Report of ESF Financed Employment Project in North Karelia - Evaluation of the Priority Axis 2 Projects

European Social Fund Programme 2007–2013 started in North Karelia with a delay but functioned as a significant additional buffer in the recession during the years 2008 and 2009. The ESF resources were used together with the national labour policy resources for the relieving of the effects caused by the growth of unemployment. However, many projects had to change their original objectives and to increase the number of participants. The growth of the demand for labour will not necessarily decrease unemployment immediately but measures are needed also for the solution of the structural problems.

The employment projects have reached their target groups well. Nearly as many men and women have participated in the projects but there have been more men in the projects in which the objective is to prevent social exclusion. Only a small part of participants has been over 50 years old even though their share of the unemployed is high. There has been a need to focus projects on young people who are outside education or labour market, because of the high level (30%) of youth unemployment. According to evaluation results, the employment projects carried out in North Karelia have reached well also quantitative goals in placement to the labour market and to education in the short term. The follow-up data during 6 months after the ending of participation in the projects refers to the fact that the achieved results are on group level relatively stable. However, the examination of the individual level showed that a fourth from one had moved during the follow-up time from one position to another. About 80% of those, who were on the open labour market after the ending in the project, were still after half a year at work. Also about 80% of those who started in the education or training after the ending of the project measures continued in education or training during 6 months follow-up time.

Employment projects have also provided additional value to the national employment services especially in developing guidance services for unemployed people. The projects have also cooperated with the employers actively and have tried to lower the threshold of employment. During the current ESF programme period the cooperation between employment projects has also deepened.