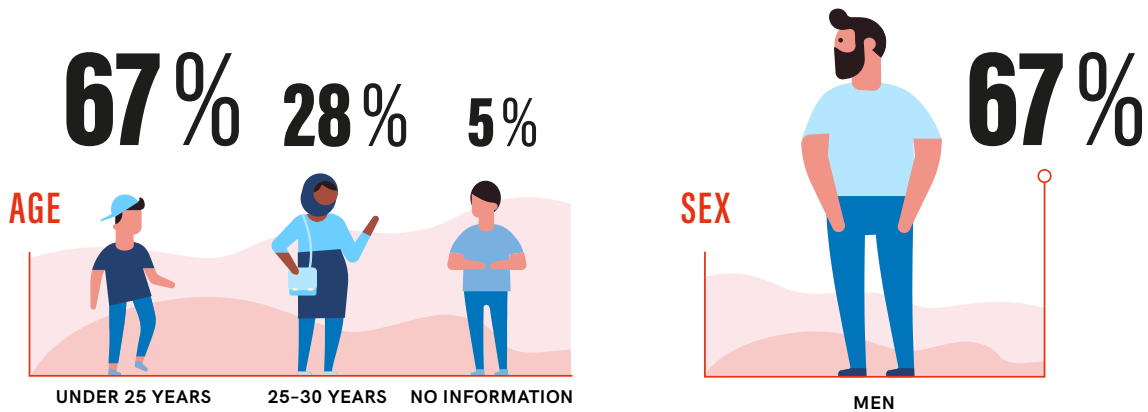
The largest positive changes occurred in domestic affairs (+1.85), friends and social networks (+1.75) and physical health (+1.59). When the data is compared with the corresponding results for Vamos youths, the changes in the foregoing areas are larger than average. The changes related to housing and the home were particularly large. However, the changes in trust and hope were not as large as in the Vamos data overall.

## Analysis

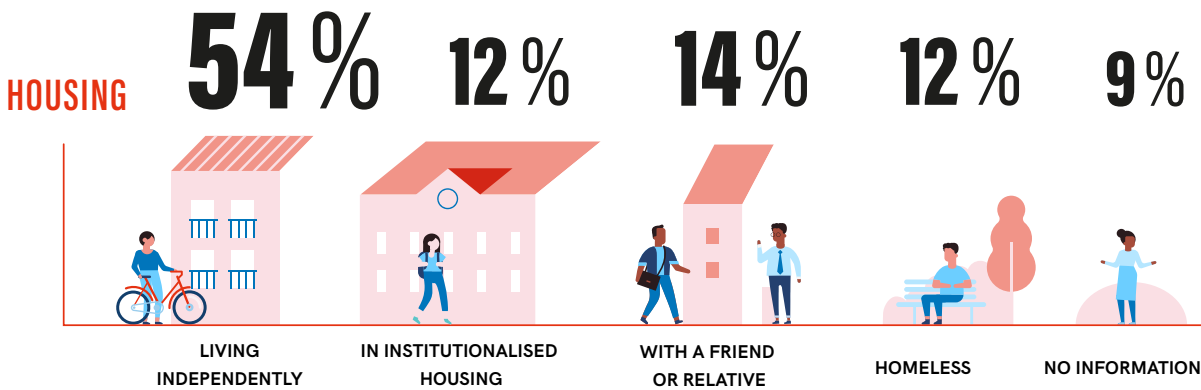
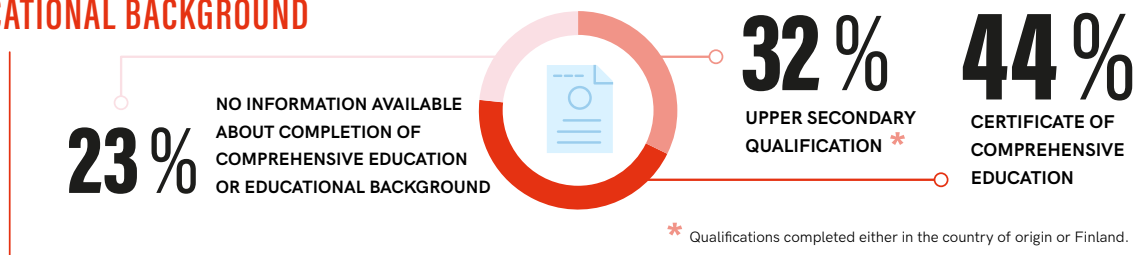
The participants and the coaches did not find the Outcomes Star methodology easy to use. Usage was rendered challenging by the lack of translated versions and the long time required to make an evaluation. For many of the people receiving coaching, the topics were presented in a way that was too complicated, and it was considered difficult to go through the process under the coach's leadership. Conversely, the coaches had different experiences depending on the person in question.

