

## Identifying learning difficulties among young immigrants

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Helsinki Deaconess Institute

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### Helsinki Deaconess Institute, Finland

Helsinki Deaconess Institute is a foundation of public utility 140 years old, it produces social and public healthcare services, and it offers educational programmes in these fields.

The Deaconess Institute is an ethically responsible entity, whose expertise has enabled it to evolve into a significant producer of welfare services in the metropolitan area.

Responding to the needs of special groups is evident in both its production of services and educational offering. Specialist expertise is available in areas such as detoxification and treatment of drug addicts, child protection, work with the elderly and housing services.

As a rule, development of and experimentation with new action models and work methods are implemented in connection with diaconia and diaconia-related education.

## Project introduction

- The objective of the project is to prevent young immigrants from being alienated from the Finnish education and training system and society.
- The project develops concrete methods for identifying and defining learning difficulties, and for setting up need-based rehabilitation and educational paths.
- The project is being implemented with the assistance of Raha-automaattiyhdistys (Finland's Slot Machine Association, acronym RAY).



## Young immigrants in the project

- Age 13 – 25
- From different language backgrounds: 22 mother tongues
- First generation immigrants:
  - some have lived in Finland for a few years
  - some have been many years in the Finnish education system
- Second generation immigrants:
  - have been in Finnish educational institutions from kindergarten and preschool
- On different stages of the educational system, also school drop outs



## Young immigrants in the Finnish education system

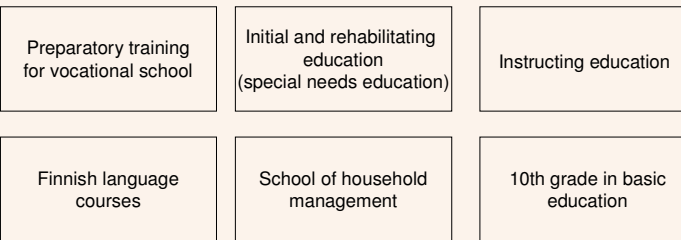
WORKING LIFE

POLYTECHNICS

UNIVERSITIES

VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

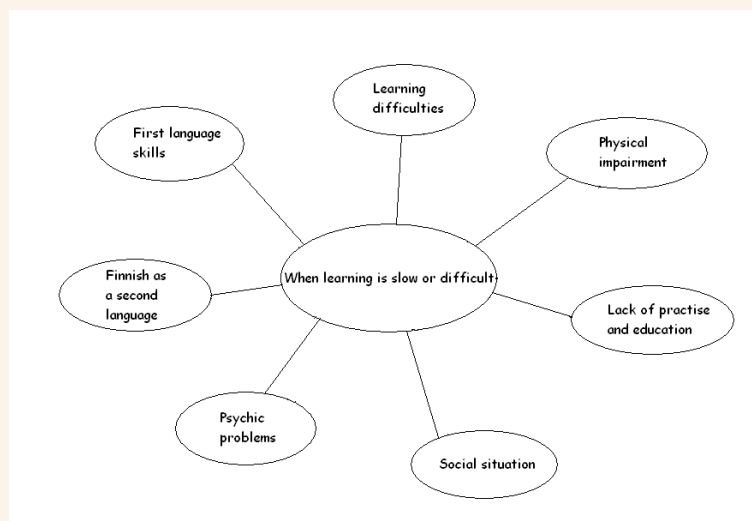
UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL



BASIC EDUCATION (9 years): preparatory teaching, national core curriculum



## When learning is slow or difficult



## Dynamic approach to assessment

- We work with young people in their own environments: school, home, hobbies etc.
- We do not focus on scholarly skills only, but also on skills needed in everyday life.
- Co-operation with families, friends, teachers, social workers, health care professionals and other networks is essential.
- The assessment is offered by our multiprofessional team:
  - Special needs teacher
  - Psychologist
  - Occupational therapist.



## Dynamic approach to assessment

- Support is offered from the beginning of the assessment process:
  - Plans are made together with the student, families and the teachers.
  - Support doesn't focus only on scholarly skills but also on skills needed in everyday life.
- Planning school pathways: guidance and counselling
- Guidance in the use of services:
  - to find suitable services
  - to support and to maintain clency
  - diagnosis when it is necessary: neurologist, phoniatician
  - rehabilitation, social services, mental health services etc.

