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## **The PAPA-model:**

**a promising tool to increase sports participation and physical activity levels  
of children and young people with disabilities**

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# Overview

- What are VAU and SEDY?
- Valtti method and PAPAI-pilot
- PAPAI pilot results
- Meet Ossi, Osku, Venla, Aaro, Vera and Elias!
- Conclusion & lessons learned



# VAU is a national umbrella for disability sports

- ✓ VAU was born in 2009 when disability-specific sports federations united to organize sports and recreation for persons with physical (visual +mobility impairments) and intellectual disabilities & transplant recipients.
- ✓ 230 member clubs with 70 000 personal members.
- ✓ National sports federation for goalball, wc-rugby, boccia, showdown & still some other *not-yet-fully-integrated* sports.
- ✓ VAU is also the Special Olympics Finland. Member of Finnish Olympic and Paralympic Committees.



# The SEDY-project (2015-2017) to work against social isolation and increase physical activity of children and youth with disabilities



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2015

- Inventory. What is the status of sports for children and youth with disabilities in SEDY-countries?

2016

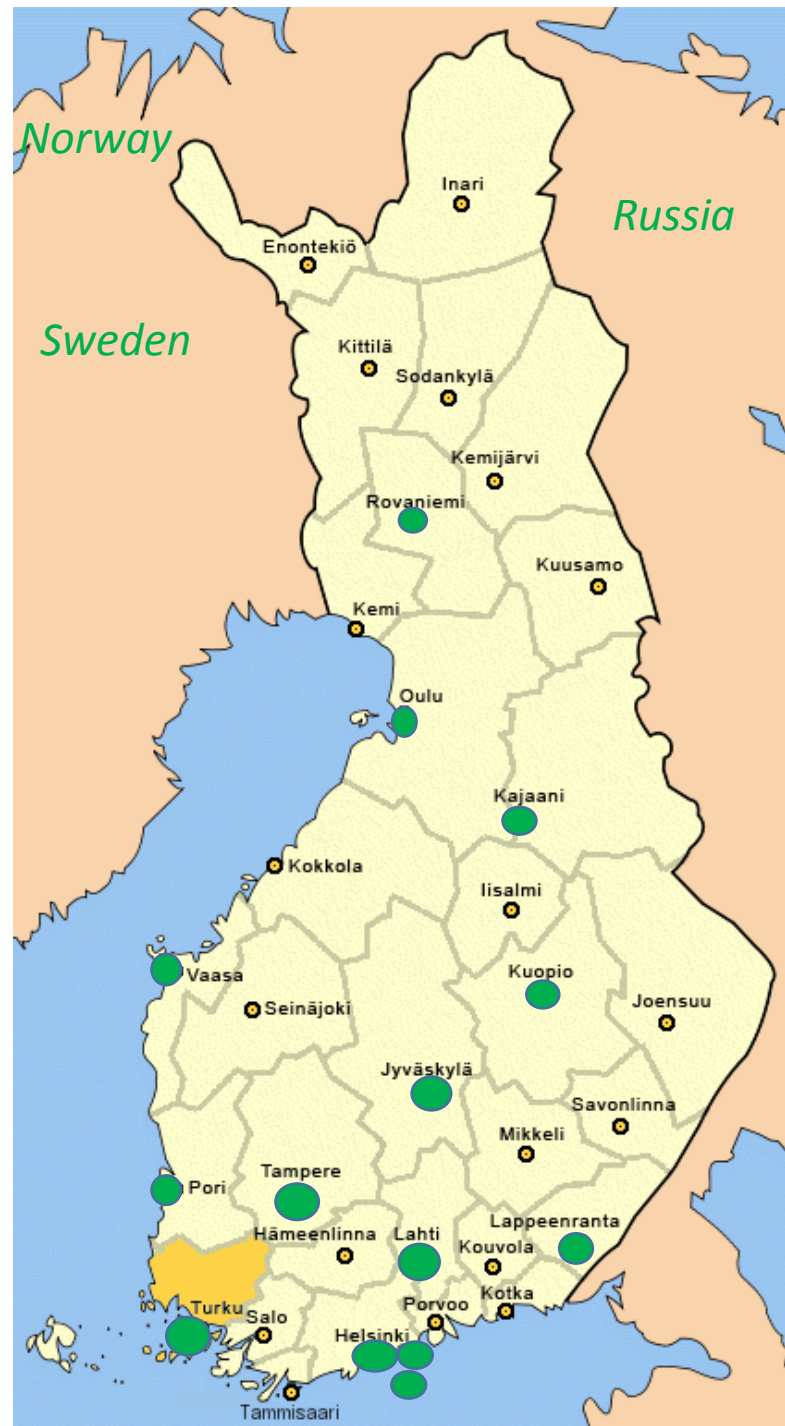
- Developing pilots & finding best practises.

