

ENPI – Social services on both sides of the border

North Karelian Society for Social Security

COURSES FOR VOLUNTEERS IN ELLINKULMA

Report



Courses for volunteers in Ellinkulma

During the spring time two courses for volunteers were organized in a Centre for The Aged Ellinkulma which is located in Juuka, North Karelia. Ellinkulma is a multi-professional low threshold centre especially for elderly people and a place for many local NGOs to have their activities. Ellinkulma is an associate partner in the ENPI-project called Social services on both sides of the border.

The aims and goals of the courses came from the needs of volunteers in Ellinkulma. In their activities volunteers work with elderly people and the work contains lots of interaction. Two of the employees of Ellinkulma told about the needs and ideas they had about the courses and the main goals chosen for the courses was to support the wellbeing of volunteers and increase their strengths in their important work. These goals contain the need of new active volunteers in NGOs and the hope to create new opportunities for also immigrants to take part in the activities. In addition, issues related to immigrants and tolerance in general was chosen to one of the themes because those are important subjects of ENPI-project.

The wellbeing of volunteers - The first course

The first course aimed to increase the wellbeing of the current volunteers in the area of Juuka. The employees of Ellinkulma found seven participants that were able to participate and they were members of three different NGOs.

In the course the first theme was to increase the strength of volunteers in their work. The main idea was to share thoughts, talk with peer volunteers and to find ways to ease the load that voluntary work might cause. This was executed by using different methods which helped the discussions. Participants thought about their role as volunteers, their motives to do the work, things that increase and decreases their strengths and which are the things that they are able to have an impact on themselves. They also talked about their own knowledge, values, skills and other resources that they can use in their work.

The second theme of the course was interaction because all of the volunteers work with elderly people. This was done by sharing good and poor experiences. Through these discussions collective guidelines to interaction were written down.

One of the main reasons for getting tired in voluntary work is the lack of active people participating. To find new volunteers to participate in NGOs participants in the first course were asked to challenge new people to the second course. They could decide themselves who they want to challenge. Behind the idea of challenging people was to make it easier for new people to participate in the course because they already had someone they knew participating with them. And many times the only thing preventing people from participating is that no one has asked them to join or people haven't even thought about volunteering before. All of the participants stated in the feedback that they felt challenging participants might feel a little bit difficult but they agree to try.

Feedback from the course

It was obvious that sharing experiences with peer volunteers was an important part of the course. It was sensed from the discussion during the course and also in the feedback that was gathered by using claims in which participants could vote 'I agree', 'I disagree' or 'I'm not sure'. In the feedback every participant stated

that they had been heard and most of them got to know new people. The main aim was to increase strengths and support the wellbeing of volunteers and according to feedback this goal was achieved. Everyone said that they had learned something new and only one participant wasn't sure if the course was necessary for him.

Basic information about voluntary work – The second course

Eight people from six different NGOs participated the second course for volunteers. Challenging participants worked quite well because in the second course 5/8 were the ones challenged. But none of these were all new in the fields of volunteering. However, one of the participants was seeking new volunteering opportunities and found new connections. All participants stated that they got new and useful information from the course, too.

The first theme was to increase the knowledge of participants in voluntary work related issues. In the course the principles of volunteering and the rights and the obligations of volunteers were the issues that were dealt with. There was also a method used to realizing the opportunities that different NGOs have to offer for current and new volunteers. On the other hand most of the issues were familiar for most of the participants but on the other hand none of them had actually thought them through before thoroughly.

The second theme was tolerance and differences between people. In Juuka they are lacking immigrant member in most of the NGOs. This was a theme that made it visible that all people have preconceptions towards other people, Finnish or foreigners. Participants noticed in the theme-related task that preconceptions are often incorrect and it is good to take it into consideration also in voluntary work.

The employees of Ellinkulma hoped that in the program of the course there would also be something fun to do together in addition to giving information. There was a guide giving us a tour around Puu-Juuka, area of old wooden houses in the centre of Juuka. Most of the participants knew the area, but they all got new information and a chance to share their own memories about the area.

Feedback of the course

The feedback was gathered by using sentences that participants continued by writing. The first sentence was about the learning experience. Participants stated that they had learned new things and found new perspectives to voluntary work. One participant stated that she had learned new things about herself and other one had found the confidence that she can work as a volunteer. One participant thought that she already knew many things but she wasn't sure if she could apply the information into practice.

The second sentence was about the program. Feedback was positive and several participants stated that the program had made them think and the content was interesting. Participant that hasn't took part in voluntary courses before said that the program was adequate for her.

