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FINNISH YOUTH RESEARCH SOCIETY  
FINNISH YOUTH RESEARCH NETWORK



# Working together for the best outcomes for young people with mental health issues

## Research perspectives on welfare services and youth work

Expertmeeting Young People & Mental Health  
2-4 November 2016, Amsterdam



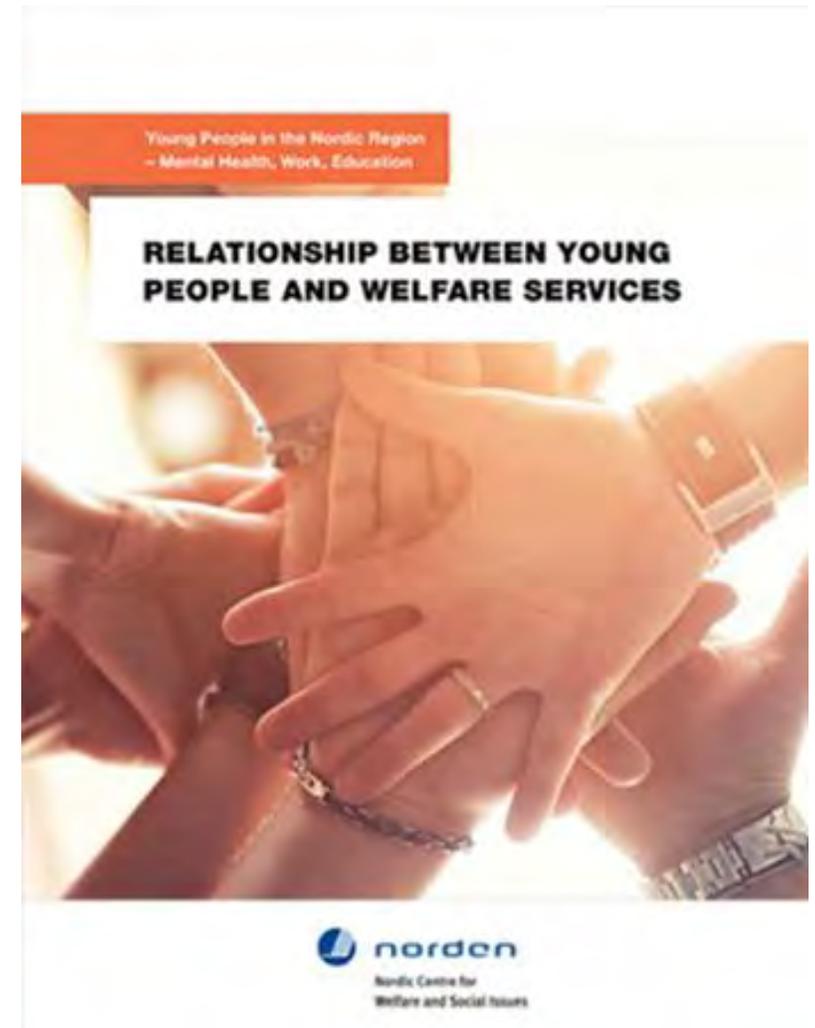
# Outline of the presentation

- Young people's perspective of welfare services – special reference to mental health services
  - Young adults position in rehabilitative services
  - Practical example of a project developing better services for young people with mental health issues
  - Relationship between online and face-to-face services
  - Potential of peer support and social media



# Research project on young people in the service system (Aaltonen, Berg & Ikäheimo)

- Background
  - Societal concern over social exclusion of young people
- Aim of the research
  - What is the position of young people in the service system?
  - How services meet the needs of young people?
- Qualitative interviews
  - With staff of employment offices; social welfare offices; service centers for long-term unemployed; outreach youth work, Vamos service ensemble by The Helsinki Deaconess Institute (public utility foundation)
  - With 18-29 year old clients most of them NEETs



# Time important and scarce resource in services

- Short encounters, long waiting times, no-shows
- Work based on trust - takes time to build
- Amounts of clients per one staff member
  - social welfare offices & employment offices – 200-400
  - service centers for long-term unemployed – 100
  - outreach youth work – 25
  - Vamos - service ensemble by The Helsinki Deaconess Institute (public utility foundation) – 15-16
    - Services offering support for material wellbeing and able to use economic sanctions have the least time for clients