In our interpretation, it is possible to use the Outcomes star methodology for similar activities. However, the personnel must have a more advanced understanding of the use of the methodology in order to use it effectively and make it a worthwhile part of the coaching process and the coach's toolkit. The methodology is unlikely to be suitable for every person receiving coaching, and it is worthwhile using a quicker self-assessment method in plain language in order to measure the wellbeing of certain people.

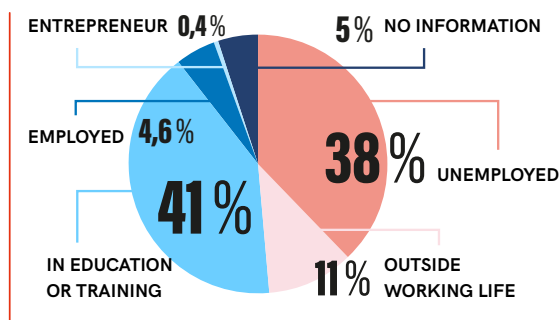
## PROJECT PARTICIPANTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



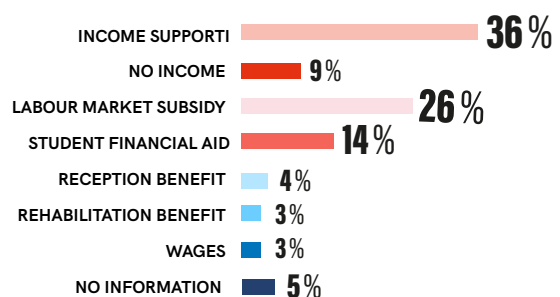
## EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND



## LABOUR MARKET STATUS



## PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME



## Vamos statistics and follow-up data from the ESF personal information system

The final impact is evaluated via the creation of sustainable employment and education pathways, which are directly reflected in the form of inclusion in society and the impacts of income transfers and national income. Changes in income and labour market status are mirrored in the background factors that affect youths and determine the added value provided by the service in relation to population-level forecasts of the development of the status of youths and the cost impacts. The Vamos statistics include data on changes in the following factors: a) age, b) gender, c) length of the coaching period, d) referring entity, e) educational background, f) housing status, g) labour market status, h) primary form of livelihood, and i) guidance outcomes. Data of this type has been collected by Vamos since 2015 for approximately 3,200 youths.

At the end of the project, 426 commencement notifications and 397 termination notifications were saved on the ESF personal system. During the project, follow-up data was entered on the Vamos statistical system for 477 people in coaching. The difference can be explained by the fact that ESF forms were not received from all of the participants, but their data was entered on the Vamos client information system. In this context, the cost and impact calculations are based on Vamos data on changes in client information, which is collected in more detail than on the ESF personal information system.

### Results based on Vamos client information

At the end of the project, follow-up data was saved within the Vamos statistics for 477 clients who had participated in the project. Most of the people involved in the activities were under 25 years of age when they began (67%). Twenty-eight per cent of the people receiving coaching were aged 25–30 and there was no statistical data on the ages of 5% of the participants. The gender distribution was weighted heavily towards men, who accounted for 67% of the participants. In terms of educational background, 23% of the participants had not completed a certificate of comprehensive education or no information was

available on their educational background. Forty-four per cent had completed a certificate of comprehensive education, and 32% had an upper secondary or higher education qualification. The qualifications were completed either in the country of origin or Finland. As a result of the project, a substantial proportion of the people receiving coaching (29%) began a new course of education during the coaching. For the participants who had not completed comprehensive education, commencing studies or engaging with studies was one of the main goals of the coaching.

