

# Vamos in 2025

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iVAMOS!  
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# Introduction

The wellbeing, mental health, loneliness and social exclusion of young people have long been topics of public discussion and concern. An increasing number of young adults are facing job insecurity and low incomes, which is also having a broader impact on social wellbeing.

Vamos is the Deaconess Foundation's nationwide youth service package that aims to promote the social inclusion, wellbeing, education and employment of young people aged 16–29 who are not in education or employment. It has been proven that Vamos is an effective solution to changing societal trends and the social exclusion of young people. For over 17 years, the Deaconess Foundation's Vamos has been a provider, expert and developer of effective youth coaching services. During this time, it has supported almost 21,000 young people in searching for their own path. Many young people face difficulties such as mental health issues, dropping out of school, unemployment, intoxicant use, homelessness and problems in close relationships. The content and duration of the activities are tailored to each young person's individual needs. Vamos provides comprehensive support to young people in vulnerable situations in eleven locations from Helsinki to Rovaniemi. Through Vamos's individual and group coaching, young people receive support with their daily lives and future planning, as well as help in gradually finding their way to school or work. In addition to individual and group coaching, low-threshold activities have previously been offered at Vamos's Katutaso Youth Centre in Jyväskylä.





In the autumn of 2025, Vamos took steps towards providing a broader and more diverse range of low-threshold services when the Olohuone activities, which were developed for young immigrants, were introduced at two Vamos locations in Tampere and Kuopio. These new locations will enable the Olohuone and Vamos activities to reach a wider audience of young foreign-language speakers from diverse backgrounds, bringing them together for low-threshold encounters and coaching support. In Jyväskylä, Vamos's Katutaso Youth Centre reaches a wide range of young people from different backgrounds through open activities. There were also more locations offering peer-to-peer activities than before. Young people can participate in the Olohuone and Katutaso activities anonymously.



**In 2025, a record number of young people were reached. The number increased by 13% compared to the previous year. Additionally, the Vamos and Olohuone staff trained 192 professionals during the year.**

## Vamos youth service

Vamos addresses prevalent societal issues and serves as a crucial support system for young people who benefit from individual and low-threshold support.

Vamos focuses on meeting young people in a way that is non-urgent, confidential and tailored to their needs.

Vamos's service package is built around two main forms of coaching: individual coaching and group coaching. Each young person is assigned a coach to support them with their everyday challenges and help them plan for the future. Rather than being tied to a specific service package, the service is built around the individual goals of each young person. In addition to receiving individual support, young people can participate in group activities. The operating model also includes service integration. This means that, for example, a worker from the wellbeing services county can visit the Vamos unit at an agreed time, or a coach can accompany the young person to see a social worker or psychiatrist, if the young person so wishes. This will reduce patient non-attendance in the public sector and make it easier for young people to access the services they are entitled to.

In 2015, a total of 3,024 unaccompanied minors arrived in Finland. In response to this situation, the Deaconess Foundation set up four housing units for these children and young people and launched the mentor family volunteer programme. In this programme, a young person is matched with a Finnish family

that they can visit occasionally to experience family life. During the programme, it was found that the need for support increases when a young person turns 18 and moves from a family group home to their own home. However, the services and support available to unaccompanied young people are insufficient to meet their needs. To address this societal need, the Deaconess Foundation established its Olohuone activities in Helsinki in 2021.

In 2025, the Olohuone activities expanded to new locations and became part of the Vamos activities. First and foremost, Olohuone is a community where everyone's voice is heard. The development of Olohuone activities is always guided by regional needs and specificities. Young people can come to Olohuone to do their homework, have a snack and hang out. They are also welcome if they would rather not be alone at home and would like someone to talk to. The staff at Olohuone offer help, guidance and advice on various issues, and encourage young people to learn Finnish, speak the language and meet new people.

Katutaso Youth Centre, which operates as part of Vamos Jyväskylä, offers an open and anonymous living room space where people can enjoy intoxicant-free activities in an urban setting. Katutaso offers inclusive meeting place activities, street outreach and individual support for young people aged 18–30 with special needs. Katutaso promotes the wellbeing of young people by reducing loneliness, providing an alternative free from intoxicants and strengthening life skills, inclusion and integration. Katutaso has a versatile space where young people can cook, play games, have band rehearsals or simply hang out.

The space has a home-like atmosphere and is open to young people around the clock; staff are present in the evenings, at weekends, during school holidays and at youth camps. Young people are actively involved in planning, implementing, evaluating and developing these activities. Katutaso reaches around 30% of the young people in Jyväskylä who are at risk of social exclusion.

All activities promote youth inclusion, encouraging young people to become active members of both society and the Katutaso community. Katutaso is part of the Deaconess Foundation's Vamos Jyväskylä activities. The activities focus on vulnerable young people who are not in education or employment and who are suffering from life-threatening loneliness. Katutaso's work focuses on reaching young immigrants in particular and providing them with peer support and coaching to help them integrate into society.

*In the summer of 2025, Helsinki Olohuone organised a picnic to bring young people together, fostering a sense of community, interaction and joy in the centre of the city.*



# Backgrounds of the young people

Vamos has been collecting customer data since 2015. This data consists of changes to the background information and living conditions of young people receiving intensive individual or group coaching, as well as changes to their wellbeing. The wellbeing of young people is assessed using the Outcomes Star tool, which the coach and young person complete together at the start and end of the service. The Outcomes Star data illustrates any changes in the young person's wellbeing that occur during the coaching period. In 2025, some Vamos activities also used the Experiences of Social Inclusion Scale developed by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) to measure inclusion. The scale consists of ten statements designed to assess respondents' sense of belonging, experience of meaningfulness, opportunities for action and sense of control. (THL, 2025.)

