

## Three years of a national survey for young people participating in activities

Kanuuna has carried out a national survey aimed at young people participating in the activities of youth clubs during the past center of expertise project, in three consecutive autumns in 2021, 2022 and 2023. The survey is part of the youth work evaluation package, which Kanuuna has prepared together with the Finnish Youth Research Society and the municipalities' youth services. The evaluation package is based on the long-term work done on the evaluation and documentation of youth work, which Kanuuna has already started years before the expertise centers started in the field of youth work.

The youth work assessment package uses the relationship theory of youth work developed by youth researcher Tomi Kiilakoski as its frame of reference. When all parts of the evaluation package are based on the same theoretical background, different parts of the package can collect key statistics measuring the same thing, the realization of the goals of youth work. For the national survey the chosen relationships that suit the basic functions of the youth clubs are as follows:

- supporting individual growth
- young person's relationship with other young people
- young person's relationship with trustworthy adults.

Young people answer questions related to these relationships in the survey. In addition to relationship-specific questions, the survey contains general questions about the youth club, its accessibility and atmosphere. In 2023, the municipalities got the opportunity to add their own, municipality-specific questions to the questionnaire. By adding their own questions to the set of national questions municipalities can reduce the total number of surveys conducted.

The survey has been developed together with the municipalities between implementations. The wording of the questions has been modified to become clearer to the youth, questions have been added, and the return of the survey results to young people and youth workers has been thought about from the perspective of utilizing the collected information. We feel that the opportunities to influence the survey and develop it together have strengthened the municipalities' commitment to implementation. The easy and free implementation have also influenced the municipalities participation from fall to fall. We have received many thanks for the service offered, especially from small municipalities.

### Statistics on survey implementations

Municipalities from each regional state have participated in the survey. The size of municipalities has varied from municipalities with less than a thousand inhabitants to municipalities with more than 200,000 inhabitants. More than half of the participating municipalities have participated in every implementation. Of the 81 participating municipalities in the autumn of 2023, a quarter were municipalities with less than 5,000 inhabitants, approx. 15% were municipalities with less than 10,000 inhabitants, approx. 15% were municipalities with less than 20,000 inhabitants, approx. 15% were municipalities with less than 40,000 inhabitants, approximately 20 % were municipalities with less than 80 000 inhabitants and just under 10% municipalities with more than 80,000 inhabitants. The national scope of the survey is realized both geographically and according to the size of the municipality.

In the fall of 2023, 309 youth clubs participated in the survey, which according to Kanuuna's survey measuring the number of youth clubs in Finland (654 youth facilities in 2022) covered 47% of the youth

clubs in Finland. 3,393 answers were collected in the first implementation, 7,003 in the second, and 7,644 in the third. In total, more than 18,000 answers were collected. It is a nationally and internationally unique material, which has helped the municipalities to bring the voice of young people to the fore in order to increase the awareness on municipal youth work. With the help of summaries made from the survey results and the visualization of data in the [Looker](#) studio, the municipalities have been able to compare their own results to the national results and other municipalities of the same size.

### The voice of young people about municipal youth work in the form of survey answers

The answers to the surveys at the annual level can be viewed using the Looker studio above, but general observations about the young people's answers include the following (the percentages have been added up from the 4-somewhat agree and 5-strongly agree answers on a five-point Likert scale):

- A third of the respondents are involved in the youth club activity for the first year, and some young people drop out of the activity year after year. 10% of the respondents were involved for four years running
- Two-thirds of the respondents first came to the youth club after being enticed by a friend, a good 10% had heard about the youth facility from a youth worker at school
- 85% of the respondents feel that they can safely be themselves at the youth club
- 75% feel that youth workers encourage young people to plan or implement activities for other youth
- More than 75% feel that they belong to a group at the youth club
- More than 50% have found new friends at the youth club
- More than 80% trust that adults will help them if the young person needs it
- More than 80% feel that youth workers treat young people fairly
- Almost 80% feel that youth workers like it when a young person visits a youth club
- Less than a quarter had observed bullying at the youth club, and most of them were of the opinion, that the bullying had decreased or stopped when the bullying had been reported to the youth worker.