The labour market statuses of participants when they began using the service were such that 38% were unemployed, and more than half of these people had been unemployed for more than six months. Eleven per cent of the participants were outside working life. At the beginning, 41% were in education or training towards completing comprehensive education or obtaining a qualification or involved in training implemented in the form of courses (such as partial qualifications or preparatory training). As a result of the project activities, the number of unemployed participants decreased by 44% according to the follow-up data, and the proportion of participants outside working life decreased by 43%. Correspondingly, 54 of the youths found employment on the open labour market and 134 youths began studying during the project.

When they began using the service, 54% of the participants lived independently, 12% lived in institutionalised forms of housing (such as reception centres) and 14% lived with close relatives. Twelve per cent of the people in coaching were homeless when they began using the service. The housing status of nine per cent of the participants was not available in the statistical data. A large number of changes occurred in housing statuses. The largest number of changes occurred in the number of people living independently, which increased by 23%. Conversely, the proportion of homeless people decreased by 75% and the proportion in institutionalised housing decreased by 81%.

At the beginning of the service, income support was the primary source of income for 36% of the participants. Nine per cent had no income (no last-resort benefits) and 26% were receiving labour market subsidies. Fourteen per cent of people starting the

service received students' financial aid, 4 % received reception benefit and 3 % received rehabilitation benefit. Salary or wages were the primary source of income for 3 % of the people in coaching. No data was available on the income statuses of five per cent of participants. The main changes in income status occurred when those with no income began receiving benefits, when people on income support began receiving labour market subsidies, and people on other benefits began receiving students' financial aid. Equal proportions of participants on income support and labour market subsidies became employed wage-earners.

In this context, the impact of the project's activities has been evaluated from the perspective of statistical changes in status. The key variables include changes in labour market status and income status while using the service. As a result of the activities, 134 participants became engaged with further forms of education in relation to their initial status. At the beginning of the service, 98 participants were engaged in ongoing studies. At the end of the service, 54 of the people in coaching were employed on the open labour market and 24 participants had been referred to work trials. Fourteen participants were referred to treatment, 45 were referred to other third-sector rehabilitation services and 35 were referred to other Vamos services. Forty-five participants discontinued the service of their own accord. There was no data on the referral status of 28 participants at the end of the service.

## Analysis

In relation to the Vamos client data in general, an exceptionally large number of the people who were coached on the projected were involved in studies or education when the coaching began. This is partly explained by the targeted age group in Turku, where the participants were 12–15 years old. The participants in other localities were also involved in educational processes in uncommonly large numbers. This explains why the guidance outcomes show a large proportion of participants engaged in education. The guidance outcomes for the project identify the number of new starts in education; this figure refers to

the educational processes that participants applied for or began doing during the project and that will lead to a qualification or part of a qualification.

The guidance outcomes for the project reached an exceptionally high level in light of the background circumstances of the target group, as 61% of participants were engaged on employment and education pathways at the end of the project. The societal cost impacts of the guidance are explained in more depth in the section entitled "Assessing the impact of the project".

