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# Ne-Rå Counselling Centre – Advice based on low threshold

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Kalliola settlementti



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# The structure of the presentation

- Short introduction of Ne-Rås "mother organization" Kalliola Settlement House and settlementmovement
- The idea behind Ne-Rå
- Services and activities
- The need of Ne-Rå Counselling Centre
- The role of students

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# Introduction of Kalliola Settlement

A multi-function association

- Founded 1919, one of 36 settlements in Finland
- Produces social services and adult education
- Supports civic and voluntary activities in the metropolitan area.

Politically and religiously unattached

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# Activities and services in Kalliola Settlement House

- Adult Learning Center
- Child welfare (several institutions providing youth care)
- Substance abuse services and care
- Housing for physically disabled young people
- Voluntary work, low threshold services (f.ex. Ne-Rå), community houses, projects
- Child and youth work
- Senior work

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# The Settlement Movement

- The roots go back to 19th century England where the movement started as a reaction to the social problems of urbanised and industrialised society
- Academic volunteers responded to the cultural, pedagogic and social needs of the community and moved to a poor area in Eastern London: Toynbee Hall, founded 1884
- Movement spread to Finland – Kalliola is the first settlement

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# Ideological background

- Radical idea: problems can depend on structures of society - they are not only individual
- People can influence their living conditions
- The importance of personal connection – reciprocal relationship

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# Central principals in settlement work today

- The idea of empowerment: believe in peoples` own resources
- Encouragement and giving hope
- Neighbourhood – aspect
- Engagement with activities which help those in the greatest need to get back on their feet
- Work is based on local needs, the activities have to adapt to local circumstances

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# Counselling Centre Ne-Rå

- Started as a project 2004, Counselling centre was established 2005
- Goal: to increase citizen's inclusion in the society
  - Advicing in navigating in the service system
- Goal: to create a learning environment
- Cooperation with University of Helsinki (Department of Social Research and Swedish School of Social Science) Universities of Applied Sciences Arcada (for swedish speaking population), Metropolia and Diak
- Financed by Finnish Slot Machine Association



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# Starting points of the project Ne-Rå(2004-2007)

- Developing activities and services based on the low threshold and the needs of the citizens – no specific target group
- Creating an innovative and authentic learning environment for students
- Creating multidisciplinary cooperation
- The model of Ne-Rå was based on the Norwegian model (independent social office, run by students, ideological background in settlement movement, empowering the students also)

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# Services and activities at Ne-Rå

- ❑ Advice on social services and benefits in Finnish, Swedish and English
- ❑ Information about housing possibilities
- ❑ Assistance with filling in forms and applications
- ❑ Support when dealing with authorities
- ❑ Assist when complaining authorities' decisions concerning social benefits
- ❑ Also outlocated counselling

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# Other activities

- Courses and lectures organized in cooperation and with different actors in the field of social work and education
  - The ABC of Finnish Bureaucracy (for immigrants)
  - Course in voluntary work (for everyone)
  - Course in community work (for students and others who are interested in working with groups and communities)
  - Lectures f. ex in housing system and tenants rights and duties

Also open doors, events,

Groups: Finnish language group, Get to know Helsinki

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# Learning environment

## Students fieldwork placement (internship)

- Around 40 students /year
- Different practice periods (goals, length, tasks)
  - Students of social work 1. practice, two weeks – obligatory, students of social pedagogy 2.,3. or 4. practice)
- Professional supervision from permanent staff at Ne-Rå (2 persons)
- Co-operation with teachers (developing, following and evaluation)

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# The tasks of students

- Advice people contacting Ne-Rå
- Participate in planning and developing work
- Inform of Ne-Rås services
- Make field visits especially to NGOS
- Carry out own projects
- Possibility to make the thesis of Ne-Rå
- Options to voluntary work (after internship or as a studyperiod) – conducting groups, planning and participating events, outlocated counselling

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# Central principals of work

- Client – centered, people visiting Ne-Rå define their need of help
- Focus on face to face work
- Time and dialogue
- The personnel can call authorities when the client is present
- Clients are not registered, work is based on anonymity

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# The need of Ne-Rå - level of phenomena

- Long-term poverty
- Homelessness
- Immigration
- Loneliness
- Health problems
- Complexity of the service system

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# The need of Ne-Rå – observations of social service system

- Categorized and decreased services, increasing of webservices
- Lack of information about social rights
- More barriers: people have to complain more to get the services or benefits
- Bureaucray
- Not multicultural enough – forms are seldom in english or other languages
- Authorities act independently – citizens have to be active and know about the system and their rights



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# Contacts

- Approximately 700-800 contacts
- Visits over 2/3, the rest are phone calls and contacts via email
- 1/3 immigrants
- Clients of different ages (under 20 very seldom)
- Got information of Ne-Rå mostly from other institutions and offices or from friends
- Some people visit Ne-Rå several times

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# The role of Ne-Rå

- Advicing – focus on problem solving
- Referring
- Advocacy mainly on individual level
- "Case management" - only little possibilities to longterm contacts

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# What students learn:

- Develop their skills in the following professional competencies :
    - Adapting to new situations; each new situation is unique in it`s complexity
    - Reflection on social reality and the complex social service system
    - Problem solving and decision making
    - Capacity for dialogue
    - Provide support
    - The role of the third sector
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# Contact information

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