



# FREE FROM LEARNING DIFFICULTIES PROJECT 2007-2011

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## Kriminaalihuollon tukisäätiö, Krits

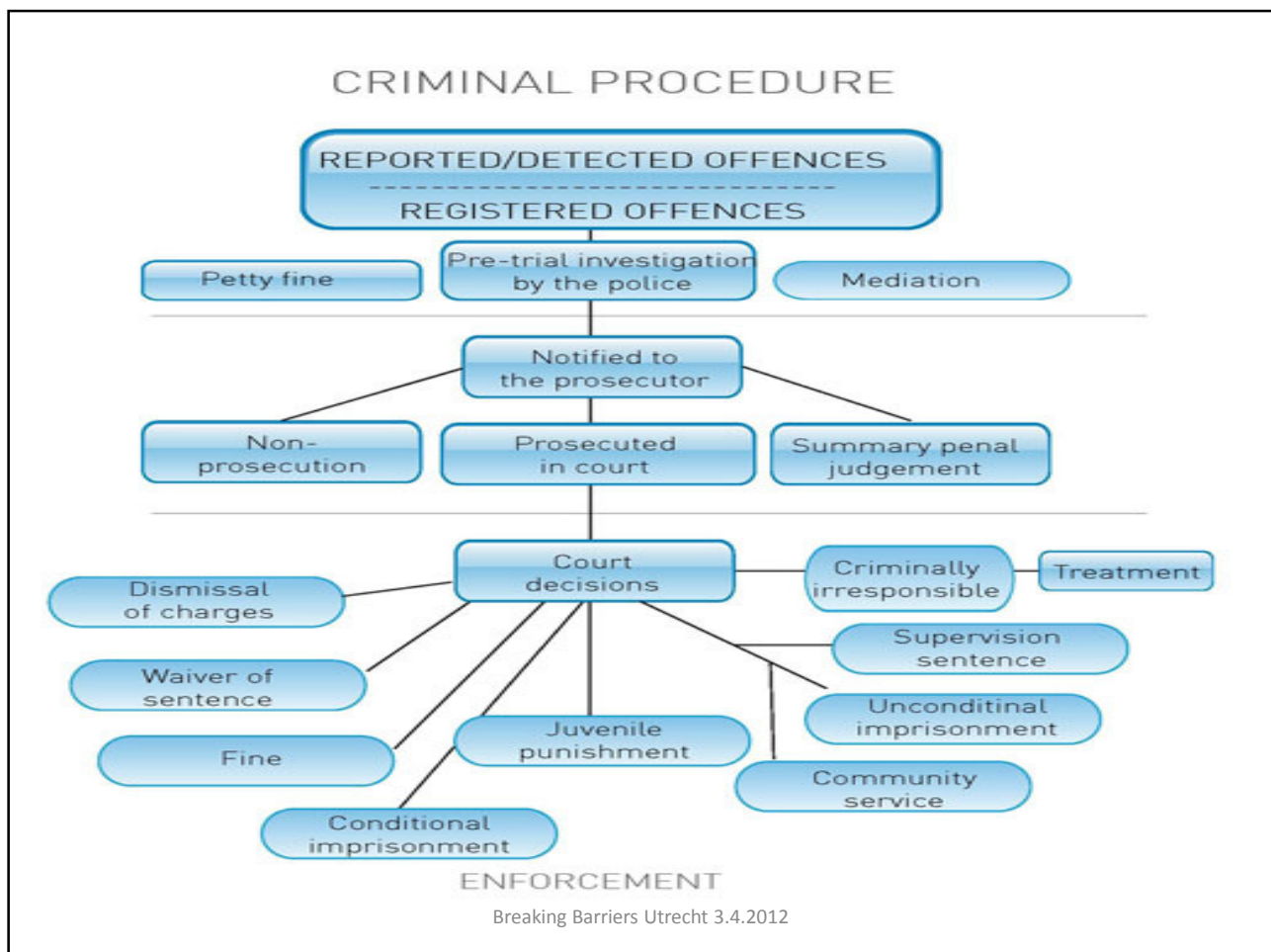
- Kriminaalihuollon tukisäätiö (Krits) is a nationwide aftercare organisation (NGO).
- The purpose of Krits is to improve the deprived status and living conditions of released prisoners and clients of community sanctions and their families in the society.