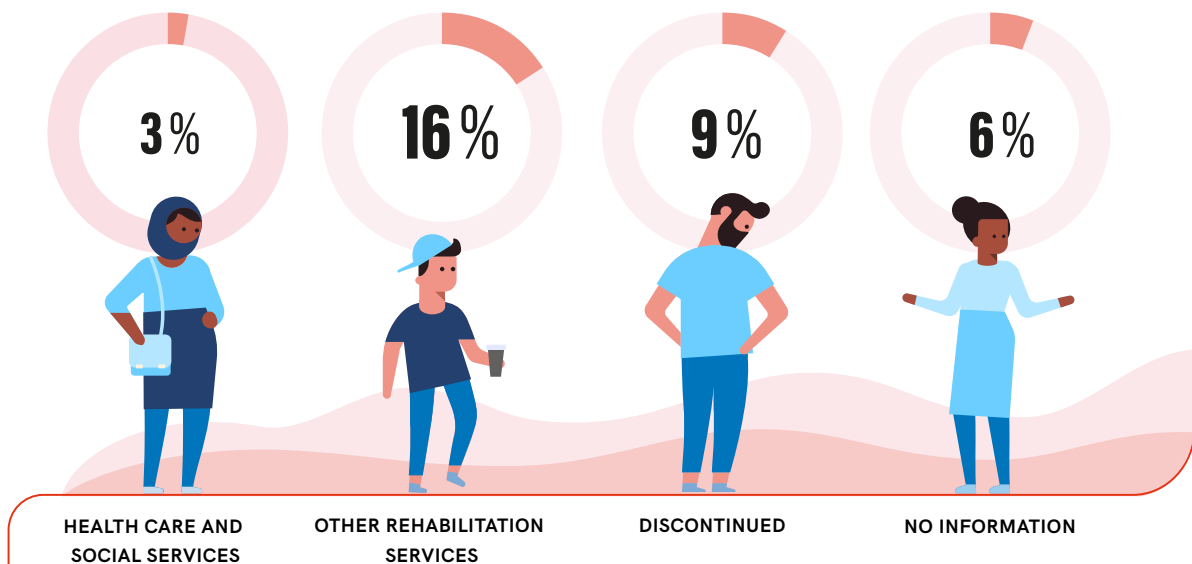
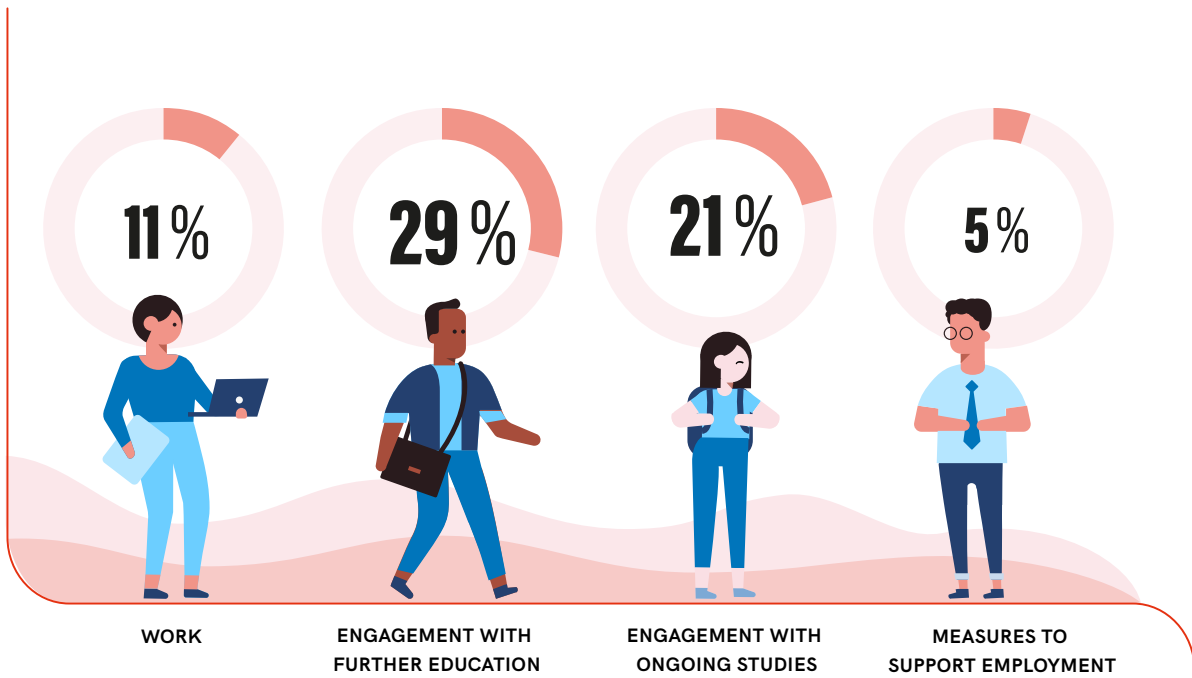
## Interviews

In the final phase of the project in 2019, qualitative interviews were conducted with 15 youths in the target group involved in the project in three localities. The purpose of the interviews was to more broadly analyse the clients' experiences of the impact of the activities on their lives and inclusion in society.

