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Mentoring and Peer Support

Experiences in Finnish Universities of Technology

Laura Kanninen, University of Oulu

Riitta Kivimäki, Tampere University of Technology

Tuuli Ikäheimonen, Lappeenranta University of Technology



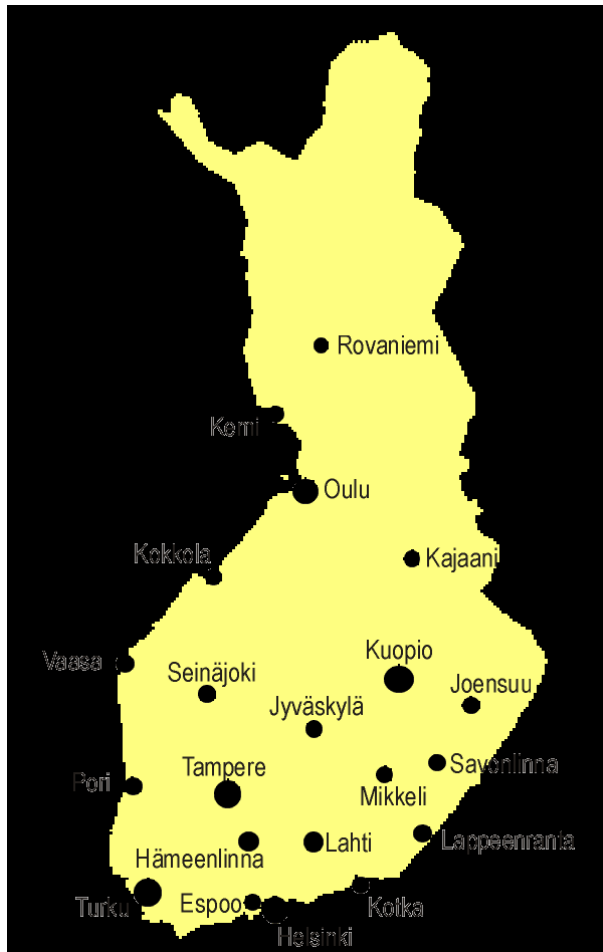


Tasks

- WE Mentoring: Laura
 - WE Methods and Practice
- WE Peer Support: Tuuli
 - WE Target Group: Women Entrepreneurs
 - WE Methods and Practice
- WE Peer Support: Riitta
 - WE Methods and Practice: Academic Women Engineers
 - WE Results



Finland



University of Oulu






Lappeenranta University of
Technology

Tampere University of
Technology






University of Oulu / Oulu region

University of Oulu

-  16 000 students, 3100 employees
-  6 faculties, 45 study programmes
-  Focused on IT, biotechnology and northern & environmental issues
-  Faculty of technology: approx. 20-25% women
-  WomEqual is managed by the Department of electrical and information engineering

City of Oulu

-  127 000 inhabitants
-  One of the largest centres of expertise in Northern Europe
-  A significant concentration of high technology: IT, biotechnology



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WomEqual at the University of Oulu

- WF Target group contains all the academic women engineers in the Oulu region
 - WF Participants are aged between 20-50+
 - WF Educational background from engineering students to Dr. Tech
 - WF Participants come from the University of Oulu, local companies such as Nokia, Kemira and Fujitsu, Technical research centre of Finland, State regional environment centre etc.
 - WF Occupations of the participants vary: researcher, sw engineer, product manager, head inspector, student...
- WF Aims of the project in University of Oulu
 - WF Mentoring of women engineers
 - WF Creating networks for the women engineers in Northern Finland






What is mentoring?

Mentoring

-  The mentor supports and encourages the mentee
-  Mentee develops herself, increases her potential as a professional, and improves her performance
-  Mentoring is objective-oriented, not just chatting
-  Focus on mentee's needs for professional development
-  It is guided with principles agreed by each mentoring pair or group

For whom it suits best?