The nature of Vamos's activities has changed, moving more widely towards community-based, low-threshold activities, which is reflected in the profile of the young participants and affects the way data is collected and statistics are compiled. Young people can participate in both Olohuone activities and Jyväskylä's Katutaso activities anonymously. The background information on the young people taking part in these activities is based either on staff observations or on information provided by the young people themselves.

In 2025, a total of 3,791 young people participated in Vamos activities. Of these, 2,390 received intensive individual or group coaching, while 1,371 took part in Olohuone activities in Helsinki, Tampere or Kuopio, or in Katutaso's low-threshold, anonymous activities in Jyväskylä.

## Vamos individual and group coaching

The following paragraphs examine data on the 2,390 young people who participated in individual and group coaching in 2025.

Vamos is effective in reaching young people who struggle to complete comprehensive school or advance to further education. A review of young people's educational attainment shows that, as in the previous year, the number of young people who do not have a school-leaving certificate from comprehensive school, or who have only completed comprehensive education, remained high at 62% in 2025. This figure also includes young immigrants who studied before coming to Finland, but whose qualifications are not recognised in the Finnish education system. At the time of joining the activities, only around 30% of young participants had completed secondary education, and fewer than 5% had completed higher education. Information on the educational level of all young participants is not available.

Around 47% of young people in the service were female, 41% were male and around 6% were non-binary. The gender balance is slightly more even than in the previous year, with the proportion of female participants decreasing by 6%. Data on all young participants is not available.



A total of 64% of young people were native speakers of Finnish or Swedish, while a fifth were foreign-language speakers. The proportion of foreign-language speakers reached through coaching work remained at the same level as the previous year.

At the time of coming to Vamos, the young people were typically unemployed (33%), students (28%) or outside the workforce (21%). These figures are also in line with the previous year, with no significant changes. Of the participants who were unemployed job seekers when they started the coaching programme, 52% relied on the unemployment benefit as their primary source of income, while 29% relied on social assistance. Other primary sources of income included sickness allowance and other benefits granted by Kela.

Of those who started in the coaching programme as students, 22% were under 18 and 43% were aged 18–21. For 37.5% of those aged 18 and over who started in the programme as students, the primary source of income was the financial aid for students, while for 26%, it was the unemployment benefit or rehabilitation allowance. Other primary sources of income included sickness allowance, social assistance and other benefits granted by Kela. Some of those under the age of 18 had no income of their own because they were still financially dependent on their parents.

*In the summer of 2025, Vamos Turku offered free counselling in the form of pop-up activities.*

Young people have been affected by government cuts and the tightening economic situation in the wellbeing services counties. The slump in employment has had a particularly severe impact on young people and immigrants, as competition in the labour market has intensified. Of all the young people in the Vamos coaching programme, 20% relied on labour market subsidy as their main source of income, while 10% received financial aid for students.

At the time of joining the coaching, 33% of young people were relying on social assistance, rehabilitation support, rehabilitation allowance or sickness allowance as their main source of income; many Vamos participants were still dependent on last-resort social security. Of young people, 13% joined the service with no income or entitlement to last-resort social assistance. This figure has remained at the same level for several years.

In 2025, approximately one-fifth of the young people involved in the Vamos coaching programme had joined the service either by contacting the service themselves or by having someone close to them do so on their behalf. This figure has remained nearly the same compared to the previous year. Public service systems in different Vamos locations actively refer young people to different services, and around half of young participants have been referred to Vamos by a public service. Most of these referrals came from educational institutions (18%), social services (13%), health services (9%) and employment services (5%). Compared to the previous year, there has been a decrease in referrals from employment services, which accounted for 9%

of referrals in 2024. Although educational institutions were the largest single referring party among public services, the number of referrals from these institutions has declined compared to last year, despite an upward trend in the past few years.

## **Olohuone activities and Katutaso Youth Centre Jyväskylä**

In 2025, a total of 1,371 young people were involved in the Olohuone activities, as well as the Katutaso Youth Centre activities in Jyväskylä. Additionally, 110 volunteers participated in the Olohuone activities, for example by assisting young people with their homework, and contributed to camps and open activities at Katutaso Youth Centre in Jyväskylä. There were 16,586 encounters during the year.

From the very beginning, the Olohuone activities in Helsinki have reached a large number of young people. The visitors of Olohuone are a diverse group of young people. In 2024, 2,948 people applied for asylum in Finland, some of whom were minors (thl.fi). According to the 2024 analysis by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), a total of 220 asylum applications were lodged by minors in Finland, which was 38% less than in 2023. (EUAA – Data Analysis of Unaccompanied Minors in 2024.)

Despite the decrease in the number of asylum applications, new young people joined the activities every week in 2025 (around 100 new young people per year). Olohuone aims to respond

to the needs of young people as they arise. From the beginning, the areas in which support has been needed most have included help with homework, recreational activities, opportunities for discussion and inclusion in the community. Young people have also needed personal assistance with their job search and everyday tasks. Other topics discussed at Olohuone included housing, employment rights, social phenomena and current affairs. Young people are looking for places where they can meet other people. As they mature, young people will have more needs. Some young people have been granted Finnish citizenship and need information about the army. Some of their spouses have also come to Finland, and they are looking for relationship advice and support in starting a family. Themes related to mental wellbeing have been particularly topical in recent years.