Three (20%) of the interviewees were women and 12 (80%) were men, which represents the gender distribution among participants in the project as a whole. The interviewees were aged between 19 and 32 at the time of the interviews, and the average age was 24. Ten of the interviewees held certificates of completed comprehensive education in Finland, and two had completed further vocational education. Three of the interviewees had not been through comprehensive education, but one of them had completed university-level education and one had completed a qualification corresponding to comprehensive education in the country of origin. One of the interviewees was involved in comprehensive education at the time of interview.

The interviews were conducted by the project coaches based on a common interview outline, which included the following themes and highlighted the changes in the individual's circumstances for the following themes: 1) Subjective benefit of the coaching, 2) Life changes, 3) Finding meaningful activity, 4) Social relations and loneliness, 5) Trust in other people, 6) Financial status and housing, 7) Health status, 8) Relationship with family and close relatives, 9) Use of services and experience in obtaining help from the authorities, 10) Plans for the future, 11) Trust in one's opportunities and faith in the future.

## GUIDANCE OUTCOMES 2016-2019



IN ACTIVE WORK 2016-2019

**477**

PEOPLE WHO COMPLETED THE SERVICE

**477**

CUMULATIVE IMPACT OVER FIVE YEARS EUR **12.5 MILLION**  
 FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS IN THE PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES EUR **1.3 MILLION**

**1) Subjective benefit of the coaching:** all 15 respondents said that they had benefitted from the coaching. Eleven respondents said they had received a lot of help in the form of comprehensive support in many different aspects of life during the coaching. Four respondents felt that they had received more limited help. Their coaching had focused on 1–3 different aspects of life and the duration of the coaching period was shorter. The responses highlighted tangible changes in everyday life, such as a change in housing status, support when dealing with the authorities, financial matters, applying for education and an overall increase in wellbeing. Five respondents said that the discussions with the coach were particularly beneficial, enabling them to make wide-ranging progress in questions that they found challenging in life.

Looking at the data for the respondents who felt they had benefitted a lot from the coaching, it was possible to identify a correlation with increased trust in other people and the surrounding society (9/11). Furthermore, their use of other social services was facilitated, and they felt they received greater support from them than before. A third common denominator was a subjective positive change in health status during the coaching.

When they began the coaching, four respondents were in very challenging life circumstances, such as homelessness, challenging financial positions, loneliness and challenges in staying healthy. The impact of the service and the changes in their life circumstances was greatest for these people.

**2) Life changes:** the interviewees felt that their own capabilities to survive in society had improved during the coaching. They spoke about their life changes mostly in terms of practical changes, which mainly concerned starting education, getting a home, employment, the ability to handle their own affairs in Finnish society, and themes related to health and healthy lifestyle choices. Four respondents found familiarisation with Finnish culture to be a significant

factor, as well as interaction, including in group coaching as part of the project.

**3) Finding meaningful activity:** nine interviewees said that the coaching had helped them to find meaningful activity for their lives. The changes concerned matters such as new hobbies, finding employment, attending job interviews, starting education, completing driving school, completing swimming school, engaging with Vamos group activities, making food together, and engaging with Finnish language lessons.

Of the six respondents who did not experience any change in terms of finding meaningful activity, two did not comment on the question and four had attended group coaching but did not feel that they were engaged with this form of coaching.

**4) Social relations and loneliness:** the responses for strengthening social relations and finding friends showed a strong correlation with finding meaningful activity. New social contacts were formed in working life, studies and Vamos group coaching. The social relations formed during coaching had also moved beyond coaching, and three of the respondents said they had met new contacts in their free time. Seven respondents did not experience any change in social relations and finding friends during the coaching period.

