



Developing Competencies
for Demanding Foster Care

VAASI

**Developing Competencies for
Demanding Residential Care For
Children**

4/2023 – 3/2026



Co-funded by
the European Union



What we are talking about?

- Child welfare or child protection
- Child welfare is the service task of society, the aim of which is to guarantee a child's balanced development and wellbeing. Child welfare is divided into child and family specific, as well as preventive, child welfare.



What we are talking about?

- Child Welfare Act
- The Child Welfare Act determines regulations concerning child welfare. In addition to the Child Welfare Act, the Social Welfare Act, the Child Custody and Right of Access Act and the Convention on the Rights of the Child also govern the protection and treatment of children



What we are talking about?

- Alternative care, out-of home care, extra-familial care, substitute care
- Alternative care means arranging the welfare of a child that has been taken into care, placed urgently away from the child's home or taken into care by a temporary order by the Administrative Court.



What we are talking about?

- Child welfare institution
- A child welfare institution is an institution, in which trained workers are responsible for taking care of children and young people placed in care. For example, children's homes, youth homes, reception homes, reformatories and family support centres are child welfare institutions. In addition to institutional care, child welfare institutions may also provide open care and after care services. In Finland, these institutions are relatively small and their aim is to offer children a home-like environment. They comply with the law and their activities and they are monitored.

What we are talking about?

- Family carer
- A family carer is a person who provides family care in their own home for a child who has been taken into care, for example.
- Children's home
- A children's home is a child welfare institution, where children and young people placed in care live. Trained workers are responsible for the care of children and young people placed in care. In Finland, children's homes resemble homes, and they are never very big. Children's homes comply with the law in their work, and their activities are monitored.

What we are talking about?

- Foster care
- Foster care means that the care, raising and nurturing of a child placed in care is arranged outside of the child's home in a private home of a foster family or in professional foster care.
- Foster family A foster family is a family providing family care, in which a child has been placed in care owing to child welfare -related reasons. A foster family provides a safe environment for the child to live and grow up. The parents of foster families are given training and must be approved. A child placed in a foster family is allowed to meet his or her own parents. Foster parents are also called family carers.
- Foster parents The parents of a foster family are called foster parents. Foster parents are also known as family carers.

