



**Irja-Kaisa Lakkala Ph.D. (Ed.D.)**  
**Principal, Aleksanteri Kenan koulu**  
**Sodankylä, Finland**  
**tel.: +358 40 482 8045**

**e-mail: [irja-kaisa.lakkala@sodankyla.fi](mailto:irja-kaisa.lakkala@sodankyla.fi)**

Irja-Kaisa Lakkala grew up in Finnish Lapland above the Arctic Circle. Her home was situated eight kilometers from the nearest village, Sattanen, and twenty kilometers from the center of Sodankylä, which is the namesake village and the governing hub of her home municipality. She was the youngest of seven children. Her mother worked at home as a housewife and her father was a reindeer herder.

She went to the elementary school of Sattanen at the age of six. The great school reform in Finland started from Lapland in 1972, so the school changed into comprehensive school after her first school year. First six years she studied in Sattanen and the three secondary school years in Sodankylä. She continued her studies in upper secondary school in Sodankylä. Although the distance was only 20 kilometers there was not any school transport for upper secondary school students. However, her supporting father drove her to school and back home every day.

She graduated from upper secondary school in May 1983 and next autumn she started her studies in the University of Lapland (at that time Lapin korkeakoulu), in the Faculty of Education. After her studies she started working as a class teacher in Sodankylä. The big changes in school system inspired her to start studying first English and then Swedish at the University of Oulu. She wanted to work on different school levels. And finally, she started her doctoral studies in the University of Lapland and her doctoral thesis was accepted in March 2011.

The same year she started working as a vice-principal in Aleksanteri Kenan koulu, Sodankylä. The school is a comprehensive school with almost 50 teachers and over 420 pupils from pre-school to ninth-graders. Nowadays she is the principal of the school. She still lives in the house her parents (unfortunately they are not alive anymore) built and takes care of her family's reindeer with her husband. Two of their three children study industrial engineering and management at the University of Oulu and their youngest child will graduate from the IB side in Oulun Lyseon lukio this year. Her roots are deep in the riverbank of the river Sattanen although her work sometimes flies her to places in Southern Finland or even abroad.