The answers to the survey have been utilized in the municipalities in many different ways. Youth workers have received feedback from young people about their own work with the help of a survey, the results have been examined together with young people to develop youth work, and youth services have presented the results in their own organization to highlight the value and quality of youth work. In some municipalities, the results have been used on social media to increase awareness of youth work among guardians and other municipal residents. National results have been utilized in the same ways, when Kanuuna has sent information and summaries, for example, to municipal politicians during the parliamentary elections.

### Utilization of survey results

As the survey continues year after year as part of the evaluation work of the municipality's youth services, the answers could be used to examine, for example, the impact of youth work on the community formed in the youth clubs, depending on how long the young people have been visiting the youth facility. For this example, we will use the national results of surveys that have already been carried out, filtered so that we compare the responses of young people who had come to the youth club for one year in 2021, those who had come for two years in 2022, and those who had come for three years in 2023. As the municipalities

involved in the national survey vary slightly from year to year, the answers of the young people included in this comparison are of course not all from the same individuals, but perhaps this gives an idea of what could be done with the results of the survey.

There were 1,163 respondents who had participated for a year in 2021, 1,169 respondents who had participated for two years in 2022, and 859 respondents who had participated for three years in 2023. When looking at the variation in the distribution of answers over time, some observations come to the fore (the percentages have been summed up with answers from 4-somewhat agree and 5-completely agree on a five-point Likert scale):

- Young people are more likely to have found new friends at the youth center the longer they have been involved in the activity 46% -> 58%
- Youth workers show an equal amount of interest in the young person's affairs, regardless of how long the young person has been involved in the activity 83% -> 82%
- Youth workers' encouragement to plan or implement activities decreases from 82% -> 75%
- But at the same time the participation of young people in the planning or implementation of activities increases from 38% -> 51%
- The average positive shares of the claims related to supporting the individual growth of young people decrease by five percent from 87% -> 82%
- Young people notice bullying a little more often at the youth farm, but they also tell the youth worker about it more often, and as a result, the bullying has stopped more often the longer they have been involved in the activity
- The experience of the atmosphere of youth clubs, comfort and having enough interesting activities decreases the longer one is involved in the activity. The average of positive responses for these three claims drops from 88% -> 80%.

Looking at the results, one could speculate that the new visitors do more things as a community when they visit the youth clubs and year by year the youngsters spend more time in their own groups of friends. The longer you visit the youth clubs, the more likely you are to find friends at the youth club, and the more likely you are to organize activities for other young people. The atmosphere, things to do and comfort are a little better for new visitors than older ones.

In this interpretation of the results, it must be remembered that it is not necessarily the same young people from year to year in the national results, and although the proportion of positive statements may decrease in some statements, the results are still positive regardless of the duration of being involved in the activity. However, the results could be useful at municipal level from the perspective of planning activities, preferably involving young people in the planning process.

## Finally

Us Kanuuna employees are really satisfied with how the municipalities participated in the survey and how successfully the youth workers motivated each other and young people in collecting the answers to the survey. The joint development process has been rewarding, and the feedback from the municipalities has only been positive during these years. Although the survey conducted by us ends at the end of our center of expertise period, we are happy that the survey will continue to live at least in the City of Oulu's Kompassi

system, and at least the municipalities that use Kompassi will have continuity in this aspect of their evaluation of their own operations.

Thanks to all parties involved. This has been an amazing journey and experience.

## Questionnaire for the survey aimed at young people (2023)

# SURVEY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATING IN YOUTH CENTRE

## ACTIVITIES

### **Welcome to the survey for young people participating in youth centre activities!**

This survey allows your youth centre instructors and their supervisors to get information directly from young people to improve their own activities. Your responses will be processed in such a way that you cannot be identified from them. Thank you in advance for taking part the survey!

#### **Questions specific to each municipality**

The survey may also include questions specific to your municipality, the answers to which will be sent to the youth workers in your municipality. The answers to these questions are not included in the national summary, and the respondents cannot be identified from them.

