

Nuotta coaching for young people - Finland

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As a strategic partnership that supports municipal level local youth work, Europe Goes Local (EGL) not only aims to raise the quality of youth work development but also create and influence a multiplier effect through identifying and promoting diverse activities of and to its members, partners and stakeholders. Thanks to the quality of its cooperation, EGL has become a rich platform of activities and practices that showcase the diversity and success of local youth work in various local settings and contexts.

We have decided to select and present to you 5 good practices that highlight the importance, creativity and impact of local youth work and look at the ways they align to the Charter's principles and promote its values across Europe.

In the hope that you might get inspired to implement a similar approach in your own country or learn more about what others are doing successfully, today we present to you the Finnish Youth Centre's Association - with their good practice of Nuotta coaching for young people and its impact.

<https://youtu.be/QaemnoGkHug>

- **Name of the good practice:** 'Nuotta Coaching for Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)'
- **Location:** Oulu, Finland
- **Organization:** Finnish Youth Centres' Association (Suomen nuorisokeskusyhdistys ry)

- **Organization Profile:** The Finnish Youth Centres Association is an organization for cooperation among youth centres in Finland. The youth centres offer Nuotta coaching, school camps, camps and other activities aimed at children and young people.

Finnish Youth Centres are supervised and subsidised by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The development of youth work in the Youth Centre Network is carried out by following the current Youth Act and The National Youth Work and Youth Policy Programme.

The Finnish Youth Centres Association develops the educational work at the youth centres, which offer a safe and responsible environment for various camps, courses, training sessions and other events throughout the year. It is Finland's most popular school camp organiser, with an emphasis on experiential learning and adventure education. In addition, the centres' Nuotta coaching for NEET youngsters supports young people's social and life management skills. Nuotta coaching has been organised at nine national youth centres since 2010. Youth centres also organise themed camps, nature schools and many international youth events. The Finnish Youth Centres Association also develops and coordinates the Finnish Adventure Education Network, which is a community of professional educators, researchers, students and other parties dedicated to adventure education. All the actors and organizations who practice adventure education or adventure therapy in Finland are involved in the activities and actions of this community. The Network encourages collaboration, sharing good practices and education and professional development in the field of adventure education and therapy.



- **Purpose of the activity:** Empowerment of young people and prevention of social exclusion and marginalization

Nuotta coaching aims to socially empower young people and to prevent inequality and exclusion. The primary purpose of Nuotta coaching is to provide support service and an additional resource for youth

workshops and youth outreach work. Along with youth workshop activities and youth outreach work, Nuotta coaching is part of a social empowerment service package funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In Nuotta coaching, young people's social empowerment is realised through a sense of community and social situations. The aim of the activities is to strengthen young people's self-reliance, everyday coping skills, social skills and a healthy lifestyle, and to support the service processes of collaborating parties. Nuotta coaching offers young people individual and group support and provides them with the tools for work between the young person and their youth worker. Also, the aim of Nuotta coaching is for the lessons learnt at Nuotta to be transferred to other operating environments: e.g. a successful climbing experience in a challenging situation which is professionally organised by a Nuotta coach can be transferred into other challenging situation when meeting authorities. The young person's self-confidence can be bolstered by reminding them of a concrete situation in which they succeeded.



- **Challenges in implementation: Logistical restraints and participation commitment**

Even though Nuotta coaching is free of charge for young people involved in youth workshop activities and youth outreach work and for their youth workers, there are some challenges related to working contracts and hours of the collaborating parties. In some municipalities, the youth workers are not allowed to engage in activities which involve overnight stay. It's considered too expensive to send youth workers to a camp because it requires a larger amount of working hours. One problem is the last-minute absences from the coaching. It's quite common that the actual amount of participants in

Nuotta camp is lower than expected because the youngsters are afraid of social situations. Often it is the first time ever to stay overnight out of the home without their families. To minimize last-minute absences from the coaching, the collaborating party is encouraged to closely involve young people in the planning and goal-setting, so that the young people commit to the coaching as much as possible. Youth centres also offer day coaching which primarily aims to provide an opportunity for young people to learn more about the youth centre and to lower the threshold for young people to participate in intensive coaching later on.



- **Impact:**

Young people: The main impact for young people is to strengthen their self-reliance, social skills, everyday coping skills and a healthy lifestyle. The immediate impact is to experience the importance of physical activities, regular meals and rhythm of day and night. It is also empowering to stay overnight in a place other than home. Many youngsters have been bullied or are very lonely and it's very empowering to feel to be a part of a group in a sense of community and feel safe in social situations. Finally, the aim of coaching is to transfer the lessons learnt at Nuotta to other environments.

Youth workers: Often youth workers lack methods, time and environment to introduce activity-

based methods such as adventure education. Nuotta coaching is a necessary and useful asset to youth workers in youth outreach work and workshops. The youth worker has the opportunity to influence the whole work that is carried out in Nuotta coaching by setting individual goals together with the youngster, by discussing goals with the whole group, and of course with Nuotta coach. The informal learning environment during the coaching offers the youth worker a great opportunity to chat with the young people about the things they learnt and learn to know them better. The youth worker is able to observe the group dynamics and how the individuals act in different situations, how they relate to each other etc. Revisiting experiences after Nuotta helps to bring successful experiences to mind and also helps to transfer those experiences into everyday life.

Youth work: Nuotta coaching is a very practical tool for youth outreach work to find a partner and collaborator for educational work with challenging young people. In small municipalities, the work of an individual outreach youth worker can be quite lonely and they often lack time, knowledge and venue for adventure education or other activity-based methods.

On the Finnish Youth Centres' Association: Nuotta coaching is the most influential single form of youth work at Youth centres in Finland. It is also the most challenging form of youth work organized at youth centres. It's intensive, requires experienced and well-educated personnel to be able to manage various kinds of activities and human aspects. We do preventive youth work for different client groups. According to the feedback we get from our clients (eg. young people at Nuotta coaching and their own youth workers, school children with their teachers at camp schools and other children and youngsters at camps and nature schools), our activities are educational, create a sense of community and belonging, clients experience that they have succeeded in activities and found new perspectives or learnt new skills.

Society/Community: Nuotta coaching is part of a social empowerment service package funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture and meant for all NEET young people under the age of 29 (in accordance with the Youth Act). Social exclusion and marginalization among young people are a great problem in Finland. Nuotta coaching is a small, but a great asset to answer to key policy objectives and measures of the National Youth Work and Youth Policy Programme (VANUPO) by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The programme coordinates the objectives and measures determined by the key ministries for promoting young people's growth and living conditions and designed to contribute to the attainment of the objectives defined in section 2 of the Youth Act (1285/2016) during the programme period. The Finnish Government has defined policy objectives for 2020–2023 which emphasize meaningful life and participation in the society.

Applying the European Charter on Local Youth Work*: All principles inscribed in each section of the Charter that the Good Practice applies in the design and implementation of this activity:

European Charter on Local Youth Work Good Practice Profile Card



Further references and contact: info@snk.fi