



# The Accessible Office Building





**Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities (FPD)** is a diversified nationwide organization representing the interests of, and providing services for people with physical disabilities.

The FPD runs many kinds of development projects, the most notable of which has been the construction of an accessible office at Ruskeasuo in Helsinki in 2007. An office constructed for accessibility provides a good and safe working environment suitable for all employees irrespective of possible limitations in functional ability.



### **Accessibility as a way of thinking**

The aim of the project was to encourage Finnish office culture towards the provision of structural spaces offering greater support in the workplace for people with a disability. At the same time the kind of working environment model is created which has application as a general reference in office planning while also serving to remove obstacles to the employment of people with a disability.

Accessibility in FPD's accessible office building means carefully designed and planned, discreetly accessible office space which has been created by making small choices throughout the project.

A group of users assisted the designers, contributing strongly to all practical solutions concerning accessibility. In addition to this, all employees had the opportunity to test the functionality of working spaces and furnishings with the help of full scale models.





## Design themes in practice

### Accessibility

- All areas of the building are accessible.
- The lifts are spacious with through-car entry/exit, voice guidance and with buttons at a suitable height in one row.

### Ease of orientation

- The environment is easily comprehensible. For instance, every floor has colour codes that are logically located in the same place on each floor.
- Specific functions are also logically located in the same place on each floor (e.g. storage and copying facilities, toilets and kitchenettes).

### Managing the working environment

- All work place furnishings allow generous adjustment. For instance, all desks are electrically height-adjustable.
- The location of work place furnishings can be easily changed.

### Universal applicability

- All facilities in the building, including toilets, are suitable for all users. Facilities do not give the impression of having been designed specially for people with disabilities.
- Work stations can be added, removed or combined when needed.

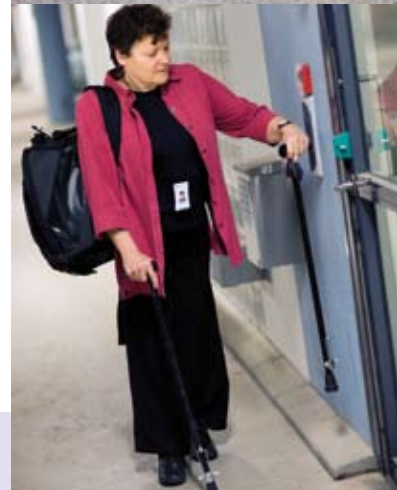
### Safety

- Sprinkler system and fire alarm system (detectors with unique addresses) are used and the lifts are back-uped with battery power.
- Users of assistive devices can be evacuated to the balconies; the rescue plan includes staff appointed as floor monitors to ensure the safety of such persons in particular.
- Various types of users have been taken into consideration when the materials have been selected.

### Economic efficiency

- The construction of the accessible office building did not cost more than that of a conventional office building.





**Chief designer:**

Hannu Jaakkola, Jaakkola Architects

**Project manager:**

Haahtela Project management

**Extent:**

gross area 11,715 m<sup>2</sup>, net usable area 8,020 m<sup>2</sup>

**Costs (excl. VAT):**

EUR 1,408 / gross m<sup>2</sup> (building)

EUR 507 / gross m<sup>2</sup> (plot and movables)

**The planning started:**

February 5, 2005

**The construction works started:**

April 5, 2006

**The building was completed:**

December 31, 2007



The accessible office building was constructed with the support of Finland's Slot Machine Association (RAY). Other sponsors included: Ilmarinen Mutual Pension Insurance Company, The Finnish Metalworkers' Union, Pohjola Bank Group, Sampo plc., Software Innovation Finland Oy, The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions, The Finnish Union of Practical Nurses, The Finnish Union of Electrical Workers, Orion Corporation, VVO Group.



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