The Facts

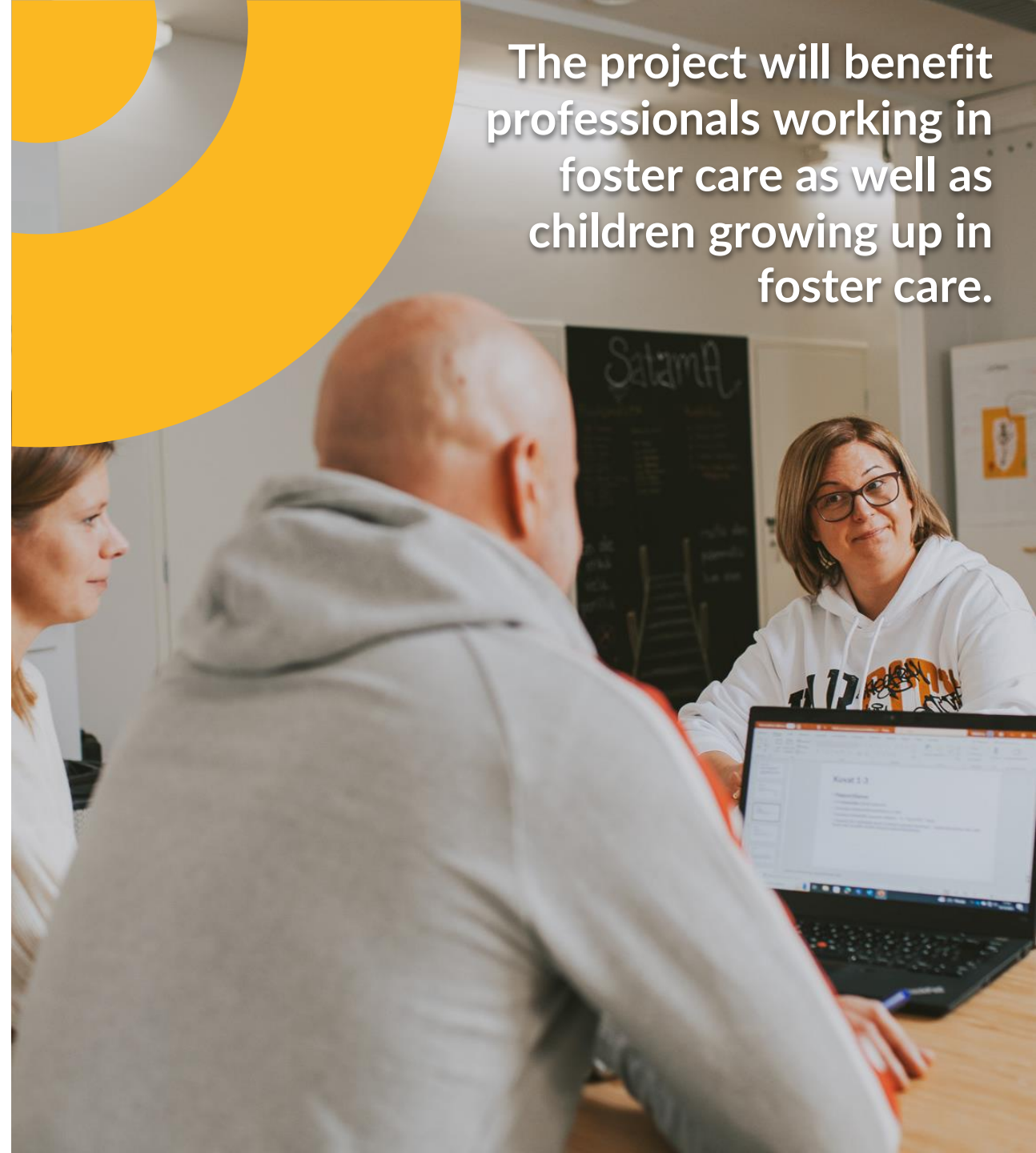
- Residential Care costs almost 1000 000 000 € / year in Finland
- 18600 children lives in substitute care in Finland
- Lack of personnel in foster care institutions
- Difficulties in recruitment
- Educated persons won't work in substitute care
- Lack of competences



The goals

- To **identify, structure and concretize** professional competences, competence requirements, competence profiles and training needs in the foster care of child protection.
- Based on this knowledge, **build digital self-learning learning materials** for the staff of foster care.
- **Strengthen the structures for collaborative learning** in foster care, supported by open digital learning materials.

The project will benefit professionals working in foster care as well as children growing up in foster care.



Target groups

- Multi-professional personnel with a heterogeneous educational background and competence profile, and family carers in foster care.
- Social workers responsible for decision-making, tendering, procurement and implementation of services in the field of child protection in foster care.
- Service providers, organizations and working communities in the field of foster care.

Project implementation

WP 1: Project management



WP 2: Mapping of competences in foster care



8/2023 – 7/2024

- Gathering information on the current situation through electronic surveys, regional webinars and workshops.
- Drawing up preliminary themes for learning modules.

WP 3: Dialogue and co-creation in working life



1/2024 – 12/2025

- Themes and content of the learning modules are refined in co-development workshops.
- Permanent community learning structures are modelled with foster care actors.

WP 4: Production of digital learning material



8/2023 – 12/2025

- Production of online activities and learning tasks (videos, self-reflection exercises, pdf files, case studies, tests, PowerPoint presentations, 360 learning environment) that motivate the usage of digital learning materials and self-learning.

WP 5: Piloting the learning material and finalizing the learning modules



1/2025 – 1/2026

- Parts of the learning material will be piloted in the foster care units of different organizations and with foster care social workers as agreed.
- Piloting of the collaborative continuous learning model.

WP 6: Competency profiles for demanding foster care




3/2024 – 6/2025

- Establishing the competences needed in different levels of foster care, as well as the differences in competences and professional specificity.

The pathway to strengthening competences in foster care




Regional workshops
Competency profiling and design of training content through co-development.




Mapping of skills needed in foster care
Conducting a skills mapping exercise for foster care workers.



Strengthening skills of foster care
The collaborative learning model, competency profiles, digital learning modules.



Creation of digital learning material
Designing, compiling and piloting of the learning content.



Nationwide webinars
The national dialogue on competences in foster care.



