

FINNISH APPROACH:

DEVELOPING DIVERSE, EQUAL AND LANGUAGE AWARE SCHOOLS FROM LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

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HOW DO FINNISH SCHOOL LEADERS SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIVERSE, EQUAL AND LANGUAGE AWARE SCHOOLS?



IT'S ALL ABOUT TRUST



Mutual trust is omnipresent between all parties and levels.

Finnish heads of school have broad decision-making power on eg. resource allocation, recruitment and pedagogical leadership yet are close to the teachers due to low hierarchy and shared leadership.

In-service training and other pedagogical support to teaching staff is valued and expected of all.



TEACH

WHAT MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO IMPROVE INCLUSION IN FINNISH SCHOOLS?



01 RESOURCE ALLOCATION

- Flexible pre-primary and primary years education
- Students requiring intensified and special support
- Small-group teaching and scheduling of certain subjects
- Specialized paths in e.g. PE, the arts, STEM, bilingual education

02 INTERPROFESSIONAL PEDAGOGICAL DISCUSSIONS

- Grouping of students and their placement in general support groups or small groups
- Need of school assistants

03 INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

- Enabling after school clubs/hobbies and a defragmented school day for all
- Positive pedagogy: involving students in assessment and learning methods
- Students' voices are heard in all level of school functions, decision making included

WHAT ARE OUR GREATEST SUCCESSES?

PEDAGOGY

- intact K-9 school path
- emphasis on secure yet flexible group formation from a social and pedagogical perspective
- education in mother tongue for non-Finnish students
- specialized language and cultural group teachers and cultural interpreters

SOCIO-ECONOMIC EQUALITY

- daily cooked meal free-of-charge
- student welfare: smooth cooperation between health care professionals, social workers, law enforcement and 3rd sector organizations
- primary school extra curricular activities support working parents

WHAT OBSTACLES ARE YET TO BE OVERCOME?

FINLAND HAS A SHORT HISTORY OF MULTICULTURALISM

WE NEED:

- Multicultural experience
- In-depth training and knowledge in language aware pedagogy
- Qualified teachers with multicultural backgrounds
- Support for our non-Finnish speaking parents in both language skills and knowledge of the Finnish school system
- Tools to enable our students with multicultural backgrounds to achieve their highest potential and to cope with having to learn two official languages (Finnish and Swedish)

WHAT LESSONS HAVE BEEN LEARNT?



Solid professional expertise

The most creative solutions stem from the teachers' pedagogical know-how and craftsmanship.



See inclusion as a way of support, not as budget cuts

Though difficult to sell to the staff and parents, re-design creatively utilization of resources.



Choose flexibility over strict boundaries

Let students move flexibly between different groups according to the level of support needed at the time.

THANK YOU!

OULU AND LIMINKA

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