



PROMOTION OF EQUALITY



Situation now

Youth Center Villa Elba's values are: respect for life and the environment, solidarity, equality, cultural diversity and internationality.

In Villa Elba solidarity and equality are present in everyday life; different needs and backgrounds are taken in to consideration when planning and executing programs and activities. Funding is applied for disadvantaged young people, no one is getting left out and all the programs are in Finnish, Swedish and English. The sponsored classes are also chosen fairly and the group sizes are kept small.

Youth Center Villa Elba is a discrimination-free zone and has raised the importance of equality and solidarity with many different campaigns.

Villa Elba arranges in-house training courses and discussions about the subject regularly and the staff also takes part in trainings hosted by Finland's Youth Center Network (SNK) and the Council of Europe. The kitchen staff has educated themselves on special diets and learned how to prepare food from different cultures. The whole staff has also taken part in Peace education's (Rauhankasvatusinstituutti) Interfaith dialogue training. The training course helped with forming opinions and offered tools to implement successful interfaith dialogue, emotional education and taught skills of creative methods.

Description of the planning process

Villa Elba has not previously had an own plan for promotion of equality but have followed Kokkola's Non-discrimination and equality plan.

The initial push to develop our own plan came from The Youth Center Network's (SNK) pedagogical team. After this the subject has been discussed within Villa Elba's executive team and in multiple workshops with the whole staff. We have gone through the terminology and deepened our understanding about what equality, non-discrimination and solidarity signify.

Osaamiskeskus Koordinaatti has published a publication called "Kaikki mukana? - Yhdenvertaisuussuunnittelun opas nuorisotyöhön" which has been a great help in developing Villa Elba's own plan for promotion of equality.

Why?

Plan for promotion of equality supports good administration and development of the personnel and services. Solidarity and equality are also part of Villa Elba's strategy.

"We wanted to go through the subject within the whole Villa Elba staff in process-like way so that the subject matter would be internalized rather than just staying on paper."

- Heli Lehto, Development manager

Discrimination-free zone

Villa Elba has declared a discrimination-free zone because non-discrimination and equality are very important. This is also a sign for young people, the employees, job applicants and other customers that everyone is welcomed to Villa Elba regardless of gender, religion, conviction, age, sexual orientation, opinion, disability or ethnic background.

“Declaring a discrimination-free zone means opposition to discrimination, addressing the problem if one exists, and recognising equality between human beings.”



Accessibility in nature

An accessible nature trail has been build to Villa Elba with the help of volunteering project and project financing. Birdwatching platform that can be found in the area is also accessible. New accessible paths will be build with available funding.

Accessibility means safety and quality and tells about a way of thinking, right attitudes and taking in to consideration people's needs. In an accessible environment people are not excluded from using something on the basis of experiencing a disability - an accessible environment takes into account diversity of the people.

Zero tolerance for bullying

Villa Elba uses the same anti-bullying guidelines used by all of Finland's Youth Centers (SNK).

The most effective tool against bullying is prevention of bullying. The aim of anti-bullying work is to support children's and young people's friendships and to support their abilities to work in a group. The purpose of this plan is to strengthen the common line between all youth centers in prevention of bullying and intervene if cases about bullying arise in, for example camp schools or camps. The benefit of using uniform guidelines between all of Finland's youth centers, is that the staff can rely on them and the policy remains even if the personnel changes.

The instructions give answers to and addresses the following points:

- What is bullying?
- How to prevent bullying?
- How to intervene to bullying and follow-up in bullying cases in the youth center
- Things to take into account when starting to resolve a bullying case



No hate speech

In Villa Elba we say a definitive 'No' to hate speech.

We want to be part of creating a society where everyone has a right to express themselves and permission to be yourself without a fear of intimidation and harassment.

Hate speech is not just about 'hate' or 'speech' but about the structures and atmosphere of society. Hate speech is a human rights violation based on inequality in society and the resulting discrimination.

Actions

If and when challenges are presented inside the house, those will be intervened immediately. Situation mapping is done always when situations that need review arise.

A board accessibility survey was done in 2019 which brought up some areas that needed improvement. Improvements regarding the buildings are done regularly when new renovations and investments are made.

During orientation new employees are introduced to Villa Elba's values. Introducing new employees to the values of our workplace is important to us because implementation of the measures is the responsibility of the whole staff. All of the staff also goes through yearly SNK's training material that describes pedagogical work techniques and clarifies them.

Follow-up

Monitoring the promotion of equality is the responsibility of the management team. The effects of the measures are reviewed by Villa Elba's different departments during the preparation of the annual report and when analysing the activities. At the same time, it is assessed whether there is a need for changes, new developments or training.



Goals

Our goal is to promote our values registered in the strategy:

Solidarity and equality

Respect for the environment and life

Cultural diversity and internationality

Our goal is also to work together in developing our skills, to detect and address discrimination, to discourse safely with young people about power structures, norms and other sensitive or difficult issues, and to prevent and deal with conflicts between individuals and groups in a constructive way.

All different - All equal