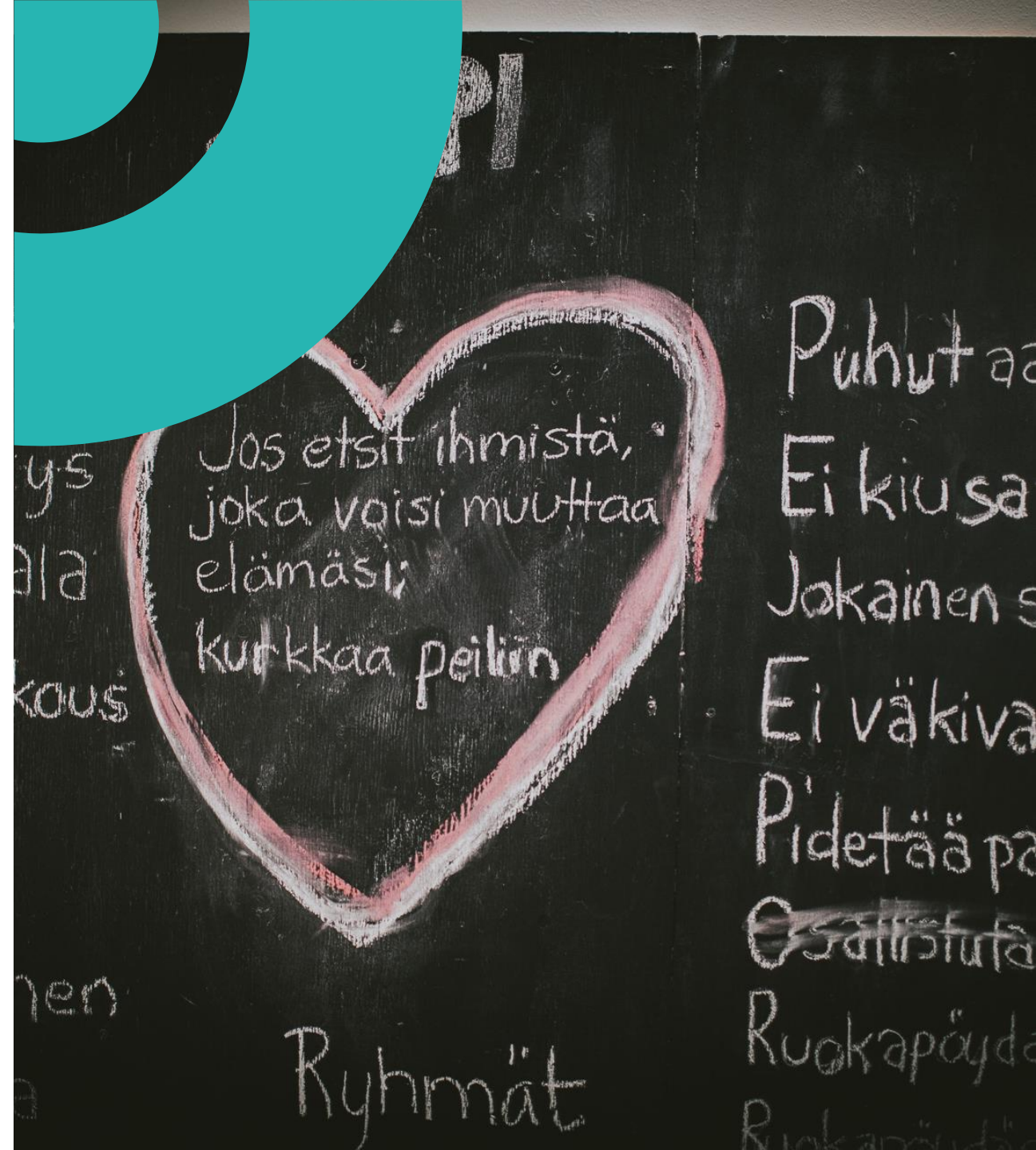
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Results and outputs

- Report on core and specific competences and skills needed in foster care.
- Five modules for continuous learning, published in a learning environment open to all.
- Modelling of collaborative learning, supported by online learning materials and workplace.
- Report on competency profiles in foster care.



Project team

VAASI is a joint project of **five** Finnish universities to develop education and competencies in foster care.

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Funded by: European
Social Funding



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