Seven of the 15 respondents had experienced loneliness during the coaching. They did not feel able to engage with social networks, and all but two of the respondents had a distant relationship with their families for various reasons. Finding meaningful activity was not significantly correlated with a change in subjective loneliness.

Two respondents said that their relationship with the coach had become a significant factor in mitigating feelings of loneliness. They would have liked the opportunity for closer contact with the coach; for example, during the weekends and in the evening.



**5) Trust in other people:** ten respondents felt that their trust in other people had grown stronger during the coaching. The respondents' subjective trust was particularly focused on their circle of acquaintances and their Vamos coach. Trust was strengthened in many ways, particularly through discussions between the coach and the participant and in situations in which it was possible to support the respondent in promoting tangible life changes. The youths have received tools for meeting others and thereby building relationships of trust.

**6) Financial status and housing:** seven respondents felt that their financial positions had improved during the coaching period. Their circumstances had improved in terms of clarifying debts, obtaining employment, improved financial literacy and changes in consumption habits. During the coaching, three of the respondents gained access to social security that they were entitled to use.

The housing status of seven respondents improved during the coaching period. Changes occurred in the following areas: a) getting a home of one's own, b) moving out of a reception centre and into independent housing, c) getting a new home, d) surviving eviction and getting a new home, e) moving to a larger home. The housing status of eight of the respondents did not change. The difficulty of getting a place to live and the speed of the process varied depending on the locality. It was considered most challenging to get a home in Greater Helsinki.

**7) Health status:** six respondents felt that their health statuses had not changed during the coaching period. Eight felt that their health had changed for the better and one respondent felt that their health had changed for the worse. The positive changes concerned matters such as changes in nutrition and amount of sleep, accessing psychologist's services, increased rates of exercise in everyday life and receiving support to access health services.

**8) Relationship with family and close relatives:** twelve of the respondents felt that their relationships

with family and close relatives had not changed during the coaching period. The majority of participants had their families living abroad. The two respondents who had experienced positive changes had a family member living in the same locality. One of them experienced an improved relationship with close relatives when changes took place in their housing status thanks to the project's activities.

**9) Use of services and experience in obtaining help from the authorities:** twelve of the respondents stated that their use of other services had increased during the coaching period. The services that participants were referred to included social work, the Guidance Centre, TE offices, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela), banking services, student services, health services, postal services, online services, housing services, the Finnish Immigration Service, the police and driving school services. In addition, participants practised applying for support with debt collection agencies and invoicing services, and support included in social security. Three of the respondents saw no change in their use of services during the coaching period.

During the period, the clients on the project ended up using 1–9 public or private services with support. On average, clients were referred to 2.6 services with support. There was considerable variation in the participants' experiences with public services. Nine clients felt neutral about the use of public services, three had negative experiences three had positive experiences. The clients with neutral experiences felt that they had mainly received the help they needed from bodies such as TE offices and Kela. Some of the respondents felt that the support had been partial or short-term. The respondents with negative experiences felt that social work had been unable to help them. Although an appointment had been made, the necessary help was not found to be available. The respondents who gave a negative evaluation in terms of receiving help also felt that they had not received support from Kela or the TE office.



**10) Plans for the future:** *The answers given by all of the interviewees were weighted toward starting education and employment.* Eight respondents said that they planned to move on to further education in the future. Six of them specified upper secondary education as their education pathway, and two planned to enter upper secondary school and obtain a university degree. The respondents said that factors such as children entering municipal day care would enable them to study. Two respondents had already been admitted to an educational establishment and they were aiming to graduate. Four respondents had chosen a specialisation and planned to apply for education.

Seven respondents were specifically aiming for employment. Two of them said that they had already been admitted to an upper secondary educational establishment. Two were aiming for a work trial or traineeship to enable them to demonstrate their competences to an employer. One respondent was seeking part-time work in order to finance his/her studies.

**11) Trust in one's opportunities and faith in the future:** eleven respondents said that their trust in their own opportunities had improved during the coaching period. The interviewees said that they no longer give up as easily as they did before, their motivation and belief in themselves had increased, their ability to find more complex means of problem-solving had improved, and their positivity had increased. Four of the respondents had not noticed any change in trust in their own opportunities (2) or were unable to answer the question (2).