The third sentence revealed the thoughts participants had about the people in the course. It was stated that the group was heterogenic which was good because it enabled to learn from each other. The group was described to be active, interested in voluntary work and nice.

According to the feedback on the fourth sentence participants would have wanted to have more profound discussions, get more information and find new ways to co-operate with other NGOs in the fields of voluntary work. Most of the participants stated that they were satisfied or left the sentence blank.

Participants were happy with the field worker who conducted the course. They stated that the field worker had information they needed and she knew what she talked about.

The last sentence was about the things that participants were still wondering about. They stated that maybe they would need more information and find ways to activate the ones who stay at home to be volunteers. One participant said that she would like to take part in these kinds of courses again.

Summary

In overall the courses went very well and the feeling was that courses accomplished to raise new thoughts and bring something new into the work of volunteers. Sharing experiences is important for volunteers and the need of co-operation with other NGOs in a small place like Juuka is essential. There also seems to be a need for finding new ways to activate immigrants to take part in activities to get new active member to NGOs and build up social circles of immigrants. These courses didn't reach immigrants but in Ellinkulma they are working on making it easier for immigrants to participate by arranging new kind of events and as a part of the ENPI-project the materials for immigrants were updated.

Participants

16.5.2014

- Pentti Nuutinen: Juuan Mielenterveysyhdistys Mielekäs ry
- Reetta Toivanen: Juuan Omaiset ja Läheiset ry
- Eeva-Liisa Räsänen: Juuan Omaiset ja Läheiset ry
- Sisko Martikainen: LC Juuka/Elli
- Esa Mahanen: LC Juuka/Elli
- Sulo Naakka: LC Juuka/Elli
- Heikki Toropainen: LC Juuka/Elli

2.6.2014

- Seija Martikainen: Juuan Eläkeliitto
- Pentti Nuutinen: Juuan Mielenterveysyhdistys Mielekäs ry
- Arja Toivanen: Juuan Urheilijat
- Reetta Toivanen: Juuan Eläkkeensaajat/ Juuan Omaiset ja Läheiset ry
- Aino Tertsunen: Juuan Työttömät ry
- Heikki Toropainen: LC Juuka/ Elli
- Kauko Halonen: Juuan Työttömät ry
- Ritva Väyrynen: Juuan Työttömät ry/ MLL Juuka/ Juuan Omaiset ja Läheiset ry

Program of the courses

Wellbeing of volunteers 16.5.2014 11 am - 3 pm			
Time	Theme	Method	Duration
11:00	Starting the course		30 min
	Coffee and snack	-	
	Welcome and the program	-	10 min
	Introduction	Role tree	20 min
11:30	Wellbeing of volunteers		75 min
	Why am I volunteering?	Motivation scale + discussion	20 min
	Why volunteering is important?	Story + discussion	10 min
	What knowledge, skills and values do I have as a volunteer?	Mapping assets + discussion	20 min
	What increases/decreases strength in a voluntary work?	Words in a grid + discussion	25 min
12:45	Break		5-10 min
12:55	Interaction in voluntary work		45 min
	Experiences about good/poor interaction	Discussion	20 min
	Guidelines to interaction in voluntary work	Written based on the discussion before	25 min
13:40	New volunteers?		50 min
	How to introduce own NGO?	Introductions written in speech bubbles	25 min
	Challenging participants to the next course	Writing down thoughts in a ready-made challenge paper	25 min
14:30	Closing the course		30 min
	Coffee and snack	-	
	Feedback	Traffic light claims	

Basic information about voluntary work 2.6.2014 11 am - 3 pm			
Time	Theme	Method	Duration
11:00	Starting the course		15 min
	Coffee and snack	-	
	Welcome and the program	-	5 min
	Introduction	Name and who challenged to participate	10 min
11:30	Basic information about voluntary work		30 min
	The principles of voluntary work	Put principles in order of importance with a pair + common discussion	15 min
	The rights and the obligations of volunteers	Filling a chart together + discussion	40 min
11:45	Prejudices		40 min
	All people have prejudices	Story + discussion (prejudices in voluntary work)	10 min
	First impressions	Photos of people and writing down the first impression + discussion	20 min
	African sayings	Discussion in pairs what sayings could mean in respect of voluntary work	10 min
12:25	Possibilities in NGOs		45 min
	What could I do as a volunteer?	The web of opportunities + discussion	15 min
		Written experiences of volunteers	20 min
	(Where can I find more information?)	Jelli – Ngo supporting web site	5 min)
13:00	Restorative activity	Guided walk through Puu-Juuka	90 min
14:30	Closing the course		30 min
	Coffee and snack	-	
	Feedback	Continue the sentence	