

Free from Learning Difficulties (2007–2010)

Aim of the project

Firstly, the project aims to look into the learning difficulties prisoners and customers of the Probation Service have and to construct rehabilitation paths from the term of punishment to freedom. The second aim is to direct the attention of both the target persons as well as authorities and organisations to these problems. And finally, the project aims to improve the target persons' understanding of their own learning difficulties.

Target group

- Young inmates of the District Prison of Southern Finland, especially in the Kerava Prison and Helsinki Open Prison.
- The 15- to 29-year-old customers of the Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa District Offices of the Probation Service.
- Referral to rehabilitation for persons diagnosed with learning difficulties, who are motivated to accept support measures and who will be released by January 2010.

Implementation method

The project workers will offer the prisoners and customers of the Probation Service information about learning difficulties, both individually and in groups. The aim is to reach those who need support in learning. Tools used include a form for initial analysis, quick dyslexia test and perception channel test, dyslexia screen, dyslexia test and discussions. The workers also inform family members of those participating in the project and the staff of the cooperation partners about learning difficulties and how to face them.

A support service plan is created for prisoners and customers of the Probation Service, identified through information provided and search activities, who are motivated to work out their problems. The plan makes a deeper analysis of their type of learning difficulty and the need for rehabilitation. The plan focuses on post-punishment measures.

The workers also act in a professional support role for the released customer. They assist in carrying out the support service plan, and offer conversational therapy and hands-on tutoring, if required.

Project organisation

The project, administered by the Probation Foundation, is part of a more extensive learning difficulty project financed by the Slot Machine Association. The main organisation partners are the Rehabilitation Foundation, the Finnish Diverse Learners' Association and the Association of Diverse Learners in the Helsinki Region (Hero). The project employs a project manager, who works on the premises of Hero.

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