For many of the participants in the Olohuone activities, the fact that they spend most of their free time alone at home poses a challenge. They essentially have no social networks, no people to meet and nowhere to go. They may find Finnish society foreign and need support to navigate it. Going to school provides many young people with a sense of routine, but the holidays can be particularly challenging for them. In many ways, the life circumstances of these young people are extremely stressful. They may have experienced trauma, be worried about the family they have left behind, struggle at school, face language barriers, find it difficult to cope, have sleep problems and experience other difficulties in managing everyday life.

Many young people are looking for a job, while others have already qualified in a trade. This is where they need advice and guidance. The number of visitors to Olohuone is steadily increasing, as are the needs of young people. The age limit for receiving support for the transition to adulthood was reduced from 25 to 23 years (06/2024). Consequently, more and more young people are being excluded from receiving this support through the public sector. This is already evident at Olohuone, where young people are increasingly facing significant challenges, such as accumulating debt or being at risk of becoming homeless.



**Our low-threshold activities reached 1,371 young people in 2025, resulting in over 16,500 encounters.**



## Highlights of 2025:

### VAMOS MIELI

The Vamos Mieli project (STEA 2023–2025) was concluded in Vantaa in December 2025. The project was a collaboration between the Deaconess Foundation's Vamos activities and MIELI ry, and its aim was to develop a coaching programme to improve the mental health skills of young people from multicultural backgrounds. A wide range of activities were organised during the project, including individual and group coaching sessions for young people, discussion and training sessions for immigrant parents, and training sessions for professionals and volunteers on supporting mental wellbeing in a culturally sensitive way. A handbook and online course prepared by the project team.

### PYSÄKKI

The Pysäkki project (STEA 2024–2026) in Lahti offers a new kind of support for young people who use intoxicants. The target group consists of young people aged 18–29 in the Päijät-Häme region who experience mild or moderate symptoms of substance abuse, and who are unable to make full use of services independently due to this use. Engaging young people in the activities has been one of the main challenges of the project. In 2025, 50 young people participated in individual coaching. The service package also included a supported volunteering group and a diary group, with a total of 78 participants. The outputs of the project will be completed in 2026. The young people will produce a visual diary to highlight their voices and experiences and to illustrate what the service paths look like when young people's lives are affected by intoxicants.

### NEUROPOP

In April, Vamos Oulu launched the ESF+ funded NeuroPop project, which aims to promote the wellbeing of neurodivergent young people and help them transition to and stay in education and employment by strengthening the structures and forms of support and providing up-to-date information to their loved ones and professionals. The project also focuses on promoting inclusive, neuro-friendly environments and practices. There is a wealth of untapped potential in neurodiversity for society as a whole.

### WAY TO WORK

The Way to Work project (ESF+ 2024–2026) aims to address the employment challenges faced by young adults from foreign backgrounds who are unemployed or not in the workforce, by providing them with support and coaching. The project targets young adults aged 18–35 who speak a foreign language. This means that coaching is offered to individuals whose first language is not Finnish or Swedish. The project is being carried out in close cooperation with companies in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area and the Lahti region that are experiencing labour availability issues. Solutions are developed in collaboration with employers and the young people who are clients of the project to address skills mismatches and support diversity. Vamos is implementing the Way to Work project in Vantaa, Espoo and Lahti.

### VAMOS CAREER

The Vamos Career project (ESF+ 2023–2025) was co-funded by the European Union and aimed to strengthen the status of young people aged 16–35 with an immigrant background and local young people in the labour market in Kuopio and Siilinjärvi. The project addressed the structural challenges faced by young people in the job market, such as a lack of professional networks, limited knowledge of working life and inadequate job-searching skills, by providing personalised, comprehensive support throughout the employment process. The project provided support with starting a job search, identifying and articulating skills, creating job search documents, preparing for interviews and securing and maintaining employment.

The activities focused on individual and group coaching, service guidance and establishing contacts with local employers. The project developed and piloted

an operating model combining individual coaching, working life skills development and employer collaboration to support equal and diverse recruitment practices. A practical handbook for young people and employers was also produced to ensure that the approaches developed during the project could continue to be used after its conclusion. The Vamos Career project built bridges between young people and employers | Deaconess Foundation