Thirteen respondents felt positive about the future. The positive indications mentioned by the respondents were stronger hobby activities, progress in school affairs, a better financial position, improvements in mental wellbeing and improvements in social relations.

## Analysis

All of the interviewees had benefited from the coaching to some extent. Seventy-three per cent of the respondents felt they had received a lot of help with a wide range of matters, as demonstrated by their satisfaction with the coaching. The respondents who felt they had received help in limited areas did not feel that they had benefitted from the coaching to such a great extent. The perceived benefit was strongly linked to the strengthening of trust in society. Two-thirds of the respondents said that their trust in other people had become stronger during the coaching. The participants who felt they benefitted most from the coaching were the ones who began using the service when their life circumstances were difficult. They also experienced the greatest positive changes. The responses emphasise tangible life changes.

The interview material shows that one of the keyways the service impacted on participants was by strengthening their ability to use the social services they need. Indeed, service integration on an individual level is an essential element of the Vamos coaching, but it is highlighted in this project. Twenty per cent of the respondents had positive experiences with public services, 60 % were neutral and 20 % had negative experiences.

Faith in the future was generally high among the interviewees. The data showed that their plans for the future were strongly oriented toward employment and education.

## Assessing the impact of the project

Vamos has worked with partners to build a forecasting model to describe societal impact. Engagement with education and a working career leads to an estimated net tax benefit of EUR 100,000 throughout the 40-year working career of one young person.

The transitions that occurred on the project (see Section 4, Vamos statistics and follow-up data from the ESF personal information system) will generate a total annual impact of EUR 2.5 million on public finances over the first five years. The cumulative effects over five years will exceed EUR 12.5 million. In total, the calculations indicate societal impacts of approximately EUR 230,000 per client throughout the 40-year working career of one young person who becomes engaged with education and a working career. The financial investments in the project activities during the operating period were EUR 1,275,269. According to the Vamos model for analysing societal cost impacts, the project activities

will return ten times the amount of money invested in the activities over the following five years.

The calculations take into consideration transitions to a higher level of education in relation to the status at the beginning of the service. In terms of employment, the transition to the open labour market has been taken into consideration. The calculation of cost impacts takes into consideration the annual reduction (16%) in the impact of the service, the level of employment among immigrants and the difference in comparison with population-level statistical data on employment, as well as the impact of other services on changes in the client's circumstances.



1

Systematically measure follow-up data more accurately than required for ESF follow-up data

2

Take into consideration the analysis of changes in wellbeing in the measurements so that the data on changes in wellbeing can be linked to status changes and other follow-up data

3

Select methods by taking into consideration ease of use and the prerequisites for using methods when the user has weak Finnish language skills

4

Collect qualitative information on clients' experiences alongside numerical data

5

Strive to build a follow-up system that also enables the impacts of activities to be monitored during the follow-up period after the project or activity

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## APPENDIX

The interview questions were themed as follows:

### A. Background information

- a. Sex
- b. Age
- c. Educational background
- d. Which Vamos location did you go to for coaching

### B. Changes in your life during the coaching

- a. How did the Vamos coaching benefit you?
- b. How did your life change during the coaching?
- c. What types of activity did you discover during the coaching?
- d. Have you found friends? If so, how did this happen?
- e. Did you feel lonely during the coaching? How has the situation changed?
- f. Do you trust other people? How did the situation change during the coaching?
- g. How did your financial status change during the coaching?
- h. How did your housing status change during the coaching?
- i. How did your health status change during the coaching?
- j. How did your relationship with your family and close relatives change during the coaching?

### C. Relationship to the service system

- a. Which types of services did you learn to use during the coaching?
- b. Which types of help have you received from the authorities? Have you received help when you needed it?

### D. The future

- a. What are your plans for the next year in terms of education or work?
- b. Did your belief in your own future opportunities change during the coaching?
- c. What do you think will happen in your life in the next year?