## Krits' s activities

- Supported housing services at Helsinki area
- Peer support contact point Redis
- Ombudsman
- Familywork
- Learning
- Portti vapauteen (Gate to freedom) -internet portal for released prisoners, their families and professionals
- Development projects

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## Prison services in 2009



- The average length of the prison term was about nine months.
- The daily average prison population was 3492 (2008: 3526)
- 7 % of prisoners were women.
- 14 % of prisoners were foreign prisoners.
- The average age of the prisoners was 36 years.
- Violent crimes (19,9%) and homicides (19,3 %) are most common crimes.
- Read more [www.rikosseuraamus.fi](http://www.rikosseuraamus.fi) english pages

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## Prisoners learning difficulties

- About 25% of people have learning difficulties
- Much more common among prisoners, 40-80%
- Adhd 25-50% (Rise 2009)
- 43% have reading difficulties (Salo 2006)
- 33% have problems with technical reading (Salo 2006)
- 30% have problems with reading comprehension (Tuominen 2009)

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## Got to do something..

- Often hereditary
- Also pertains to the world of work
- Undiagnosed learning difficulties often contribute to low self-esteem, depression, intoxicant abuse..

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## Free from learning difficulties "Oppiva" project

- Part of a more extensive learning difficulty project financed by the Slot Machine Association
- Project Manager and two Rehabilitation Instructors
- Co-operation partners:
  - Public administration
  - Four Foundations and associations (Finnish Diverse Learners' Association)
  - Three schools

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## Target groups



- Inmates under 30 years of age
- The under 30-year-old customers of the Community sanction offices
- People close to the customers
- Staff of the criminal sanctions field, organisations working with the customers and the public sector

## Aim of the project



- To look into the learning difficulties prisoners have and to construct rehabilitation paths from the term of punishment to freedom.
- To direct the attention of both the target persons as well as authorities and organizations to these problems.
- To improve the target persons' understanding of their own learning difficulties.

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## Forms of activity



- Identifying learning difficulties
  - OPPIVA test, perception channel test, attention assessment form
  - Dyslexia screen, dyslexia test, calculation test
  - Assessment of working ability
  - Neuropsychological/neurological examinations as an outsourcing service
  - Survey by means of discussion
- Guidance and support in learning problems
  - Preparing a rehabilitation schedule together with the customer's network
  - Providing dyslexia rehabilitation
- Support in managing everyday activities after release

## We have reached



- A total of 330 persons that belong to our clientele and more than 1000 professionals
- 181 actual long-term customers (at least two meetings)
- An after-release rehabilitation schedule, in which Oppiva has played a part, has been prepared for 2/3 of the customers
- Most of the customers have continued in the Oppiva project after release => the release stage is challenging

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## Observations on customers

- Average age 25 years
- Three women, the rest are men
- 75% have reading/writing difficulties
- 80% have attention deficit symptoms
- The majority of the customers learn best by doing and experiencing
- 92% have substance abuse problems
- Only 10% have upper secondary qualification

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## Observations on neuropsychological studies 1/2

- Attention deficit problems are the main reason for referral to a neuropsychologist
- Intellectual level is good
- Memory difficulties, especially auditory memory is poor
- Difficult to understand speech
- Slow reader
- Psychological problems (e.g. anxiety, depression)
- Difficult to divide attention

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## Observations on neuropsychological studies 2/2

- Reading comprehension difficulties
- Face recognition difficulties
- Writing difficulties
- General difficulty to concentrate
- Executive function difficulties
- Hypersensitivity to noise
- Difficult to comprehend rapid speech
- Perception problems
- Problems with motor functions
- Poor linguistic deduction skills

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## Other observations

- Customers have been transferred to special education because of disturbing in class, but the reason behind this has not been identified properly
  - => often an underlying unidentified learning difficulty
- Learning difficulties should definitely be paid more attention to in the criminal sanctions field
  - => to improve the social adhesion of the customers



## Other observations



- Dyslexia diagnosis has helped many customers get a driving licence
- Diagnosis of learning difficulties has improved the self-respect of many customers and given them the confidence to pursue studies
- Prisoners should have the opportunity to attend neuropsychological tests during their imprisonment
- Network co-operation should be increased, especially during transition periods
- Work-oriented supported study opportunities should be increased both in prisons and in the community

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## How about the future?



- We get new funding : Coaching for learning continues nationwide

### Targets of the work:

- To develop identification and rehabilitation of prisoners learning difficulties
- To raise the workers knowledge of learning difficulties
- To increase understanding between social exclusion and learning difficulties

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## What do we do?



- **Network** of professionals who work with prisoners learning
- **Peer groups** for prisoners who have learning difficulties, adhd
- **Lectures and consultation** for people who work with prisoners
- **Guidance and support** in learning problems for prisoners

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