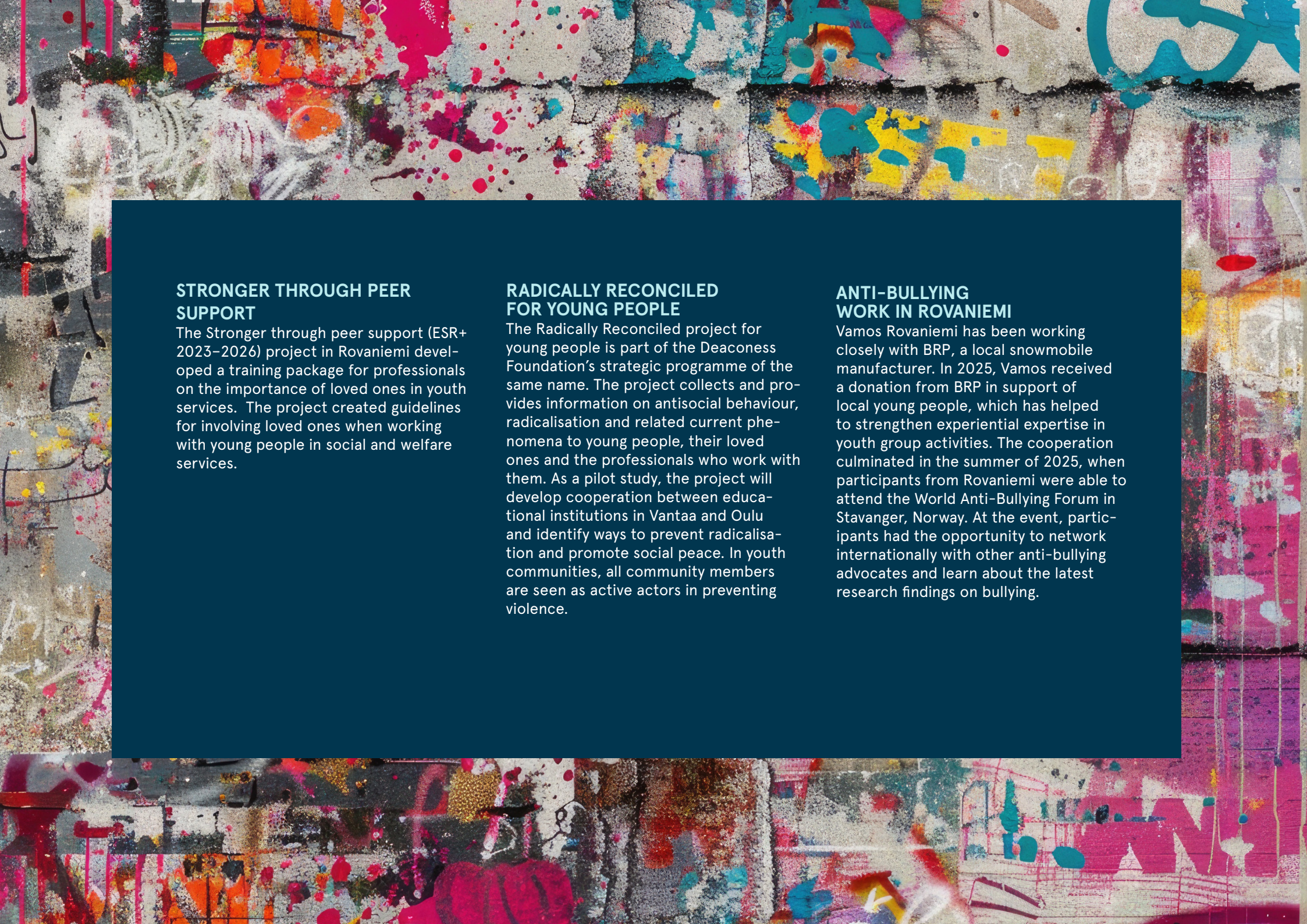
## JALKAPARI

The Jalkapari – Collaboration for inclusion project (ESF+ 2024–2027) supports young people under the age of 30 in the Päijät-Häme region who are facing challenging circumstances and require multiple services. During the project, a new operating model called 'Peer support for young people' will be developed and piloted. In the model, peer instructors work within the target group's own environment. They encourage young people to participate actively and engage in age-appropriate social interaction through goal-oriented coaching, individual peer instruction and activating peer group activities. Peer instructors work in close cooperation with social welfare and healthcare professionals, who can use this collaboration as an additional tool to enhance the effectiveness of their own work.

In 2025, the project employed two full-time coaches to provide intensive individual coaching to young people. Each coach worked with 18–25 young people at any one time. In total, the project has reached around 70 young people. The meetings were always scheduled with each young person individually. They took place no more than once a week and covered topics ranging from motivational discussions to school applications. Networking to raise awareness of youth issues was carried out in collaboration with various services, including social services and specialised health care.

## HIMA

The HIMA project (STEA 2023–2025), which was carried out by the Youth Housing Association, Vamos Helsinki and Pääkaupunkiseudun Nuorisoasunnot, developed a work pair model that offered young people comprehensive support in their daily lives by involving two professionals simultaneously. In this model, two professionals visited young people in their homes and worked together to address issues related to housing, daily life skills, mental health and career/study paths simultaneously, allowing everyday situations to be observed in their natural setting. As part of the project, a workbook was created for young people, providing information on topics such as wellbeing, close relationships, moving and housing. HIMA Workbook 2025.



### **STRONGER THROUGH PEER SUPPORT**

The Stronger through peer support (ESR+ 2023–2026) project in Rovaniemi developed a training package for professionals on the importance of loved ones in youth services. The project created guidelines for involving loved ones when working with young people in social and welfare services.

### **RADICALLY RECONCILED FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Radically Reconciled project for young people is part of the Deaconess Foundation's strategic programme of the same name. The project collects and provides information on antisocial behaviour, radicalisation and related current phenomena to young people, their loved ones and the professionals who work with them. As a pilot study, the project will develop cooperation between educational institutions in Vantaa and Oulu and identify ways to prevent radicalisation and promote social peace. In youth communities, all community members are seen as active actors in preventing violence.