# Mental health issues central among NEETs

## ”Troubled”

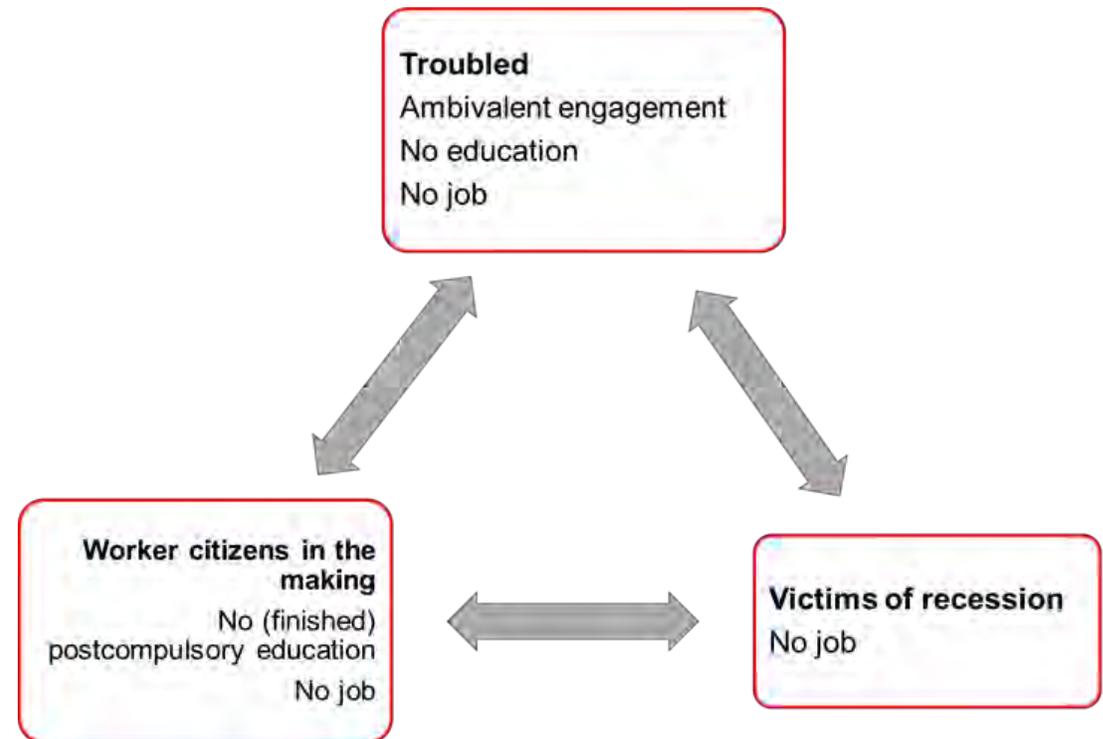
- troubles in life (mental health issues, bereavement, substance abuse, lack of familial support) that have made it difficult to get an education or find a job

## ”Worker-citizens in the making”

- history of interrupted post school studies (and mental health issues) but an interest and abilities to gain an education or job

## ”Victims of recession”

- educated, motivated, cannot find a job





## Lack of shared data on young people's history and pathways through the sector

- *If you think about shrinks, and how I have to start another treatment relationship with another person then I know that it's just gonna be the same thing all over again for a long time. [...] Those things never go anywhere, like, it's just them saying "Poor you" and not much else and I think we always deal with the wrong things. [...] I don't mind talking about myself and I usually hear the same comments and stuff and they say that talking helps, but I don't really see it. (Young person)*



# Lack of low-threshold mental health services

- *A few weeks ago a youth came here [at 1pm] and said that they needed someone to talk to, an appointment with a psychiatrist and began dialling the number to the health station on my phone. The youth said that they needed an appointment for a psychiatrist soon, and the nurse on the phone replied that call again tomorrow morning, because appointments are made between 8am–12pm, so then the youngster seriously did not want to hear what other options might have been at that point, so they lost their temper and just said “okay” and hung up on them. I was bothered by the situation, and wondered who was at the other end of that call. I had this youngster here, but because they weren't in person in the situation, and tell them to call the next day, that's pretty risky. [...] It's hard to get any low-threshold mental health services in here. (Outreach youth worker)*