2017

- Dissemination & evaluation. Final conference in Nov 29- Dec 1 2017 in Amsterdam.



Solving the service & demand -problem in Finland:



## The Valtti-method:

1. Each young person with a disability is given a personal coach, tutor or buddy (PAPAI) for a limited period of time to escort him/her to hobbies.
2. Co-operation with universities and institutes of sports, pedagogy, therapy & recreation. Students work as PAPAIs to receive credits and to get experience in APA & disability sports.
3. PAPAI-coordinators are hired to serve as problem solvers. Working locally.

1. Online application – 2. consent information sheet & Valtti 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

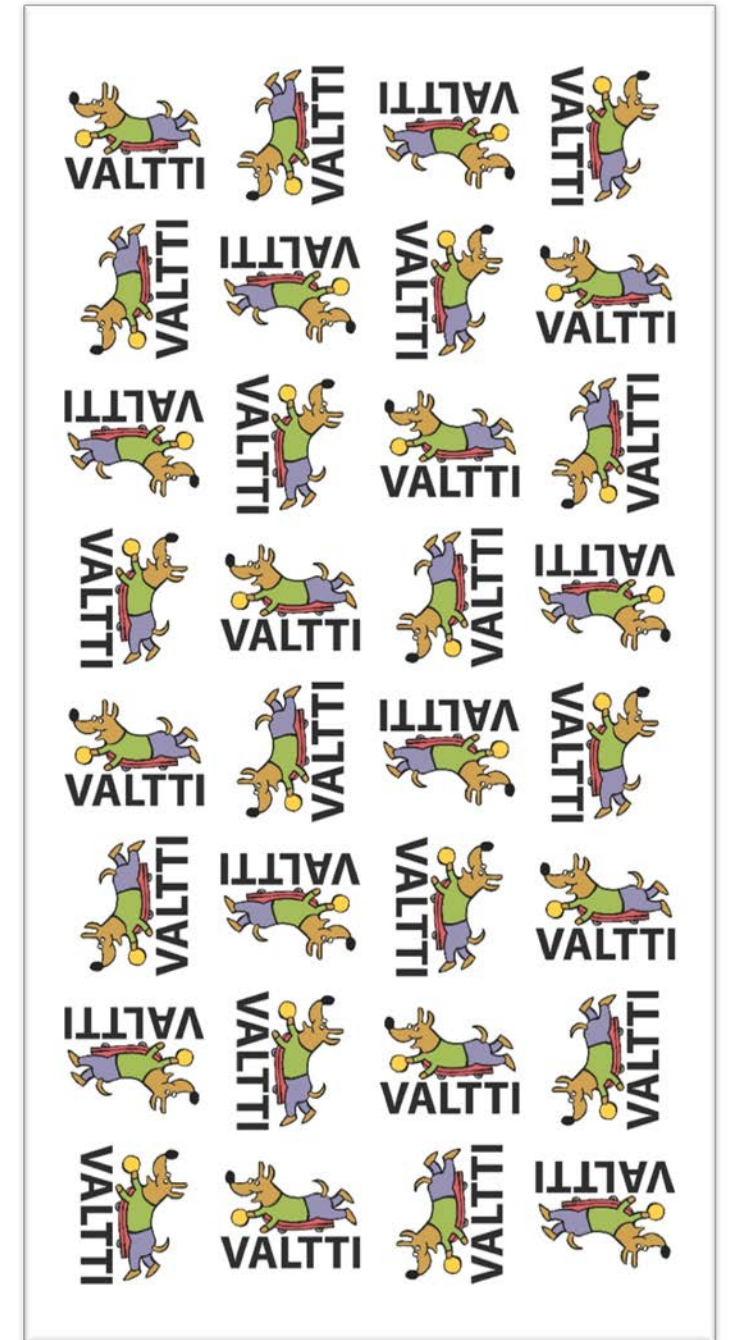
Opportunities (special vs.  
mainstream).  
Group vs. individual  
activities.