-  Mentees who are willing to learn from the mentor's experience
-  Mentors who are willing to share their tacit knowledge
-  Strong motivation is essential



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WomEqual at the University of Oulu

Mentoring programme for women engineers is organised:

- **Personal mentoring**
 - Mentors and mentees are paired according to each mentee's individual needs
- **Group mentoring**
 - Groups of 2-3 women have an own mentor
 - Mentees in every group have similar needs
- **Peer support groups**
 - Peer groups of 5-13 women are gathered
 - Subjects relevant to each group are discussed
- **Networking events**
 - Organised once or twice a year, open for all women taking part in WomEqual



Mentoring Programme: Needs

- Needs of the participants vary:
 - Starting career in the industry after achieving PhD
 - Career development and career planning
 - Managing, being a leader
 - Finishing studies
 - Career and family: how to combine demanding job and family life?
 - Meeting other women in similar career phases
 - Working in multicultural organisations



Mentoring Programme: Practice

- Informing about the programme started in Sep 05
 - An opening event was organised and advertised in various channels
 - Lists of the graduates, university employees, students, companies, internet, university PR office, alumni networks
 - Email, personal contacts, printed invitations
- Participants were gathered during autumn 05
 - Every participant of the opening event was contacted: Gathering mentees and selecting mentors accordingly
 - Pairing, providing training and mentoring materials
- First mentoring pairs and groups started in Jan 06
 - The main idea was that everybody could chose the best way to operate: length and ways of the cooperation, subjects discussed etc.
 - Plenty of materials provided for designing the cooperation
- Providing the needed assistance during the project



Mentoring Programme: Methods

- The programme is based on the needs of the mentee
=>everybody chooses the best way to operate in order to fulfil the needs, “customer orientation”
- Step 1: Proper base
 - Literature study and benchmarking of other mentoring programmes
- Step 2: Focus on informing early on the project
 - Informing the target group through various channels
- Step 3: Defining the needs of the mentees
 - Interviewing all the mentees
 - Evaluating needs for the process and explaining the meaning of mentoring: what can/cannot be expected
 - Assessing which solution will be the best for each participant (pair/group mentoring, peer group or no participation)



Mentoring Programme: Methods

- **Step 4: Individual selection of mentors**
 - Starting from the mentee needs
 - Using the network of the project coordinators: defining suitable people
 - Personal contacts to the defined people
- **Step 5: Proper material**
 - Existing mentoring literature and experiences of the previous mentoring projects were used
 - The material is designed to help in recognising the individual needs and planning the most suitable working model for each group
- **Step 6: Personal training**
 - Offered individually for each mentor and mentee
 - Emphasising the main idea behind the programme



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More Info

 <http://www.ee.oulu.fi/womequal/index-en.shtml>


 Email: laura.kanninen@oulu.fi

 Gsm: +358 40 829 7527



Peer Support

What it is

-  In peer groups participants can discuss and get support from others who are or have been in a similar situation or have similar experiences. Peer tutoring is also an effective way of learning and transferring information between group members.

- Riitta Kivimäki, Tampere University of Technology
- Tuuli Ikäheimonen, Lappeenranta University of Technology



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Lappeenranta University of Technology (LUT)

- City of Lappeenranta
 - 59 000 inhabitants
 - Main business fields: wood processing, information and communication technology and service industries
 - Training and education centre in South-East of Finland (South Karelia region)
- Lappeenranta University of Technology
 - 5000 students, 900 employees
 - 8 faculties
 - Focused on combination of technology and economics
 - WomEqual is managed by the Department of Business Administration



WomEqual at the LUT

“Supporting women entrepreneurs”

- WF Target group: Women entrepreneurs and women interested in entrepreneurship in South Karelia region
- WF Main aims are
 - WF Founding peer support groups for different target groups
 - WF Arrange seminars for local women entrepreneurs
 - WF Developing supporting model for women entrepreneurs in South Karelia region in co-operation with local supporter of entrepreneurs
 - WF Participating in WomEqual –project’s common actions and mainstreaming







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WomEqual at the LUT

Peer groups

-  2 groups started in march 2006: one for entrepreneurs with start-ups and the other for more experienced women entrepreneurs
-  Both groups will meet 8-10 times during 2006
-  Firms of participants are mainly small service companies
-  Backgrounds (education, age, motives) of entrepreneurs varies a lot



WomEqual at the LUT

- Peer groups: something about subjects
 - subjects for meetings are proposed by participants
 - Short introduction of the subject at the beginning of each meeting
 - Discussion about the subject by comparing experiences of participants
 - Proposed subjects are mainly information based (for example marketing mix, a pension plan for entrepreneurs)
 - Entrepreneurs are also interested in subjects like ‘connecting entrepreneurship with family life’ or ‘finding a substitute for entrepreneur during holidays’



WomEqual at the LUT

- Peer tutoring and entrepreneurs: some experiences
 - Entrepreneurs are not easy to reach and get to participate
 - The most powerful way to reach entrepreneurs seems to be by “word of mouth”
 - One way to reach entrepreneurs with start-ups is for example via financial institutions or other supporter
 - Effective way to reach more experienced entrepreneurs is via entrepreneurship organizations



WomEqual at the LUT

- Peer tutoring and entrepreneurs: some experiences
 - Challenge: heterogeneous target group
 - Different firms (service companies, small production companies, virtual companies...), common feature is quite small size
 - Different entrepreneurs:
 - Motivation to make business
 - Education and know-how
 - Experience
 - ...



WomEqual at the LUT

- Peer tutoring and entrepreneurs: some experiences
 - Peer tutoring is not only problem-based method
 - For entrepreneurs peer tutoring is mainly:
 - A tool for learning
 - Possibility to change experiences
 - A way of getting new ideas and view for their own job
 - Possibility for networking and creating contacts with other entrepreneurs



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WomEqual at the LUT

What next:

- Groups for women entrepreneurs if needed
- A group for academic women entrepreneurs or for academic women working for example in the university but also interested in entrepreneurship as a possibility
- Seminars (subject: entrepreneurship as a possibility)
- Some action for supporter of women entrepreneurs



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WomEqual at the LUT

More information:

- www.lut.fi (LUT)
- www.lut.fi/kati (Department on Business Administration)
- www.lappeenranta.fi (City of Lappeenranta)
- www.kareltek.fi (a technology centre in the campus area of LUT)


Tuuli Ikäheimonen

e-mail: tuuli.ikaheimonen@lut.fi







City of Tampere / Tampere University of Technology (TUT)

City of Tampere

-  Over 204 000 inhabitants
-  Region is a modern concentration of industry, commerce, services and education

Tampere University of Technology

-  12 333 students, 1897 employees (2004)
-  20,3 % of all students are women (2004)
-  Tut has pioneered cooperation between universities and business life in Finland
-  WomEqual is managed by the Laboratory of Electrical Engineering and Health



WomEqual at the TUT

- ”Finding a working operational model for peer support groups for women in Universities of Technology”
- Main aims are:
 - Founding different kind of peer support groups
 - Testing different working operational models
 - Evaluating
 - Spreading good functions
 - Mainstreaming



WomEqual at the TUT

- Peer groups
 - 3 groups based more on free conversation and exchange of experiences
 - 1 group for post graduate students based on presentations from library personnel
- Networking events
 - Themes about combining family and work
 - Organised 2 – 3 times per year



Peer Groups: Methods

- Peer groups / free conversation
 - Three groups: one for female executives, one for post graduates and one for female teachers & researchers
 - Usually 4 - 8 participants
 - Meet 7 – 8 times, once a month
 - one meeting takes 1 ½ hour
 - Themes e.g.
 - Mental work load
 - Equality between women and men at work, and family life
 - Scheduling



