

# KEKS

## Developing quality and competence in youth work

**KEKS is a network** for municipalities and others who run open youth work. We are steadily growing and currently consist of 40 member municipalities.

**Our starting point** is as follows: youth centres, clubs, youth projects, etc., should function as tools in a positive, social development aimed at *all* youth. Our **overall idea** is to promote the personal and social growth of youth.

We want to be **an arena for learning** where the experiences and interests of young people are nurtured in such a way that they experience engagement, meaningfulness and a sense of hope for the future. We see young people as the main resource in their own lives, and all activities should therefore be built on their active **participation and sense of responsibility**.

Based on these principal ideas we have created a set of **common and clear goals** that are measurable and easy to follow up on.

In order to see how well we meet our goals we carry out **an annual survey** where we among other things ask our visitors if they feel that they are being treated as resources and are being supported to participate and take responsibility. (We received more than 7000 responses from a total of 161 different youth centres in 2013). In 2010 we also implemented a web based **group survey** for on-going monitoring on how young people experience their participation in groups and different youth projects.

Every year we also accumulate costs and visitor statistics in the form of **quantitative indicator charts**. Staff and young people at every youth centre are presented the results pertaining to their centre, in order to discuss the findings together and develop suggestions on how to improve their activities.

In order to assist in this improvement process **KEKS' main task** is giving our members support in competence and method development.

Every year we arrange eight to ten **seminars** on different themes for all youth centre staff. Moreover we arrange **courses** about different pedagogical methods and current issues. We also offer different forms of **guidance and tutoring**.

An important part of our programme is different forms of **exchange of best practise**. Interested members can for example take part in our many **sub-networks** on different topics, such as human rights and outdoor activities. These networks also facilitate the start of **common projects**.

We put an emphasis on this latter part, because even if KEKS' main aim is to support development, it is always exciting to practise what you have learned "live". For example, we promote international projects, since we know that they are incredibly rewarding for both youth and staff. In 2008/09 we raised ca 190 000 Euro for different international projects, and the extent has not reduced since.

In order to improve youth work and offer an effective support, KEKS is also engaged in **research**. Together with researchers we have published a study on the conditions for participation in youth centres. We examined how different sets of staff thought and acted in their every day work and how this influenced the sense of participation amongst the local youth.

The possibilities for young people to participate and have influence are, however, not only affected by staff behaviour. In our latest report, ("**Ideas first. Money later**"), we discuss and offer tips about how mu-

nicipalities can work with economic support systems where young people could apply for money and other kinds of support in order to realize their ideas and interests.

To be able to offer support to our members in their efforts concerning **documentation and planning**, and simultaneously providing a base for continuous research, KEKS has implemented a **digital logbook** where staff easily can keep **statistics** and make pertinent notes about their operations and activities.

All KEKS activities and support systems are **free** for our members. We finance our operations mainly through **membership fees\*** but also partly through **funding** from among others the EU.

The membership fee, how the support shall be composed and all other important decisions are made by our **board** where the managers of all our members are represented. Mr Jonas Agdur is chairman of the board, and has authority to execute decisions made by the board. Many other board members are also engaged in different KEKS operations.

KEKS has also published its **"Vision for youth work"**. Through this vision we have offered our contribution to the necessary debate on what ideas should shape and characterize youth work in the future.

Also worth mentioning:

- ✓ KEKS is accredited as a EURODESK entity, actively working with EU information for youths and the European Voluntary service, EVS.
- ✓ KEKS has ongoing cooperation with universities and colleges about education and training of youth workers.
- ✓ KEKS has a continuous dialogue and "think-tanks" with different NGO's on topics like human rights, integration and the inclusion of youths with disabilities in regular youth work.
- ✓ In their study "Youth politics as a regional affair" two organizational researchers notes that KEKS is "... the most consistent actor on an inter-municipal level..."

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\* Our membership fee for 2014 consists of two parts; a fixed rate of 2700 Euro, and an additional fee of 0,65 euro per person between 13 and 19 living in the municipality.

## **Becoming a member in KEKS entails the following:**

### Through our annual youth center survey you get:

- ✚ A complete picture of your operations regarding
  - ✓ How well you reach your target group.
  - ✓ How young people experience the social environment, general treatment, and accessibility
  - ✓ To what degree young people are actively participating in your activities.
  - ✓ The relation between your costs and the quality you deliver.
- ✚ The possibility of making comparisons between your youth center and others.
- ✚ The ability to see how you develop over time

### Additionally, through our group survey you get:

- ✚ A complete picture on how your group activities function regarding
  - ✓ Which young people you reach.
  - ✓ To what degree they are actively participating in creating activities.
  - ✓ How staff works at participation within groups of youth.

... both in general and in regards to specific groups

### Through our digital logbook you get:

- ✚ A complete system for documentation of both statistics regarding visitors/participants, and what kind of activities they take part in.
- ✚ A possibility to follow how different members of staff work with groups and youth participation.

### Through our development support you get access to

- ✚ The KEKS seminars on different topics open to all staff, normally hosted 8 -10 times each year.
- ✚ Courses on different topics suggested by our members.
- ✚ Popular sub networks on different topics where staff get to exchange experiences and best practices.
- ✚ Support and tutoring for managers and staff.
- ✚ Support in initiating and conducting international projects
- ✚ Our vast network of contacts with authorities, universities, educators in Sweden and internationally.

### Last, but not least:

- ✚ You are automatically offered a seat in our board where all decisions, from economy to content, regarding our operations are taken.
- ✚ You become a part of a dynamic network, which today is leading in the development of youth work.

**KEKS**

**Quality and Competence in Cooperation**

## **KEKS quality assessment system**

KEKS defines quality as “the degree to which we meet our aims”, i.e. the better we are at meeting our aims, the higher the quality of our work. All of KEKS’ members have as an overall aim that our youth centres, clubs etc. become “arenas where young people get the opportunity and support to satisfy their social needs”. These needs include, amongst others, the experience of security, friendship and participation. Our overall aim is personal and social development of our youths, where the individual is seen as, and supported to be, the main recourse in its own development.

The KEKS quality assessment system consists of:

- An annual survey for youths visiting the youth centres associated with KEKS. The survey consists of two parts; one containing questions about the respondent (age/sex/background/school results, etc.), and the other containing questions about the youth centres’ ability to satisfy their social needs (questions about safety, participation, support to take own responsibility, etc.)
- A group survey answered by young people who have taken part in creating activities for themselves and/or others, answering questions about how and to what extent they have participated in the creation of the different activities.
- Statistics and economic data regarding the number of visitors, number of open hours, staff costs, etc., from all youth centres within the KEKS organization.
- A digital logbook where all youth work, in youth centres as well as in groups and projects, is documented through both statistics and written reflections/comments.

In the end of the year the survey results, statistics and economic data are compiled to indicators (key figures) for every youth centre and municipality where one can see development over time, as well as in relation to other youth centres. The result is reported per question/variable in five different target areas; Target group, Safety and Treatment, Accessibility, Social needs and Resource utilization and effectiveness.

Based on an analysis of these results (which also can be differentiated regarding sex, age, background, etc.), the youth centres will be able to set measurable goals for the next year. Examples of such goals are “We will increase the share of girls visiting us to 40%” or “We will increase the participation index to 60%.”

An essential and mandatory part of this work is also to discuss the results of the survey with young people, inviting them to actively participate in the development of youth work.

In cases where the results, due to different reasons, are difficult to interpret or where it is experienced that more knowledge or raised understanding is necessary, KEKS initiate different types of more in depth studies.

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