Nuotta Coaching for Young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Name of the organisation
Suomen nuorisokeskusyhdistys ry

Website of the organisation
www.snk.fi

Location of the organisation
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Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work
- Non-formal education/-learning
- Inclusion
- Diversity
- Segregation/integration

Good practice category

Good practice aim & purpose
Nuotta coaching aims to socially empower young people and to prevent inequality and exclusion. The primary purpose of Nuotta coaching is to provide a 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.

Good practice description
Please describe your good practice based on the above given information (Explain your practice as such, in 'technical' terms and as clear and simple as possible.)

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. Coaching is always planned individually to meet each group's objectives and wishes. Also, young persons backgrounds and situations in life are diverse, so the methods and activities used in coaching vary from group to group.

The impact of the coaching is based on the Nuotta coach's knowledge of choosing the right kinds of activities to achieve the group's goals. Basically, Nuotta coaching can be seen as adventure education and experiental education. Still, it is essential to carry out coaching in accordance with following the youth centres' pedagogical approach (see uploads).

Typical activities in Nuotta coaching are climbing, rowing, hiking and outdoor skills, problem-solving exercises, animal-assisted activities, archery, crafts and arts workshops, preparing food as a group, topical group discussions relating to the future and self-awareness and various reflection methods as part of the process. Nuotta coaching is organised as intensive coaching and as day coaching. The objective of day coaching is to guide young people into intensive coaching, as many of them are afraid of social situations. Intensive coaching takes the form of camps and involves an overnight stay. It is best not to plan a Nuotta schedule too strictly, as young people also require leisure time, and down-time between activities. Before Nuotta coaching youth workers from collaborating parties book coaching at youth centre. A Nuotta coordinator will send advance instructions for the group on how to plan the coaching so that the young people commit to the coaching as much as possible. The Nuotta coach will speak with the group's own youth worker to obtain the necessary background information to plan the program: e.g. group dynamics (do the participants know each other, are there any cliques or bullying among the group), the group's attitude towards the coaching and health information such as functional limitations that relate to physical, psychological or social safety. The background information helps to provide the Nuotta coach with an initial idea of the group and allows them to plan coaching that will provide an appropriate challenge for the participants.

During the coaching: the Nuotta coach will create a welcoming atmosphere right from the start. The young people are treated as individuals and the coach will strive to give each one positive personal feedback during the coaching. The programme before the activity will be planned so that participants can develop the skills they will need for the activity step-by-step. The programme will also contain sufficient time for reflection, which will use various methods to guide participants towards educational goals.

After the coaching: The group will transfer the things that they experienced and learnt at Nuotta after the coaching to their everyday lives. The collaborating party's youth worker plays a significant role in utilising the Nuotta coaching after the coaching so that the lessons learnt are transferred and concretised in the young people's daily lives

Please describe eventual challenges and problems related to the creation, implementation, and/or running of your good practice? (Explain the eventual difficulties that you have come across, so that others know what to think about if they want to implement your practice.)

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 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 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.

Please give the names, roles and tasks of eventual partners involved in the creation, implementation and/or running of your good practice.

The Nuotta coach is responsible for the activities marked in the programme, both planning and implementing. It is important that the Nuotta coach keeps the youth worker accompanying the group up-to-date and involved in the coaching. Throughout the entire coaching both the Nuotta coach and the youth worker will reflect on their observations of the young people and the group processes during the coaching.

The youth worker from the referring collaborating party plays a key role in the Nuotta process. Collaborative planning of the coaching begins the process before the actual coaching begins. Coaching is carried out in small group activities. Depending on the situation, the youth worker may act either as an observer or as an equal participant along with the young people encouraging, and striving to do their part to ensure the smooth function of the group during the session. The youth worker also plays a significant role in the evenings during the coaching, when there is a great opportunity to chat with the young people about the things they learnt or experienced during the day. Correspondingly, revisiting experiences after Nuotta helps to bring successful experiences to mind and also helps to transfer those experiences into everyday life.

Please give an overview of the resources needed in order to establish and run your good practice. (Please describe the human, financial and other resources that are needed. Please also explain if you have got external financing from sources available for others, and if so, from what funding scheme(s).)

