

Theme Group Youth

Theme Group Youth is working to ensure that use is made of the experience and knowledge gained from projects financed by the European Social Fund. The Swedish Public Employment Service, Communicare, Swedish Social Insurance Agency, National Agency for Education, National Board of Health and Welfare, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society all cooperate in the Theme Group.

© Swedish Agency for Youth and
Civil Society 2014
ISSN 1651-2855
ISBN 978-91-85933-55-6

project manager **Lidija Kolouh**
graphic design/cover Marcus Westfal
distribution Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society, Box 17801,
118 94 Stockholm, Sweden
tel +46 (0)8-566 219 00, fax +46 (0)8-566 219 98
e-mail: temagruppen@mucf.se

Summary and conclusions

- Strength to work is a report on how youth projects within the European Social Fund work with young people with disabilities and health and fitness promotion. Young people with functional or other disabilities, which may result in those individuals finding it more difficult to become established in the labour market, comprise a high proportion of the young people participating in many Social Fund projects conducted in Sweden. Project staff find it worrying that ill-health will constitute an obstacle for many young people in the future, as regards being able to get a job and coping with an eight-hour working day.
 - Health and fitness promotion is highlighted as a success factor for successful work with the target group (NEET:s) and should be included as a mandatory part of all activities. Projects primarily work with mental and social health, and to a lesser extent with physical health, even though they see a need for this in the target group. Here we are primarily referring to the motivational and self-strengthening work to prepare young people for a placement or to give them enough self-confidence to begin studies.
 - The project staff interviewed consider that most young people are actually interested in health and fitness promotion and their physical health but are lacking support, means and targets. There have also been positive experiences of creating mixed groups in health and fitness promotion work, putting young people and adults together. It is usual to discuss what and when one eats during projects; young people have particularly good experiences when preparing and eating breakfast together. Having breakfast together represents a positive experience and forms the basis of making changes to their eating habits. Surveying and discussing lifestyles is common. Staff emphasise the importance of young people being personally involved, as well as deciding and having an influence on how activities are formulated, as this enhances their sense of participation and increases their motivation to participate. At the same time, they consider that financial compensation is a motivating factor. It is clearly apparent that low or non-existent compensation reduces the motivation to participate.
- Success factors that came to light during projects include:
 - scheduling training in the area of health and fitness promotion
 - involving young people in planning and implementation
 - developing outreach work to reach the target group
 - conducting proper surveys with young people about their lifestyle
 - including meals together, both to prepare and eat together
 - tempting young people into physical activity by setting individual targets for individual participants
 - activities being fun and easily accessible
 - health and fitness promotion work working well in mixed-age groups
 - planning the activity for an environment and context

that supports work with the target group

- staff receiving regular supervision and development
- resolving issues relating to secrecy and consent between organisations at the planning phase
- planning a long-term approach from the outset, both in terms of staff and implementation within the regular activity.