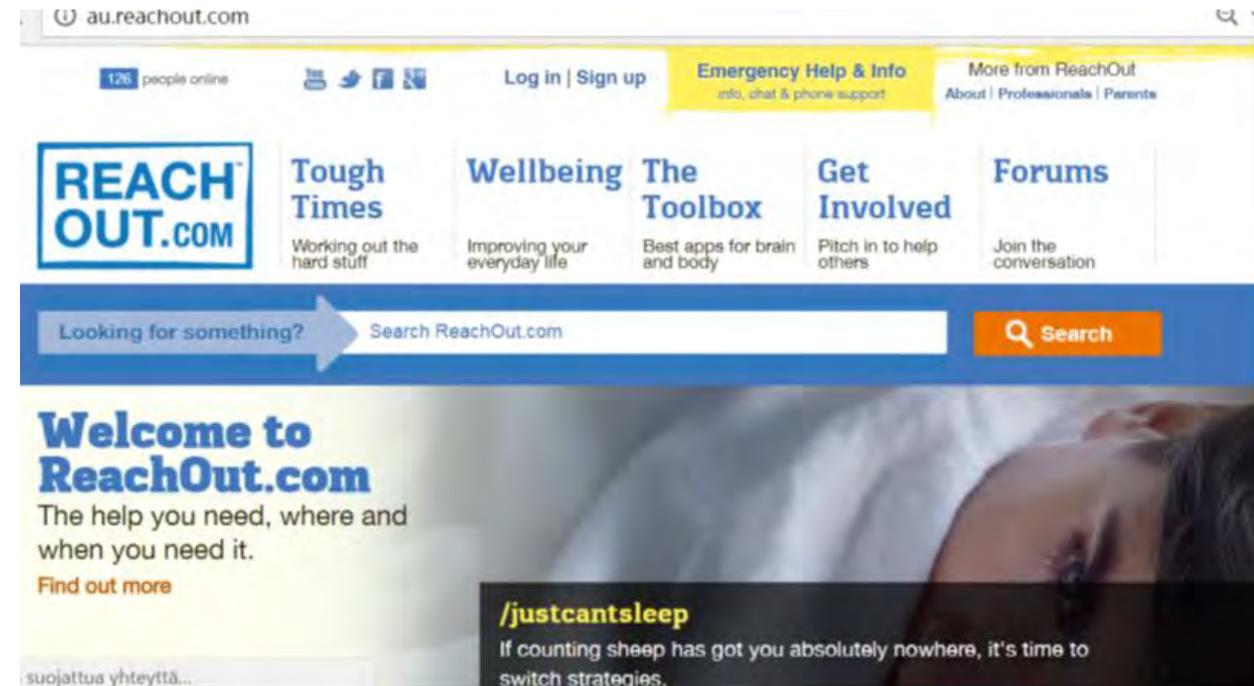


# ESF project “I am the service!” (2015-2017)

- Background
  - current mental-health services do not reach all the young people in need of help
  - services are disintegrated, service system extensive but individual service providers unable to refer the young people to appropriate services.
- ESF funded project implemented in the city of Vantaa
- Seeks to develop novel models and strengthen existing ones in supporting young people who struggle with mental health issues.
- I am the service – young people find the support they need instead of being referred to the next service provider
- Rehabilitation day activity center for young people, access to support and rehabilitative activities
- Group activities and individual support for strengthening life-management skills.
- Aims to create a new kind of operating model that rejects the "culture of referring a customer further"

# Online and face-to-face services

- Young people value both online services and personal services
- Prospective of online services in tackling mental health issues (Burns 2011; Webb & Burns & Collin 2008)
  - Engaging with young people in their environments and by using tools and networks they engage
  - Creating connections between online and face-to-face services
  - Designing with consumers, participating young people in co-creation of services
  - Reaching people with different service needs





# Inclusive Promotion of Health and Wellbeing (PROMEQ)



- One of the aims to explore the potential of social marketing, use of technology and peer support among young adults outside education or employment
- 16-29 year old clients of Youth Services are invited to participate in group activities and share ideas on how to improve health and wellbeing through cross-platform mobile messaging application
- Peer support recognized as a valuable component of youth mental health care (Orygen 2016)
  - Opportunity to benefit from collective wisdom
  - Opportunity to understand and destigmatize mental health issues
  - A renewed sense of self-respect and belonging through being part of a circle of caring community
  - Opportunity to rediscover and activate own personal hidden resources
  - Opportunity to receive hope, inspiration and empowerment
  - Opportunity to give help to others as equal-to-equal

# Thank you!

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