

Title: **Assessing work performance in people with developmental disabilities**

Presentation format: Oral / Poster presentation

Authors: Ville Villberg

RinneKoti-Foundation

ville.villberg@rinnekoti.fi

Abstract:

In Supported Employment (SE) the motivation, skills and aptitudes of the client are often assessed by the job coach in a process called vocational profiling. Most models of SE do not encourage using norm-referenced or other structural measures of performance to make inferences about the client's job readiness. Instead, vocational profiling should rely more on client interviews, observational methods and functional assessments to identify the client's work skills and possible needs for adaptations.

There are a few assessment-tools available that can be used to evaluate the client's work performance in a given task. Only one of these, the Melba (Abkürzung für **M**erkmalprofile zur **E**ingliederung **L**eistungsgewandelter und **B**ehinderter in **A**rbeit) has been recommended for use in vocational rehabilitation by the Social Insurance Institution in Finland. However, the qualifiers in Melba-evaluation are often quite complicated and can only be evaluated by trained professionals. Moreover these qualifiers are not always applicable for people with developmental disabilities.

In the SE framework, the key assessment questions should be: "what can the person do?" and "what kind of support will he/ she need in the workplace?". The criteria for job success should be defined or approved by the employer. Furthermore, the tool that is used for the evaluation should improve communication between the employer, job-coach, employee and his/ her support network.

In the Skills to Work –project we created an easy-to-use evaluation framework to capsuleize work performance into simple multi-level client-profiles. The qualifiers of these profiles were designed to describe the overall work performance of people with developmental disabilities. When needed, the qualifiers can be depicted in detail by using suitable questionnaires.

This evaluation framework enables an easy review of the clients work history and need for supports in various work-settings which, in turn facilitates planning of future directions for SE.