### **ANTI-BULLYING WORK IN ROVANIEMI**

Vamos Rovaniemi has been working closely with BRP, a local snowmobile manufacturer. In 2025, Vamos received a donation from BRP in support of local young people, which has helped to strengthen experiential expertise in youth group activities. The cooperation culminated in the summer of 2025, when participants from Rovaniemi were able to attend the World Anti-Bullying Forum in Stavanger, Norway. At the event, participants had the opportunity to network internationally with other anti-bullying advocates and learn about the latest research findings on bullying.

## A YEAR FULL OF CELEBRATIONS

Vamos Kuopio celebrated its 10th anniversary on 23 May 2025 at the Kuopio Academy of Design. Tomi Kiilakoski, leading senior researcher at the Finnish Youth Research Society and adjunct professor at Tampere University, delivered a speech in which he discussed recent studies on the wellbeing and social status of young people. The event was also attended by young people, employees and partners of Vamos, as well as the CEO of the Deaconess Foundation Group Olli Holmström, the Director of Non-Profit Operations Maija Hyle and Leena Mannonen, the service area director responsible for Vamos activities nationwide. The day was filled with emotion and nostalgia, with some wonderful speeches and great singing, instrumental performances and videos put together by the young people.

In Turku, the 10th anniversary was celebrated on 15 May 2025 together with partners, local entrepreneurs and young people. Thanks to the support of the Deaconess Foundation's Vamos youth service, thousands of young people in Turku have found

direction and hope in their lives. For ten years now, Vamos has supported young people in Turku when they have lost their direction, lacked self-confidence or faced other challenges in life.

Ten years of the mentor family programme. The mentor family programme was launched at the Deaconess Foundation ten years ago. Born out of a crisis, the programme has become an integral part of the everyday lives of many young people and families. Over the past decade, mentor family activities have matched more than 300 young people who arrived in Finland alone with mentor families. These activities bring together different cultures and ways of life, allowing them to evolve together. While the activities have their challenges, heartwarming stories and meaningful encounters are at the heart of it all. The event took place in the Aurora living room on Alppikatu on 27 October 2025. Mentor families, young people and network partners took part in the celebrations. Guests heard about the experiences of the young people and mentor families, enjoyed a musical performance by Eastern Melodies and were served snacks.



*The Vamos Kuopio team celebrated its 10th anniversary at the Kuopio Academy of Design, marking a decade of supporting young people and helping them to find*

## Results and impact

In 2025, 1,274 young people who took part in coaching activities completed their journey in the service. Data on changes in their living conditions and perceived well-being were collected from them at the start and end of the coaching. This report is based on this data.

The 2025 social report of the Wellbeing Services County of Pirkanmaa highlights how poverty can limit young people's opportunities for action, participation and planning for the future. Financial problems experienced by young people often manifest as debt, an increased risk of dropping out of school and psychological stress, among other things. The report emphasises the importance of providing more financial advice, improving cooperation between different authorities and establishing low-threshold services. (Suksi-Koivisto & Ylistalo, 2025.)

The increase in youth poverty has also been evident among those who participated in the Vamos activities. Targeted efforts have been made to address this phenomenon, with key results relating to young people's transitions to employment and education paths and changes in their main source of income. Of those who completed the coaching programme, 43% advanced to employment or education paths, and of those who started the programme on social assistance or with no income, 44% experienced an improvement in their main source of income by the time they completed it.

Of the young people who were outside the workforce at the beginning of the programme, 29% had found employment or started education by the end of the coaching, while over a third had started looking for a job. These effects are directly reflected in the change in main source of income between the start and end of the programme. At the beginning of the programme, 56% of young people in this group relied on sickness allowance or social assistance as their main source of income, or had no income at all, and by the end of the programme, this figure was less than 25%.



**The coaching programme supported young people in advancing to employment or education paths and improved the financial situation of many of them.**