Peer Groups: Methods

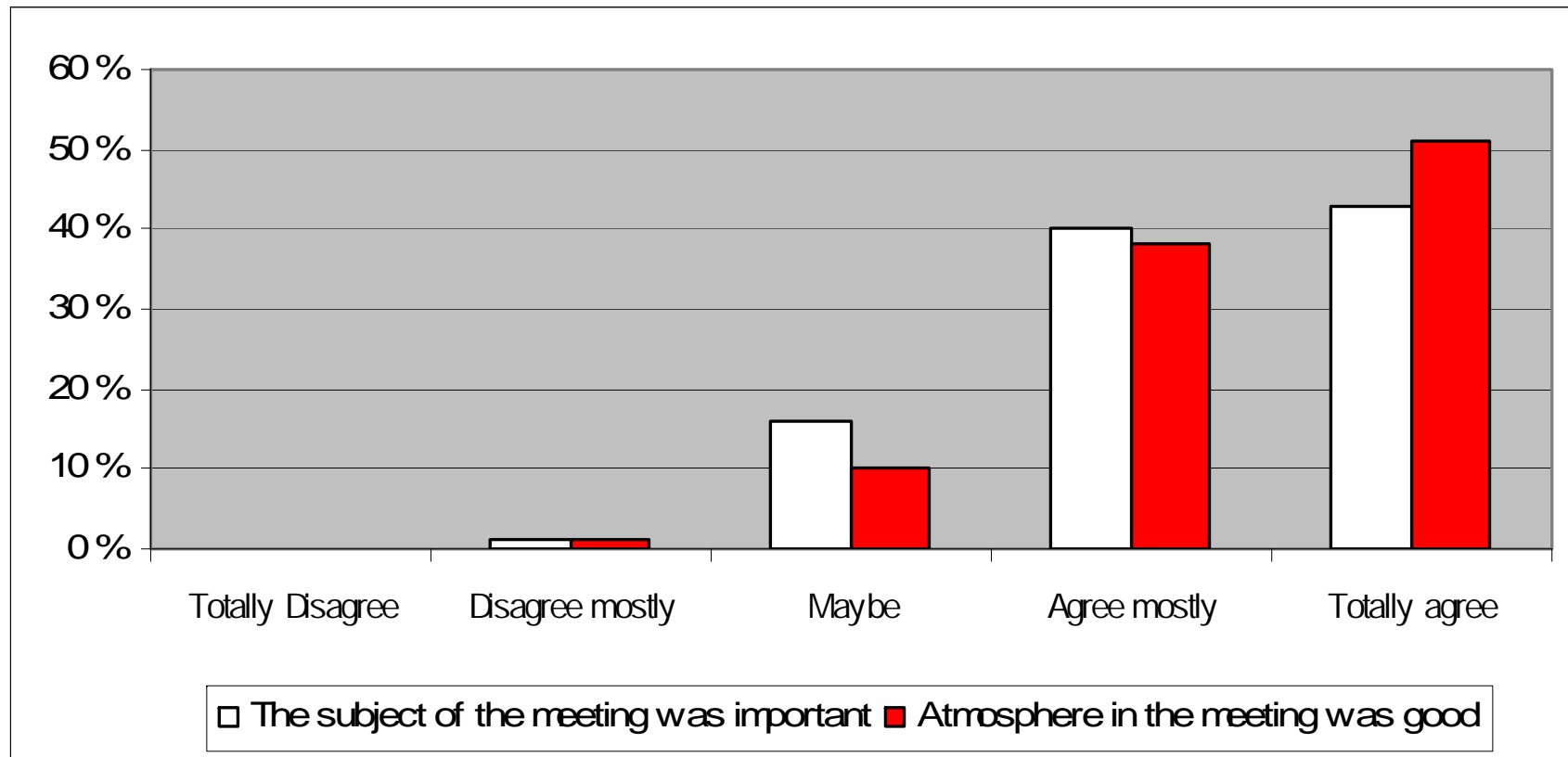
- Peer groups / expert presentations
 - Aimed at post graduates at TUT
 - Usually 5 – 10 participants
 - Meet 4 times, once a month
 - One meeting takes 1 - 1 ½ hour
 - Themes:
 - Scheduling the doctoral thesis
 - Information retrieval
 - Printing the doctoral thesis
 - The public defense of a doctoral thesis

Riitta Kivimäki, TUT







Peer Groups: Feedback

- Feedback from participants is collected shortly after each meeting by e-mail
 - Statement: "The subject of the meeting was important"
 - Statement: "Atmosphere in the meeting was good"
 - Statements can be valued from 1 – 5 (1 = totally disagree, 5 = totally agree)
 - Proposals to develop peer group activities further





What Next




-  New peer groups will be established in autumn 2006
-  Networking events will be organised during autumn 2006
-  Comparing and evaluating different kinds of groups will continue
-  Further development of operation models



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More Information

-  www.e-leeh.org (Laboratory of Electrical Engineering and Health)
-  www.tut.fi (Tampere University of Technology)
-  www.tampere.fi (City of Tampere)

Riitta Kivimäki

e-mail: [riitta.kivimaki\(at\)tut.fi](mailto:riitta.kivimaki@tut.fi)

Riitta Kivimäki, TUT