You need a venue to spend two to three nights in a surrounding close to outdoors. To create a feeling of being in the camp is essential to achieve desired atmosphere of community and belonging. In a cold country such as Finland, you need to have youth centre operating environments that highlight nature and a wide range of activities. Regular meals and a clean bed to sleep in after an action-packed day are also an important part of the coaching and essential in order to achieve the goals of the Nuotta coaching. In warmer countries activity similar to Nuotta coaching could probably be in the wilderness, but in colder climate you need a place such as Youth Centre.

It's very important to make sure that security matters are taken into consideration in a holistic way, which means that not only hard skills (first aid skills, security plans, technical skills for climbing and canoeing etc.) but also soft security skills are essential. In order to be allowed to use climbing or canoeing as a method in youth work you need to have a training and standardized certificate organized by national climbing or canoeing society etc.. Soft security skills are educator's psychological skills to pay attention to feelings and experiences of individuals in the group. In a holistic view of security the coach minimizes psycho-social risks such as the coach makes young

people to take part in activities they feel they are not capable of, exclusion and discrimination happening among the group and strong feelings of fear and insecurity. When these matters are payed attention to, we can make sure that everyone can participate, feel seen in a respectful way and feel safe when taking part in the activities.

Another essential resource is the human resource. The Nuotta coach has to be an educated youth worker or social worker who also has skills and knowledge to use the methods of adventure education. It's a must to be able to work with groups to strengthen group cohesion in order to help youngsters to integrate and learn social skills. Former work experience with young people who have special needs in learning, specified social needs and integration problems, is an asset. It is recommended for coaches to be familiar with youth outreach work and workshop activities so that they can support the work of the youth worker that accompanies the young people.

In short, you need a suitable venue in the nature or close to nature, an educated and experienced youth worker or social worker specialized in adventure education and a group of youngsters (three to twelve) with their own youth worker. The camp should be no shorter than two nights, ideally taking four nights or more.

Good practice result & concrete effects
For 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. An example: A young person has participated in climbing activities despite being afraid of heights. The young person had a positive experience of daring to try and succeed at something that felt scary. After Nuotta coaching, the young person encounters a situation where they have to deal with the Employment Office in person. Meeting new people makes them feel uncomfortable. The youth worker reminds the young person of how good it felt after they had succeeded in the climbing activity. The young person's self-confidence is bolstered by reminding them of a concrete situation in which they succeeded.

For youth workers:

Nuotta coaching helps to reach young people that are unmotivated or unable to work on verbal level. Often the 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 from the has 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 cause with Nuotta coach. The sense of community felt by individual youngsters is the most powerful means to minimize the individual drop outs in services of youth outreach work or workshops after Nuotta coaching. 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.

For your organisation as such:

Nuotta coaching is the most influential single form of youth work at Youth centers 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. Still, it's difficult to measure and implement the impact of the role of preventive work in the lives of young people. For Nuotta youngsters it's more easy since the groups are small and the feedback more immediate and more detailed in the questionnaires they fill. Also the interaction and discussions between the Nuotta coach and the collaborating youth workers is intense and confidential

For youth work in general:

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.

For society/your community in general:

Nuotta coaching is part of a social empowerment service package funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture and ment for all NEET young people under the age of 29 (in accordance with the Youth Act). Social exclusion and marginalization among the young people are a great problem in Finland. According to Eurostat statistics, 20.4 per cent of the workforce under 25 years of age in Finland was without work in May 2017, as compared to the EU average of 16.9 per cent. According to Statistics Finland, the unemployment rate of 15 to 24-year-olds was 21.7 per cent in July 2017, which was 1.7 percentage points more than the year before. Statistics compiled by researcher Mr Pekka Myrskylä in June 2015 reveal that in 2013 there were 44,463 young people (16–29 years of age) who were neither in education nor employed and who had not completed any qualification after comprehensive school. (National youth work and youth policy programme 2017–2019.)

Nuotta coaching is a small, but great asset to answer to key policy objectives and measuers 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.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work