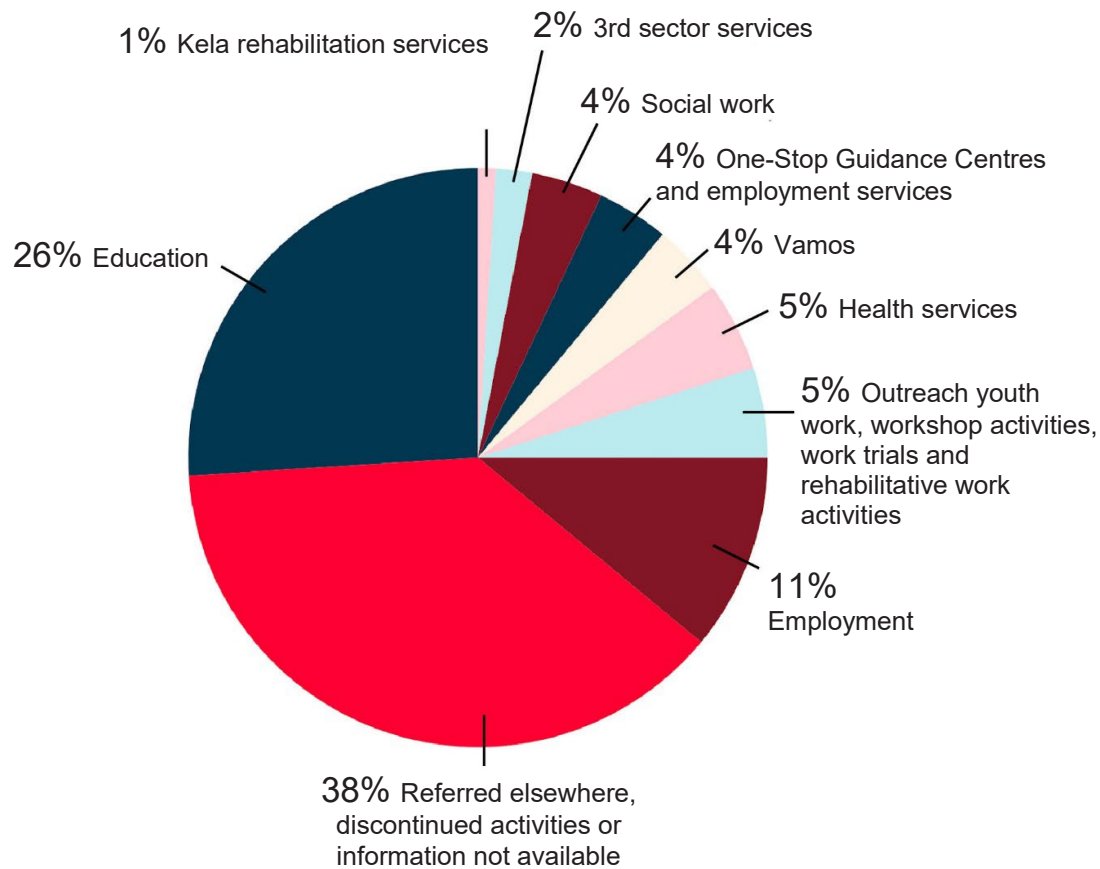


Figure 1: VAMOS's referral outcomes (%) in 2025 (N=1,274)

Half of the young people who completed the VAMOS programme were guided to employment or education paths (Figure 1). Of the young people 11% found paid employment in the open labour market, 26% pursued further education and the rest of those who chose the employment path found work with the help of support measures (work trials, workshops and rehabilitative work activities). The proportion of young people who joined the coaching programme and went on to pursue further education remains almost the same as last year. The results have been broken down to show that, of those who were outside the workforce at the beginning of the programme, 29% had found employment or started education by the end of the coaching, while over a third had started looking for a job.

A wide range of collaborative efforts have been undertaken with companies to promote youth employment. The goal is not only to increase employment opportunities for young people, but also to boost their understanding of working life and the various career paths available, while simultaneously raising employers' awareness of the challenges of youth employment. Particular efforts have been made to promote the employment of foreign-language speakers by working with companies in the Lahti, Turku and Kuopio regions and the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

The number of young people who found employment or started education remained consistent with the 2024 figures. However, the number of young people who dropped out of the programme increased, reaching 38%.

Reasons for this include the fact that, in recent years, Vamos has developed services specifically for young people waiting for mental health services, as well as for those who are struggling to navigate the complex service system due to their limited ability to function.

Young people progress through the Vamos activities according to their own situation and goals. In 2025, coaching processes varied in length from a few months to over a year, and young people participated in low-threshold activities flexibly according to their life situations.

General social developments can always be seen in the Vamos activities. In 2025, the unemployment rate increased and the number of job vacancies decreased. At the end of December, there were 43,000 unemployed jobseekers under the age of 25, 5,500 more than in December of the previous year (Employment Bulletin, December 2025). A slightly smaller proportion of young people who participated in Vamos activities also advanced to employment or education paths than before.

Of those who came to Vamos without having completed their comprehensive school education, 44% had found employment or started education, thereby proceeding to complete their comprehensive school education. Of those who had completed comprehensive school, 16% found employment or started education, while 24% of those with at least an upper secondary education advanced to employment or education paths. Therefore, it can be concluded that advancing to employment and education paths becomes easier with higher levels of education.

Of the young people who were available for the labour market, 26% found employment or started education. By contrast, the corresponding figure for those who came to the coaching from a situation of not being in employment or education, and not being registered as unemployed jobseekers, was 14%. Young people who are registered as unemployed jobseekers already have a stronger ability to function than those outside the workforce.

The effectiveness of the Vamos activities is evident in the fact that nearly half of those who completed the coaching programme were guided to employment or education paths, despite the nationwide slump in employment.

Not all young people taking part in the Vamos activities are ready to advance to employment, education or employment-promoting services at the end of the programme. The aim of youth-centred work is to help young people find the next step on their future path that supports their own goals and to which they can commit. Evidence shows that this provides a long-term solution for young people. Later integration into working life is more sustainable than guiding a reluctant young person into work with insufficient resources. The length of the Vamos coaching process is determined by the individual needs of each young person.

In 2025, coaching processes lasted anywhere from a few months to over a year, with an average duration of around eight months. Young people participated in low-threshold, open activities in a flexible way, depending on their life situation – either attending one-off sessions or visiting more regularly.

*The Vamos Mieli project offered guidance on mental health issues to young people and created new materials for professionals, some of which were developed by young people themselves.*



## Changes in young people's wellbeing

The content and goals of the coaching are tailored to the individual needs of each young person. As advancing to education and employment paths is not the primary goal for all young people when they enter the service, it is important to consider changes in the wellbeing of those who have participated in coaching, in addition to the referral outcomes. The starting point of the young person also determines whether the coaching focuses more on providing psychosocial support to build resources and lay the groundwork for later transitions to education and employment. In this case, the coaching may address issues such as establishing a circadian rhythm, managing everyday life and accessing necessary social welfare and healthcare services, especially at the beginning of the coaching process.

