

Examples of actions and projects promoting the accessibility of information and counselling services

Example 1

In Lapland, where distances between population concentrations are long, projects have focused on the creation of versatile websites. The municipalities in Lapland are also currently developing their own youth information and counselling services that would operate independently and not under portals. The intention is that youth information points will be created around the region according to the resources of the municipalities. Such objectives are also common in connection with many other regional projects.

Example 2

The youth support and counselling centre, the Linkki project, launched in 2000, operates in Lohja. Its goal is to prevent the civic exclusion of the young people, to activate them, and decrease the discontinuation of studies and employment. Linkki operates on a low-threshold principle without being a characteristically local authority service. Here, young people can seek advice anonymously and without prior appointments.

Example 3.

One of the goals has been to keep web services as versatile as possible. Almost half of the youth information and counselling sites on the Internet have an easy-to-use interactive question-and-answer service and/or young people's own discussion forum in addition to the information compiled on various subjects. Web-based services have been considered a good way to reach young people also outside the opening hours of the centres. Youth workers of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area can be met in the popular HabboHotel virtual world, which also contains youth information services.

Example 4.

This year, a suggestion box and mobile information service for young people has been established in Rovaniemi, the capital of the Province of Lapland. These will help young people receive youth information and other news through a free browser. Young people can also suggest initiatives through their mobile phone or home computer. Similar experiments are also being developed elsewhere, for example in Oulu. In addition, the Turku Youth Information and Counselling Centre has utilised the opportunities offered by mobile phones, and young people can send questions to the staff by e-mail as well as by SMS service.

Examples of opportunities offered by peer group youth information work

Example 5.

The objective of the OSMO project for the encouragement of youth participation, currently under way in Lohja, is to introduce youth information at youth centres by way of information points. The goal is that young people in the youth centre councils themselves would take responsibility for the functioning and development of the information points. The staff of the information centre will provide help in the acquisition of guidebooks and other material. Young people in other localities have also been encouraged to create their own material for the notice boards of the youth information centres.

Example 6.

An interesting addition is provided by the Girls' House project of the Helsinki City Youth Department, which is, at least in part, based on peer group activity. The project takes into account the gender aspect and the promotion of participation by girls and it is intended to serve as a support centre and meeting place and leisure centre for young girls. Girls are welcome to just spend time in the Girls' House, or they can discuss issues in groups with girls of the same age or in the same life situation, or with young women and adult youth workers.

Example 7.

The young people who responded to the questionnaire preferred participation in media work: the creation of a magazine, radio programme or web pages. They saw these as a welcome opportunity to act as content producers provided the municipality took the financial responsibility. Guidance files did not raise similar interest in terms of actual doing. Not all, however, were opposed to the creation of guidance files, and they were considered important, at least when prepared by adults. The young respondents also pointed out that the guide folder information should also be available on the Internet, and that there should be a person present in the youth information centre with whom they could discuss matters. Some also found the youth information websites rather dry and static. A magazine was seen as an opportunity for more interesting content. This could be handed out in schools, which, the respondents said, would result in a more spontaneous reading experience. Different informative events and competitions were also considered good ways to encourage youth participation.