

YOUTH WORK IN FINLAND

(Youth Work and Youth Policy/Fact Sheets/Ministry of Education 2006)

- Youth work means aiding young people to become active members of society and empowering them socially
- Youth policy means supporting young people's living environment through cross-sectoral co-operation at the national and regional level
- In Finland, youth work is divided into young people's own civic activities and various public measures, complete with service functions linking these two sectors
- Finnish youth work is based on the law (Youth Act 72/2006)
- Youth policy activities are being restructured on the basis of the new Youth Act

Financing of Youth Work and Policy

- The government is responsible for supporting Finnish youth organisations, youth work organisations and local youth services (39 million euros per year within the Ministry of Education budget)
- Municipalities are in charge of local youth services, and for this receive money from the state budget (150 million euros per year). Youth work expenses are included in the budget

Municipal Youth Work

- 432 municipalities in Finland
- 3,400 municipal youth workers, 1,100 youth facilities of different sizes and about a hundred camp sites and centres
- In addition to supporting young people's active citizenship, another key aspect in municipal youth work is social empowerment of young people, which covers preventive substance abuse welfare work, organisation of afternoon clubs for schoolchildren and working with young immigrants as well as workshop services

Youth Research

- Youth research provides information for the needs of youth policy and youth work
- A significant part of youth research is carried out within the Finnish Youth Research Network supported by the Ministry of Education
- Tripod structure: The Ministry's (Ministry of Education) Youth Division co-operates with Allianssi, the umbrella organisation for Finnish youth organisations, and the Youth Research Network on major projects and improvements

Youth Workshop Activities

- Youth workshops have operated in Finland since the 1980's
- In 2005 7,050 young people under the age of 29 participated in youth workshop activities. Of these 66% found placement in work, education, training or some other active measure at the end of their workshop period

Advisory Council for Youth Affairs

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- The Advisory Council for Youth Affairs is an expert body in youth work and policy appointed by the Government and operating in conjunction with the Ministry of Education. National youth organisations and youth work organisations may propose members to the Advisory Council
- The key task is to monitor and evaluate implementation of the Youth Policy Development Programme for and submitted to the Government on an annual basis

Advisory Council for Youth Affairs

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- It is also responsible for bringing young people's perspective into the decision-making process
- It produces information on young people's living conditions and attitudes (The annual Youth Barometers and yearbooks)

Preventive Substance Abuse Welfare Work

- Prevention of substance abuse, i.e. use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco, is a significant part of youth work to guide young people towards healthy lifestyles
- Instructors dealing and working with young people are trained and prepared for coping with substance abuse issues
- Usually about primary prevention; youth work uses community-based methods, whereas individual treatments and therapies are left to the health care and social services sector