The Recovery Star is the Finnish version of the Outcomes Star™ method, which is primarily used in the social welfare and healthcare sector to assess and support the progress of recovery and wellbeing. It is one of the Outcomes Star assessment tools, five of which have been translated into Finnish. One of them is the Recovery Star. The Recovery Star examines changes in the lives and wellbeing of young people in ten different areas. It provides a comprehensive overview of the changes experienced by young people during the coaching process. The assessment is used interactively in Vamos coaching and also serves as a goal-setting tool, as it is completed jointly by the coach and the young person. Each area of the star is assessed using a scale from 1 to 10. It has been used for various Vamos activities since 2017.

During 2025, 405 young people completed two or more Recovery Star assessments. The change between two or more assessments represents the changes in the young person's wellbeing and ability to function that have occurred during the coaching process. The most significant positive changes were seen in the areas of life that the young people had identified as the weakest when they first came to Vamos. In line with previous years, the area of mental health showed the greatest improvement in the average score in 2025 (+1.26). The lowest baseline value was in the area of work and education (with an average score of 5.17), which saw a +1.24 change in the average score as a result of the coaching. However, the changes in average scores are lower than in previous years for the areas of confidence and hope (+1) and identity and self-confidence (+1.07). According to publications by Sitra and the Children and Youth Foundation, among others, 2025 marked a clear turning point in young Finns' faith in the future. Both Sitra and government authorities emphasise that young people's weakening faith in the future threatens their own educational and employment choices, mental health and democratic participation, as well as Finland's long-term development. This is also reflected in the Outcomes Star data.

In 2025, the Deaconess Foundation introduced a customer satisfaction survey for all its services. The survey was conducted as a pulse survey, enabling responses to be collected as comprehensively as possible from participants involved in activities at different times. It also allowed the survey to be kept short, making it quick and easy to complete. The individual questions were grouped under the main themes of safety, relevance to needs, availability, encounters, customer-centredness, agency

and inclusion. A total of 2,517 responses were collected from young people participating in Vamos activities. According to the responses to the customer satisfaction survey, 95% of young people who took part in Vamos activities felt that they received help when they needed it. The average level of satisfaction with the service in terms of its relevance to needs, availability, and customer-centredness was 90% or higher in all areas. Safety in particular was perceived to be high, with an average satisfaction rate of 94.2%.

## Societal benefits and cost implications

Young people can always participate in Vamos activities free of charge. The activities are funded by project and organisation grants, purchases from wellbeing services counties and municipalities and the Deaconess Foundation's own funding, among other sources.

In 2021, the Itla Children's Foundation conducted an impact study on Vamos, building an analytical model to calculate its societal benefits and cost implications.

In the analytical model, data from the Vamos customer register data on young people who completed the Vamos service between 2017 and 2020 (N=3,260) were matched to the 1987 Finnish Birth Cohort data (N=59,476) in terms of the young people's starting points at the beginning of the Vamos programme and the changes that occurred during the period under review. Rehabilitative work activities were used as a comparison.

In this context, societal benefits refer to the cumulative economic impact on the public administration (in the form of reduced social transfers and increased tax revenues) over the life cycle after the end of the comparison period for young people who were guided to education and employment paths. Cost implications refer to the costs of activities that are deducted from social benefits to calculate the SROI (Social Return on Investment) ratio. The SROI method has been used to estimate the costs and impacts of activities in monetary terms. In this calculation, societal benefits are divided by the costs incurred during the review period.

Figure 3 shows the societal benefits and cost implications for the young people who were in the Vamos programme in 2025. The calculations are based on a 2021 study by the Itla Children's Foundation on the impact of Vamos (Merikukka et al. 2021).



**Young people's wellbeing was strengthened during the coaching, and almost all participants felt they received the help they needed.**

