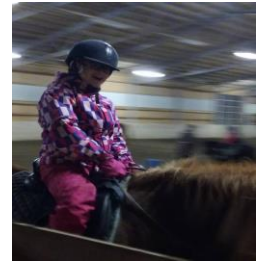


Community educators, Xamk and Valtti program in Finland



Community educator

- Bachelor level Humanistics
- 210 ECTS
- 3,5 years
- [Curriculum](#)

Employment and career opportunities

Municipal youth work (guidance, planning and management positions)

- Non-governmental organisations (coordination and project management positions)
- Child welfare
- Schools (youth work at school)
- Workshops for young people (individual trainers)
- Entrepreneurs (leisure services)
- Special youth work
- Youth information and counseling activities
- International youth work
- Multi-cultural youth work

Valtti - program

- Is a youth sports project of the Finnish Sports Association of Persons with Disabilities (VAU)
- The goal of the program is to help children (aged 6-23) with special needs to find a physical hobby

In Valtti-program a personal adapted physical activity instructor (PAPAI) guides a child or young person with special needs into a suitable hobby.

Valtti is a Finnish version of PAPAI,
personal adapted physical activity instructor





South-Eastern Finland
University of Applied Sciences

PAPAIs are students from the field of

- physical education
- education and pedagogics
- rehabilitation and social welfare

Main thing is that they are interested in adapted physical activity!

How did it start?

- program was part of the three-year SEDY project (2015–2017), which is funded through the European Union (Erasmus Plus)
- the goal of the project was to help more disabled children and young people to engage with physical activities.
- The Finnish Sports Association of Persons with Disabilities VAU invented the Valtti program
 - it was tested in whole county in 2016 in co-operation with 19 institutes or universities
 - Valtti continues, and the PAPAI model is tested in the partner countries
 - Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture has granted financial support for VAU to continue and develop the program for 3 more years (2017-2019).

The partners:

[Youth Sport Trust](#), United Kingdom

[WheelChair Dance Sport Association](#), United Kingdom

[Finnish Sports Association of Persons with Disabilities](#) (VAU), Finland

[ENGSO Youth](#), Italy

[Sport & Citizenship](#), France

[Lithuanian Sports University](#), Lithuania

[Sport Science School – Polytechnic Institute of Santarem](#), Portugal



1. Online application – 2. consent information sheet & PAPA! pairs

3. First contact and
interview

5. Experimental
period

4. Hobby-try-
out-plan

6. Final
meeting

Get to know each
other, background,
interests, resources,
goals

Opportunities (special
vs. mainstream).
Group vs. individual
activities.

Min 4 (2) try-outs,
feedback, photos.

Did we find a hobby?
Did we meet the goals?
Recommendations for
the future.

PAPAI pilot in a nutshell

- Method was tested in 15 biggest cities Finland in 2016
- PAPAI got study credits. They didn't get fee, but their expenses (travel etc.) were covered.
- The online application process was open in spring 2016. Applicants and students were matched to make up PAPAI pairs. Some applicants had two PAPAI.
- In autumn the PAPAI met the family, made an individual hobby try-out plan and acted as a sports buddy minimum 4 times. The try-outs were documented with photographs and hobby-try-out diaries.
- Participation for the child was free of charge, except one's insurance-, travel- and ticket costs.
- In the end of the year an electronic questionnaire was sent to collect feedback

Valtti – program in Mikkeli

- 2017 call from VAU
 - Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences would participate
 - PAPAI coordinator was needed
- In key locations experts or advanced students are hired as part-time PAPAI coordinators to
 - help and coach the PAPAI,
 - keep time, approve try-out budgets, solve any problems between family, hobby and PAPAI,
 - network (marketing, information) between the institutes, municipalities, sports clubs, families & VAU,
 - after try-outs collect reports and photos, write PAPAI-diplomas.
 - In final conference: give feedback & development ideas.

Mikkeli 2017

- 11 child applied for the program
- 13 students were interested
→ 11 pairs

70% 4 tryouts

30% 2-3 tryouts

80% found a new hobby

100% increased weekly activity

Mikkeli 2018

- 6 child applied for the program
- 4 students were interested
→ 4 pairs

Mikkeli 2019

- 6 child applied
- 6 students
- Kick off 31.8

Valtti pilot was a success

- **367 applicants** by March 2016. 288 received a PAPAI. 16% (n=47) cancelled or dropped out due illness, moving to another city, finding a hobby or time problems.
- **237 children and youth finished** the project (=did the experiments) and 155 of them took part in the feedback survey (Heidi Skantz/Jyväskylä University).

An electronic questionnaire was used to capture the participant's sociodemographic background, physical activity levels and sport participation before (n=367) and after (n=155) the experiments.

- **Participant profile:** 68% boys, mean age 12.2 years, 27% uses mobility devices, 87% needs assistance for leisure activities.
- **Results:** 54% found a hobby, 61 % are now more physically active.

The program is a cost-efficient way to increase social inclusion and physical activity of the participant.

- **Most popular physical hobby** was found in combat sports, dance, multisport clubs, basketball, equestrian, swimming or going to the gym. Participants tried altogether 37 different sports.
- **The facilitators** to sports participation are, if the participant had influence on the selection of sports, fun and joy during the try out, ability to participate after school and feelings of success.
- **The hindrances** to sports participation are if the child needs support person to go to the hobby, lack of personal assistance, lack of transportation and lack of suitable (adapted) sports opportunities.
- **The costs** of one Valtti pair were approximately 300 €.
- **Win-win:** Working as a PAPAI supports learning outcomes of future professionals. Moreover, the programme facilitates inclusion in sports clubs by bringing new members to their activities.

Venla, from Hollola has a visual impairment. With her Valtti lida she tried swimming, trampolining, horseback riding, basketball, show dance, bowling and wall climbing. She didn't become a regular participant, but gained courage and becom



Read more about Venla <http://www.vammaisurheilu.fi/ajankohtaista/valtti/valtti-stories>

Elias from Kuopio found showdown. His Valtti Carita works today as his new leisure time personal assistant.



In Oulu, the whole family found a hobby along with Vera.



Aaro from Tampere is today a wheelchair basketball player.



Ossi, a 14-year-old boy living in the city of Lahti has autism spectrum disorder. Now Ossi is a regular participant in a Unified basketball club.



Read more about Ossi <http://www.vammaisurheilu.fi/ajankohtaista/valtti/valtti-stories>

Osku, from Helsinki, tried table tennis first, but it was not that fun. The boxing club was a real success. Now Osku is a member of an ordinary savate club in Eastern Helsinki and he loves it.

[Youtube Osku](#)



4 x win

155 families (Heidi Skantz):

54% found a hobby.
61% become more active.

16 /(19) teachers:

Learning goals were well met & good co-operation model.



201 (∞ 250) PAPAIs:

87 % reported having learned useful profesional skills. 85 % would recommend this program to their fellow students.

12/(46) municipal APA-instructors:

Good way of marketing and developing sporting opportunities and reaching this target group, development ideas.