Employment Policy of People with Disabilities in Finland

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Introduction

• The Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) was established by the European Commission in 2008 to provide scientific support and advice for its disability policy Unit. In particular, the activities of the Network will support the future development of the EU Disability Action Plan and practical implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

• This presentation has been prepared as input for the Thematic report on the implementation of EU Employment Strategy in European countries with reference to equality for disabled people.

• The purpose of this report (Terms of Reference) is to review national implementation of the European Employment Strategy from a disability equality perspective, and to provide the Commission with useful evidence in support of disability policy mainstreaming.
Statistical Data (2009)

• There are reported to be 43,534 disabled people in the public labour market. Their impairments are:
  – physical disabilities (35 %)
  – mental health disorders (23 %)
  – respiratory diseases (10 %)
  – others (32 %)

• These percentages are estimates (Vates-säätiö 2009).
## Statistical Data (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONS in SUBSIDISED EMPLOYMENT</th>
<th>7/2009</th>
<th>7/2008</th>
<th>Change in number of persons</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment with the State</td>
<td>1461</td>
<td>1470</td>
<td>-9</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment with municipalities</td>
<td>6817</td>
<td>7596</td>
<td>-779</td>
<td>-10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment in the private sector</td>
<td>24290</td>
<td>26206</td>
<td>-1916</td>
<td>-7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour market training</td>
<td>21329</td>
<td>20026</td>
<td>1303</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainee work with labour market support/coaching for work</td>
<td>8289</td>
<td>7604</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In job alternation places</td>
<td>6298</td>
<td>7952</td>
<td>-1654</td>
<td>-20.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
New policy changes

• The long-term process of developing intermediate labour markets is a contemporary policy issue of the Comprehensive Reform of Social Protection (Sata)-Committee (Vogt 2009).

• The Act on Disability Services includes a personal assistance as a subjective right. It extends assistance to work places too.
Research Findings

- Only 15-20% of disabled people have a paid job compared with a rate for the whole population of about 70%. This situation has been very stable for many years. Disabled peoples’ gross incomes are 2/3 lower than that for the whole population. In 2005, 22% of disabled people lived in poverty. (Parrukoski, Sanna & Karjalainen, Jouko: Tietoja vammaisten työllisyydestä ja toimeentulosta. Helsinki: Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos, 2009. [Knowledge on employment and livelihood of disabled people] http://www.koyhyyskirjoitukset.org/alustuksia/20092/Tilastoja%20vammaisten%20k%F6yhyydest%E4.doc)
Research Findings

Research Findings

• The report suggests companionship policy programmes, social policy reforms to identify risks i.e. to pre-empt risks, different kinds of contracts of employment and consideration of a conventional contract of employment as not a norm. A new policy of taxation, deeper social risk analysis, strengthening adult education and life-long learning, better connections between rehabilitation activities and the realities of working life, more multidisciplinary research and follow-up by other EU countries are further recommendations. (Suikkanen, Asko (2009): Selvitys välityömarkkinoista. Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö. [Report of intermediate labour markets] http://www.stm.fi/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=41254&name=DLFE-4806.pdf)
Conclusions and Recommendations

• Finnish labour policy is undeveloped in sense of employment of disabled people. The ethos and practice of welfare is based on the idea that disabled people do not have to be at work and the welfare state attempts to compensate this matter with the disability pension.
Conclusions and Recommendations

• Two policy developments should be considered:
  – Consideration of sanctions if enterprises do not employ disabled people and better public support for the employment of disabled people.
  – There is a need to basic research on disabled people’s employment in Finland. Only a few surveys or statistical analysis have been done, and these are not included in the strong Finnish tradition of the sociology of work.
  – These recommendations should be taken up together with the development of legislation and statistics.