## Vamos 2025

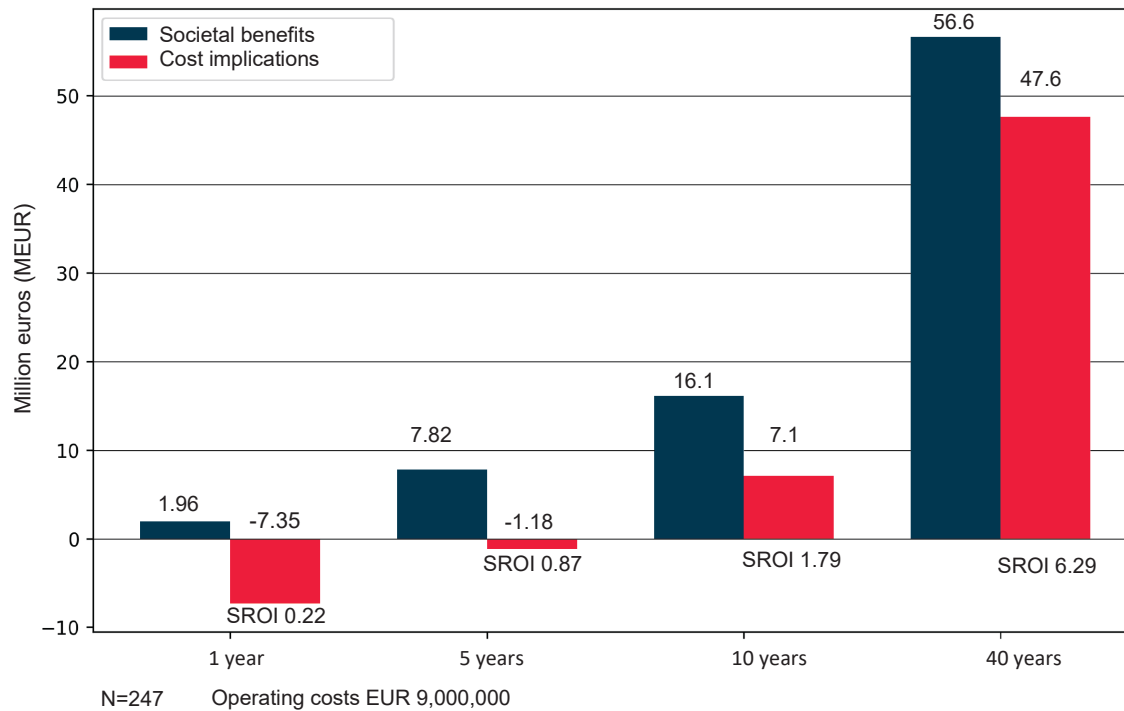


Figure 3: Projected societal benefits and cost implications of Vamos for those who completed the coaching in 2025 (N=246)

For each person who gains access to an employment or education path, society benefits economically by €5,000–7,000 per year in terms of increased income and reduced social transfers and other costs. As shown in the above figure, the societal benefits of the Vamos service amount to €1.96 million in the first year under review, with a significant increase expected in the longer term.

Meanwhile, the cost implications will be –€7.35 million in the first year under review, but will reach €7.1 million over ten years, according to the calculation formula developed by Itla. Based on data collected between 2017 and 2022 from young people who had completed the service, the cumulative societal benefit projected for each year is €13–15 million.

### SOCIETAL BENEFIT:

The cumulative economic impact on the public administration (in the form of reduced social transfers and increased tax revenues) over the life cycle after the end of the comparison period for young people who were guided to education and employment paths (Impact study on the Vamos youth service, ITLA 2021).

### COST IMPLICATIONS:

The costs of activities that are deducted from social benefits → SROI ratio: SROI, Social Return on Investment, a method used to estimate the costs and impacts of activities in monetary terms. In the calculation, societal benefits are divided by the costs incurred during the review period.



## Summary and conclusions

The year 2025 was a year of growth, expansion and societal change for Vamos activities. A total of 3,791 young people took part in the activities, with 2,390 receiving intensive coaching and 1,401 participating in the low-threshold Olohuone or Katutaso activities. Vamos responded to the growing need for support among young people at a time when youth poverty, mental health issues and job insecurity were on the rise. The service had a wide reach among young people who were not in education or employment, many of whom were dependent on last-resort social security or had no primary source of income.

Based on Vamos's activities in 2025, it can be concluded that the service plays an important role in promoting the wellbeing, functional ability and inclusion of young people at a time when youth poverty and mental health issues are on the rise and the service system is overburdened. Vamos is able to reach young people at risk of dropping out of education or employment and provide them with personalised, long-term and low-threshold support that public services are not always able to offer. When young people join the service, they often have poor living conditions, with a significant proportion living on last-resort social security or without a main source of income.

*A donation from BRP, a snowmobile manufacturer, strengthened the anti-bullying work of Vamos Rovaniemi. The Yellow Day campaign raised awareness of bullying around the world.*

The changes that take place during coaching demonstrate that providing young people with holistic support can significantly improve their life situation and ability to function. Almost half of those who had no income or were receiving social assistance at the start of the coaching programme experienced an improvement in their financial situation, and many of those who were outside the workforce found employment, started education or began searching for a job. Although the employment situation deteriorated across the country in 2025, Vamos still succeeded in guiding nearly half of those who completed the programme into education or employment paths.

Changes in wellbeing support this trend: young people felt that their mental health, sense of hope, identity and social network had been strengthened during the coaching process. It is also clear that providing timely guidance does not necessarily result in an immediate transition to education or employment – for many young people, the most important thing is to identify a realistic and sustainable next step that creates the conditions for a future commitment. This shows that a personalised and youth-centred approach is justified and effective. The Olohu-one and Katutaso activities, which were expanded in 2025, also strengthened low-threshold services, reaching out to foreign-speaking and lonely young people with limited social networks who needed a safe place to spend time in.

The projects carried out during the year demonstrate Vamos's ability to respond to rapidly changing societal needs, such as the backlog of mental health services, the increased demand for support for neurodivergent young people, the challeng-

es of employing young foreign-language speakers and the rise in the use of intoxicants. Extensive cooperation with various stakeholders – public services, businesses and volunteers – will strengthen the service package and create new opportunities for young people.

Overall, Vamos produces clear societal benefits. Impact studies show that the activities reduce long-term costs and promote the employment and inclusion of young people, delivering tangible economic benefits within the first few years. The results demonstrate that Vamos is an integral part of the youth support network and that its existence is essential at a time when young people's wellbeing is becoming a polarising issue and service needs are becoming more complex. The impact of the activities relies on young people feeling seen, heard and genuinely supported. It lays the foundations for lasting change in their lives.

In 2025, Vamos established itself as an important and influential part of the youth support network at a time when young people's wellbeing was becoming a polarising issue and their service needs were increasing. Individual, long-term and low-threshold support strengthens young people's ability to function, improves their financial situation and encourages them to commit to educational and employment paths. It delivers both human and societal benefits and responds to changing needs in a flexible way.

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