The Finnish League for Human Rights offered one day human rights training to youth workers in 27 largest cities in Finland. Initiative for the human rights training came from the youth directors of the cities. In November 2015 they gave a statement on the need to strengthen the human rights base of all youth activities: “The starting-point, the core and the condition for revival of youth work is human rights. Youth work is based on the principle that everybody who becomes a participant in our activities has equal rights to define her- or himself as a human being. The strength of youth work is to support the growth of every young person to someone who recognizes and assumes her or his responsibility as a citizen.” In order to achieve this youth workers needed further education on human rights and how to support them in daily contacts with the youth. Unique network of actors was formed for this endeavor. Human rights NGO the Finnish League for Human Rights and youth directors of the largest cities, through their cooperation network Kanuuna, requested funds from the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Finnish League for Human Rights developed a one day human rights training for youth workers and organized a “human rights road show” offering education for all 27 cities. Youth directors of the cities ensured their staff had a chance to participate in the human rights education session. In all 1120 youth work professionals, which is 63% of all personnel of the youth sectors of the cities, received basic human rights training in September 2016 – March 2017.

The one day human rights education session included a brief introduction to human rights: what are human rights, where do they come from and how do they work. Then we moved on to themes of discrimination and accessibility (both physical and social) in youth activities. And finally we discussed freedom of speech and human rights based approaches in the fight against hate speech. Training combined lectures, discussions and activities. Feedback for the training has been positive. The Finnish League for Human Rights, in cooperation with Kanuuna network and with renewed financial support from the Ministry of Culture and Education, will offer the basic human rights training to youth workers in smaller municipalities, develop and offer advances training on anti-discrimination measures and develop online resources for human rights based youth work.

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