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

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

# Participant profile

- 367 applicants (children and youth with a disability/special needs, age 5-21).
- 284 received a PAPA. 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.
- 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.



**Background variables****All applicants (n=367) n (%)**

<b>Sex, boys</b>	247 (67.3)
<b>Age (sd)</b>	11.8 (3.8)
<b>Finnish speakers</b>	339 (92.4)
<b>Functional difficulty</b>	
<b>Seeing</b>	99 (27.0)
<b>Hearing</b>	41 (11.2)
<b>Mobility</b>	178 (48.5)
<b>Concentration</b>	294 (80.1)
<b>Self care</b>	292 (79.6)
<b>Communication</b>	252 (68.7)
<b>Medication</b>	159 (43.8)
<b>Assistive device</b>	101 (27.7)
<b>Need for personal assistant</b>	308 (85.1)
<b>Participation PE (almost always/always)</b>	297 (91.4)
<b>Have some therapy</b>	255 (69.7)
<b>Has some hobby</b>	233 (63.5)
<b>Regular physical activity</b>	
<b>Average</b>	95 (25.9)
<b>Heavy</b>	53 (14.4)



# 565 try outs/37 different sports

- 54 % found a hobby (n=83).
- Most popular physical hobby was found in combat sports, dance, multisport clubs, basketball, equestrian, swimming or going to the gym.
- 61,4 % reported rise in PA level (lot or some). At application phase 22,6% was physically active (medium or heavy intensity PA daily), after experiments 34,8%.
- For VAU the costs were 60 000 euros --approx 300 € /one Valtti pair. Families estimated having paid 33 €/per kid.

## Success factors (found a hobby, n=83 )

- **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.

## Not found a hobby (n=72)

- **The hindrances** to sports participation are not having an assistant (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.

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 the boxing club was a real success. Now Osku is a member of an ordinary savate club in Eastern Helsinki and he loves it.



Aaro from Tampere tried judo, swimming and wc-basket. Today he plays wheelchair basketball twice a week.





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





Elias from Kuopio found showdown. Today his Valtti Carita works as his leisure time personal assistant.





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 become more active.



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

**155 families:**

54% found a hobby.

61% become more active.

**16 /(19) teachers:**

Learning goals were met.

Good co-operation model.

**5 x win-win**

**201 (∞ 250) PAPAIs:**

87 % have 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.

More demand, more participants with disability: Sport clubs are moving towards inclusion.

# Lessons learned from PAPA-pilot

## **This works**

- Individual intervention, observing the family's resources.
- Hearing & respecting the voice of young people & feedback (smileys, emojis, thumb-feedback).
- PAPA-coordinators to govern PAPA & solve problems.
- Pre-infos & free access to disability sports workshops for students.

## **Development needed**

- An updated website which covers both inclusive and disability-specific hobby options.
- Inclusion training for mainstream sports providers.
- Making sports appealing for girls with a disability.
- Public image of disability- and para-sports (competitions) negative for some.
- Valtti-method does not meet to needs of smaller villages and provinces.



# Resources

Saari & Skantz (2016) The PAPA-handbook, in English

<http://www.hva.nl/kc-bsv/gedeelde-content/contentgroep/sedy-project/results/development-of-pilots/development-of-pilots.html>

Saari & Skantz (2017). Was there more physical activity, did we find hobbies ? [final report, in Finnish]

<http://www.vammaisurheilu.fi/images/tiedostot/ladattavat-tiedostot/valttiraportti2017.pdf>

Skantz, H. 2017. The effects of PAPA-programme on self-reported physical activity and sport participation in children and adolescents with disabilities. Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences, University of Jyväskylä, Master's thesis. (finnish)

## More information

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Thank you for your attention

