

# Nuuksio rules

## Here under the North Star

At the beginning of May I visited the Finnish Natural Park Nuuksio with two friends to prepare our eco excursion. Although it was already spring, there was still some snow there. I visited Haltia and the Nature’s hut to look for ideas of what to do during our visit, when we will be over 30 people there.



Little by little I came with an idea: it would be really nice to spend the night there. I’ve been in the Scouts for some years and knew that preparing a night there wouldn’t be that difficult. There were mostly 3 challenges: rain, mosquitoes and water. The last might sound surprising, but carrying water for a big group spending a whole day in the forest is no small task. I talked about the idea with the mentors, and they were supportive but made it clear

that it is up to me. If I want to make it happen, I have to think the logistics. I collected some sleeping bases and found a shop that sold decent ones for 5 euros, then I contacted the other groups and asked if they could bring sleeping bags. The weather could have been a big problem, but as the exchange came closer it was clear that Mother Nature was going to be generous with us. The problem is that no rain normally will mean also

loads of mosquitoes. As the day came closer I got little by little support for the idea. For some guys it was going to be their first nigh in the forest. Some couldn’t get around the idea that I wasn’t planning to bring tents. We would spend the night under the North Star! The day arrived and was one of the warmest days of the Summer. No wind, no clouds and at least 25 degrees. For my surprise, there were no mosquitoes. In Nuuksio we learned many things, although once more I was disappointed not to spot any flying squirrel. It is supposedly the main species of Nuuksio, but I have never seen one and I begin to believe that there are none there. One way or another, we had a great time, atetraditional Finnish makkara with Turku’s mustard and prepared “evergreen tee”. We even collected some boletuses, which was a nice surprise in for July!



### SERVICE

“For me Help me to Help was an opportunity to see concrete ways to help people around me. That’s why we developed the idea of “Help for you” for next year”.  
-Mauro



### LEARNING

“The exchange was mostly about learning new things. About myself, about others, about different cultures and about solidarity. I think it has given me new points of view and skills that will be useful”  
-Manu



### NETWORKING

“Young people from Spain, from Finland and from UK. And from different cities. That, if anything, is what made this experience unique.”  
-Rafa



### INNOVATING

“The Social Project Case Competition and the weekly volunteering activities were the best things of the Urban Service Project. It shows that if we really want, we can be the change that our society needs.  
-Anthony

# Urban Service Project



When I first heard about the Help me to help project was when our mentor Pablo told me about the possibility of organising a project with guys from Finland and Spain. I had met the leader of the Spanish team in Summer in London, where his sister lives. Jyri had told me about the projects IYC Suomi does and they were very inspiring. We had similar activities with friends from my school. It was cool to see that other people from other countries were involved in volunteering projects.

When Pablo told me about this idea I was first very excited... but then I heard that we had to prepare an application form of over 80 pages, with all detail about the project. I almost fainted! But Pablo and

Jyri calmed me down: we are almost 40 people in the project, if each one does his bit and contributes with his ideas, the total project is a piece of cake! Truly speaking, it wasn’t a piece of cake and we  
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we had to work hard, but it was a great experience of learning, doing, learning more and keep going. At the end, once the project was ready I was really happy and couldn't believe it. The effort was really worth it.

The next step was to prepare the visit to Madrid where I met the guys from Spain and their leader. The visit to Madrid was really intense and we didn't really have time to see much of the city, but it was cool, specially the bbq the last night, where we were all together and tasted the local "chorizo".

Another cool thing during the project was to develop our volunteering activities in London. I was involved mostly on the walks looking for homeless people. Talking to them helped me see how many stories are invisible in our day to day, with people in the streets that no one seems to see. But when you talk to them, you find that each of them has a life, they had dreams, families, etc. This may sound obvious, but it really struck me, once it became real through the conversation with each of them.



# LIVING FOR OTHERS.

“ From day one to the end, the feeling was clear: we are a team! ”

Meeting all the people of the exchange was a great experience. I was surprised that very soon we all became good friends. I already knew that Spanish people are generally quite open, but I imagined that Finnish people are "colder". That wasn't the case at all. The guys from Finland were really welcoming and they had prepared everything for our arrival.

From day one to the end the feeling was clear: we are a team!

The daily volunteering projects included helping homeless people, visiting elderly houses, sharing food with people in need, etc. It was great that the projects and the teams changed everyday. My personal highlight was when Manu played piano for a poor lady that we brought food to. IYC Suomi had got the piano for her, as she used to be a musician before losing everything. It was a deeply moving moment that impacted me.

Now, two months after the exchange, it is nice to see that we are still in contact and organising future things. Let's keep rolling the ideal of "Living for Others".

## 3 highlights of the exchange

### FRIENDSHIP

The best of this exchange was meeting new people. Everyone was very friendly. It was nice to meet guys from Finland and United Kingdom. The general environment was really open and it was easy to talk to everybody. Also because we shared similar experiences. That is my first pick from it.

### HELPING

During the project we helped in solidarity events in Madrid. I was painting houses of poor people living in suburbs, visiting elderly houses and we also had an event with immigrants. In Helsinki I helped sharing food, helping homeless people, visiting an elderly house, etc. The experience from it is that you always get more than what you get. Now we plan to expand our volunteering during the next school year.

### LEARNING

I learned a lot of things. Mostly about myself, helping others and being responsible. I was in charge of various things, mostly about preparing the #paintingforothers events in Madrid and in Helsinki coordinating the food teams. It has helped me learn about how to lead others. And to do so, it is important to first know them.



## Help me to help - Urban Service Project



The topic of the exchange was "Help me to Help: Urban Service Project".

For me the project was a great opportunity to both meet new people and new realities. It was kind of out of my comfort zone, as I am what most people call an introvert. I like being with people, but I don't rush to begin a conversation. The first visit to one house to bring food was at the beginning quite wired. It was an old lady with some mobility problems and we were standing close to the door not knowing what to say or what to do. Then Tom

who is able to make friends with anyone began showing what food we got. He just began to explain what we had and ideas of what to prepare with that food. Few minutes later we were talking like we've known her always. She invited us for some tea and biscuits and talked about her background, she picked her old photos and talk about her youth. That day really impressed me. Another challenging thing was presenting our project in the public library. We decided that each one presents one part of it. I was nervous, but then it went very well. All in all, the project was great to build new skills and grow.

## Living4Others

### Preparing for others

Before the exchange, the Finnish team we had a lot to do. We felt the responsibility to prepare things here so that all goes smoothly and all have a great time. The hardest was to prepare enough solidarity things for all participants every day. It isn't easy to coordinate over 30 volunteers 7 days! But it was nice to do it, and the leaders always helped.

### Living with others

When the exchange began, I was like "wow, we are a lot", I can't really meet all of them in a week. I was surprised that by the second day I knew the name of all of them. After few days of volunteering, cooking, playing, learning and being together, it felt like all were "old friends". Like we knew each other for years. That was nice.



### Living for Others

The topic of the exchange was to design new social projects in our schools, neighbourhoods, etc. With the idea of "Living for Others" that was all the time in the background. Personally, at the beginning I considered it a little cringe. But then, you begin to try to implement it, to keep in mind the needs of other people, and it really changes you. First of all, it made me feel part of something bigger. Now I was not alone with my things anymore, but with others that have also challenges, problems, etc. And also good things. And I shared them with the guys, and they shared my things. This applies to the participants, but also to the people we helped. For example we helped cleaning an old lady's house, because she can't move properly. She was very thankful, and invited us for snacks and told us about her youth. It was like gaining a new grandma. For me the exchange was about learning how to help others, and improve the skills needed for it.