#### **Information on the use of responses in the national summary**

The Centre of Expertise for Municipal Youth Work Kanuuna also uses this survey to collect national data on municipal youth work. The survey will be carried out in several municipalities in Finland. Your answers will be used to develop youth work. The survey is part of the operations of the Centre of Expertise for Municipal Youth Work Kanuuna, funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

You will answer the survey anonymously, and you do not have to provide any information about yourself that could reveal your identity. Participation in the national summary is completely voluntary. There will be no consequences for you if you choose not to give your consent for your answers to be used in the national summary.

#### **The following question is used to obtain consent for the use of your answers in the national summary**

##### **Consent to the use of answers in the national summary**

My answers can be used in the national summary (yes/no)

If yes -> Skip to the section 'Select a municipality/youth centre'

If no -> You answered that you do not give your consent for your answers to be used in the national summary. Please complete this survey anyway, as it will be useful for the development of youth work in your municipality. -> Skip to the section 'Select a municipality/youth centre'

**Select a municipality/youth centre** (If only one of your municipality's youth centres is included in the survey, you will be taken directly to the background information section after selecting a municipality. If the municipality has more than one youth centre, you will be directed to select a youth centre before proceeding to the background information section.)

#### **Background information**

Age of the respondent

Gender (female, male, I choose not to answer, other)

How long have you been involved in youth centre activities?

How often are you involved in youth centre activities?

Why do you participate in youth centre activities?

What made you come to the youth centre for the first time?

Menu:

- a youth worker spoke about the opportunity at my school
- a friend convinced me to join
- I knew the instructor beforehand
- I had read a newsletter about the youth centre's activities
- I had heard about the youth centre while participating in online youth services
- other reason, please specify:

## COMMUNALITY IN YOUTH WORK

Menu: Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree nor disagree – Disagree – Strongly disagree

- Supporting individual growth
  1. I feel safe to be myself at the youth centre
  2. Youth workers take my opinions seriously
  3. I feel that youth workers understand me when I am at the youth centre
  4. Youth workers encourage me to adopt a healthy lifestyle (e.g. exercise, rest, sleep, nutrition, meaningful activities and abstinence from substance abuse)
  5. Youth workers encourage me to adopt a sustainable lifestyle (a sustainable lifestyle includes saving energy and natural resources in areas such as housing, mobility, food and consumption)
  6. Youth workers encourage me to plan or carry out activities
  7. I have participated in the planning of activities
  8. I have participated in the implementation of activities
  9. I would like to be more involved in the planning or implementation of activities
  
- The young person's relationship with other young people
  10. I feel like I am a part of the group at the youth centre
  11. I meet my friends at the youth centre
  12. I can find new friends at the youth centre
  13. I have found new friends at the youth centre
  14. I would only have a few friends if I didn't go to the youth centre
  
- The young person's relationship with reliable adults
  15. The same rules apply at the youth centre, regardless of which instructors are on duty
  16. The youth centre is a safe environment, regardless of which instructors are on duty
  17. I can rely on adults to help me if I need help
  18. Youth workers treat young people fairly
  19. Youth workers are interested in how I am doing
  20. I feel that the youth workers like it when I visit the youth centre

## YOUTH CENTRE, ETC.

1. In my free time, I meet other young people who visit the youth centre, also outside the youth centre
2. I have witnessed bullying at the youth centre (if the answer is agree or strongly agree: question 3; otherwise question 5)
3. Has a youth worker been informed about the bullying you have witnessed? (If yes: question 4; if no: question 5)
4. What has happened after you have reported the bullying?  
The bullying has stopped  
The bullying has decreased  
Bullying has continued as before  
The bullying has gotten worse  
I don't know
5. My youth centre is cosy and welcoming
6. There are plenty of fun things to do at the youth centre
7. The opening hours of my youth centre work for me

8. My youth centre is too far away
9. The youth centre has a good atmosphere
10. Do you feel that you have been treated unfairly at the youth centre?

No, I don't

Yes, by other young people

Yes, by a youth worker

Yes, due to gender stereotypes

Yes, due to my age

Yes, due to my ethnic background

Yes, due to my religion

Yes, due to my sexual orientation

Yes, due to my disability

Yes, for another reason

Open feedback / open-ended question: