

The background of the cover is white, adorned with numerous teardrop-shaped icons in three colors: yellow, orange, and green. These shapes are scattered across the page, with some clusters and some isolated. Three dashed black lines are also present: one on the left side curving upwards, one on the right side curving downwards, and one at the bottom curving from left to right.

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Multiagency in schools

COMMUNAL SCHOOL WELFARE AND
SUPPORT OF TRANSITIONS

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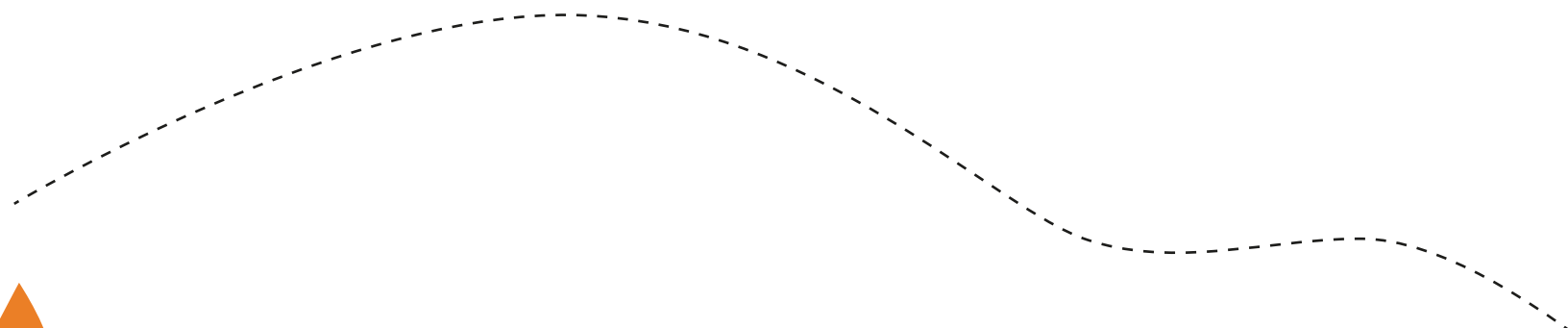
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Introduction



This publication compiles activities carried out during the Preventive Multiprofessional Cooperation: Participation and the Prevention of Exclusion as Part of the Schools' Operational Culture (EMOK) project. The project is funded by the European Social Fund (ESR) and the North Ostrobothnia Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment. It is motivated by the changes in the Pupil and Student Welfare Act (1287/2013) in which the emphasis on student welfare shifted from corrective individual work to preventive communal student welfare. The new law emphasises operational models that increase communality, participation and cooperation in supporting school welfare. The central goal of the project is to promote a multiprofessional cooperation culture in everyday school life, emphasising the strengthening of participation by children, young people and families as well as support for communal school welfare in various ways. Multiprofessional cooperation highlights the notion that the knowledge and participation of all parties is important in promoting school welfare. Expertise due to the experiences of children and parents is considered equal to the knowledge of professionals. Although the new law emphasises multiprofessional preventive school welfare work, the principles and practices of multiprofessional cooperation are not yet sufficiently clear in the school sector. Concrete methods are needed to cooperate in a multiprofessional way. Good practices can be shared and produced, and new information based on research can be distributed in the school sector from project activities.

The proficiency of schools and their staff members was strengthened during the project, and methods that could make an early impact were developed and applied to prevent exclusion. In addition, the project promoted communal student welfare and school welfare. During the project, operational models and information on multiprofessional cooperation during school welfare work were given to staff in education, and the requirements and opportunities for multiprofessional work were highlighted. The goal was to clarify the role of different actors in multiprofessional work, recognise the significance of dialogism and interactions as part of a multidisciplinary prob-

lem-solving process and understand the role and significance of expertise based on experience. The development of the multidisciplinary professional identity of the teachers and student welfare staff of the project schools leads to preventative school welfare and promotes the school staff's awareness of the importance of multiprofessional cooperation.

During the project, special attention was paid to the streamlining of the students' transitional phases from primary school to upper comprehensive school and from basic to secondary education. The participation of students was strengthened both in the transitions and in everyday school life. Through the project's research interests and project activities, information was produced, and models of smooth transitions were created that consider the significance of communality, multiprofessional cooperation and school welfare and student agency. The goal of the project was to intervene in the social exclusion episodes of children and young people during basic education and to ensure that a strong support network is available to the young people when they leave basic education for upper secondary education. Developing early intervention methods has a far-reaching impact that promotes the transitions of young people.

Cooperation among educational sciences, especially between teacher training and social work, was also developed and extended during the project for both teaching and research. A joint Multiprofessional Cooperation and Multidisciplinary study module, which up to now has been implemented during three autumn terms, was developed for teacher training and social work with students. By modernising the contents of education, students can utilise a multidisciplinary working model during their studies.

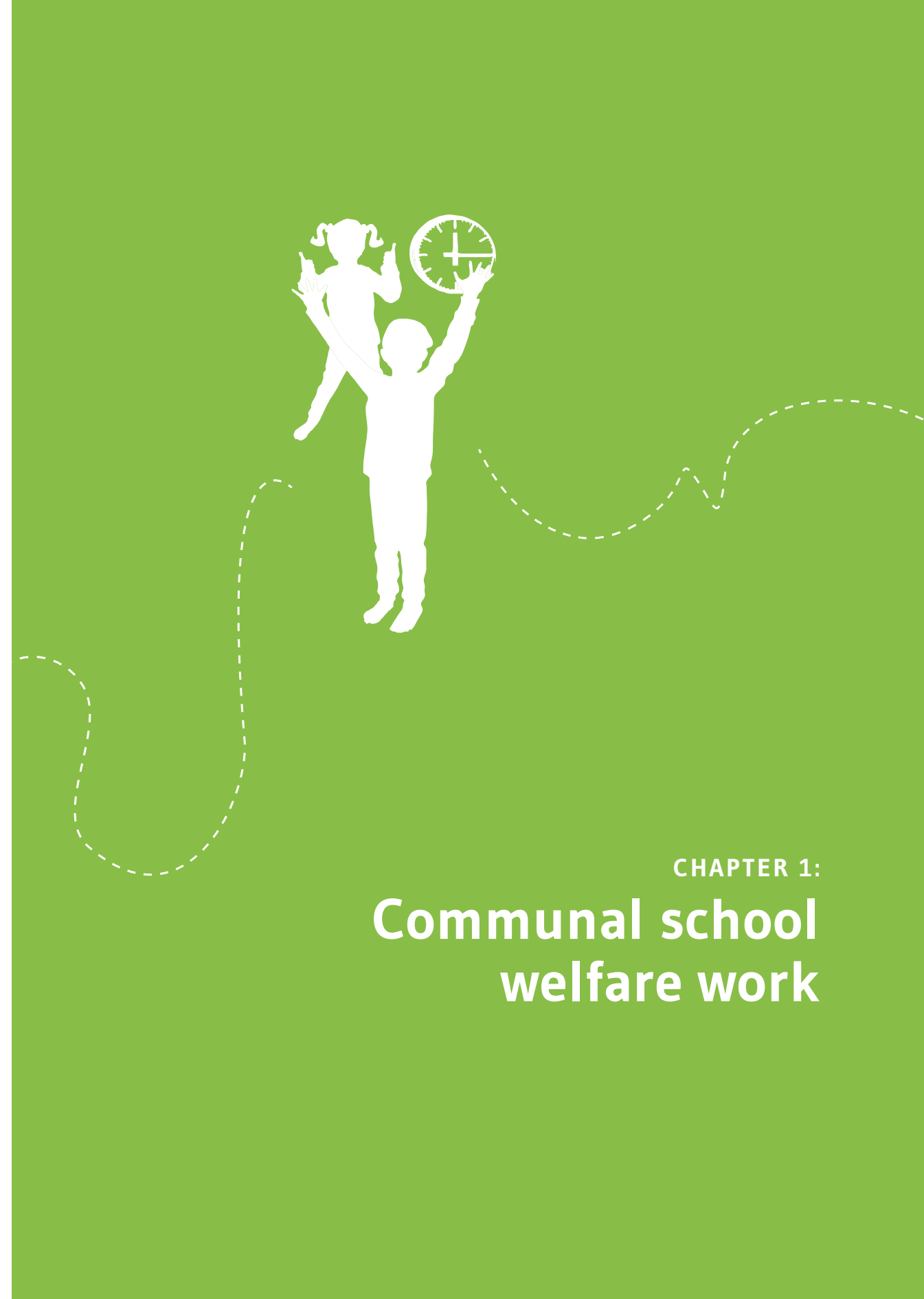
The main organiser of the project was the University of Lapland, which was represented by the Faculties of Education and Social Sciences. The city of Rovaniemi participated in the project as a

part-organisier with four project schools, which were the Ounasvaara Comprehensive School, the Saari School, the Hirvas School and the Alakorkalo School. The municipality of Enontekiö participated in the project as the other part-organisier. The Kilpisjärvi School, the Karesuvanto School and the Peltovuoma School were included during the early part of the project.

This publication presents different working methods to promote communal welfare and to support transitions through the activities and experiences of those who participated in the project. The content is divided into three different themes. The communal school welfare section discusses multiprofessional cooperation and multiprofessionalism as a premise for welfare work and illustrates how communality and the knowledge of experts can be developed along with the work community through the processes implemented during the project. The working methods used to create an early impact include four multiprofessional procedures for working with students. The main emphasis in these examples is on working methods that increase communality and are focused on the entire student group. The section on good practices for streamlining and supporting transitions describes different student-centred activities that were developed and carried out during the project to support transitions both from primary school to upper comprehensive school and from basic to secondary education. The texts were written by the project workers and the school actors who participated in the activities.

Preventive multiprofessional cooperation project team:

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CHAPTER 1:

Communal school welfare work

Multiprofessional cooperation in support of the transitions of young people



Why does a multiprofessional working method support the transition of young people to the secondary level?

- ▶ The experiential knowledge of young people and families is an important resource
- ▶ Expert knowledge and experiential knowledge are combined
- ▶ The transition can be supported based on the needs of young people and their families
- ▶ The participation of young people in their own lives is strengthened
- ▶ Young people learn that they can impact their own lives

Beginning upper comprehensive school and ending primary school are important transitions in the lives of young people. Many expectations and new opportunities as well as exciting and even frightening changes are associated with these transitions. Each young person's transitional experience is unique. When they are successful, the transitions support the young people's concepts of themselves and their abilities to act in new situations. Unsuccessful transitions convey the opposite message.

Young people and their families have a wealth of experiential knowledge of their own lives. Experiential knowledge refers to knowledge and know-how that is created in one's personal life. It involves relationships, situations and events and can have different forms, such as psychosocial, physical, bodily and emotional forms. It is important to recognise the importance and multidimensionality of experiential knowledge during transitional phases. Studies have shown that experiential knowledge is often unofficial knowledge; it consists of the experiences of young people and their families as well as those of older siblings, the parents' own transitional experiences and experiences shared by other young people and families.

The school and student welfare staff possess expert knowledge, including knowledge regarding the growth and development of young people, the societal state of families and children and the school and welfare system. In addition, experts possess practical information about good operational models and working methods,

” It is important that the expertise based on the experiences of young people and families is respected.

and their task is to continuously study and develop their own and the school community's approaches to work.

Multiprofessional cooperation combines these types of information. It is important that the expertise based on the experiences of young people and families is respected and that they are included in the planning and implementation of transitions as full-fledged actors. This strengthens the participation of young people in their own lives and supports the development of life skills. Multiprofessionalism helps experts understand transitional experiences from the perspective of young people and families and facilitates access to the right type of support in a sufficient and timely manner. Consequently, the transitional process can be supported with the young person and the family in mind.

A multiprofessional work approach occurs at a school when young people and families are given the time and space to participate in the planning and implementation of the transition. Its realisation requires a desire to examine and understand the transition from different perspectives. The school and student welfare staff members occupy an important position because their task is to create an atmosphere of trust in which different types of knowledge are equally respected. Language has a high significance in this approach. Realising dialogism requires considering what type of language professionals use when meeting with young people and their families.

During multiprofessional work, it is also important to remember that the life goals of young people do not necessarily correspond with the transitional expectations of society or the school system. The route through which young people find their societal places in education or work can be complex and uncertain, and strong support is required.

Tips for a multiprofessional work approach:

- ▶ Providing space for the knowledge and goals of a young person
- ▶ Recognising and respecting different values
- ▶ Recognising the limitations of one's own know-how and entering into professional partnerships with an open mind
- ▶ Possessing the courage to question things openly and collaborate
- ▶ Shifting from guarding one's territory to creating a shared working arena

Multiprofessional cooperation: From the culture of coping alone toward a reciprocal cooperation



Toimivan moniammatillisen yhteistyön avaimia:

- The parties understand one another's job descriptions and justifications behind the solutions
- Strong interaction skills and genuine intent to reach a shared understanding
- Efficient targeting of existing resources

This Master's thesis examined the perceptions of classroom teachers regarding multiprofessional cooperation. The teachers who participated in the study had a positive view of multiprofessional cooperation because sharing the concerns of students supported the teachers' ability to cope. At best, the teachers received support and were able to develop their own qualities as teachers as a result of the cooperation, which enabled efficient support for the students. Slight resources, stricter data protection and inefficient cooperation, which have been addressed in recent years through legislative changes, were viewed as challenges to implementing cooperation.

According to previous studies, the need for multiprofessional cooperation has increased. The emphasis on the students' difficulties has shifted from learning difficulties to behavioural and emotional disorders. Teachers feel they need multiprofessional know-how to support their work, specifically for challenges related to behavioural and emotional disorders. Multiprofessional cooperation is successful when it is clearly organised, the persons understand one another's job descriptions and recognise the capacities of different parties and a common perspective on the matter at hand is shared. The most beneficial approaches are consultations, meetings and school visits by professionals. Functional multiprofessional cooperation requires strong interaction skills so that the parties' personalities do not impact the achievement of a shared view and goal.

According to the teachers who participated in the study, above all, resources and time are needed to carry out multiprofessional work both when meeting with students face-to-face and following them at school in their natural operational environment. Visits by professionals to schools—the physical operational environment of the children and teachers—were considered especially valuable. Teachers recognised that students were experiencing difficulties and required help at an early stage; however, early intervention does not guarantee that a student will progress, as bureaucracy, the lack of resources or inefficient cooperation, for example, could affect their progress. Unnecessarily strict data protection regulations that can weaken the flow of information and thus a student's access to the support services were viewed as a key challenge in the functionality of cooperation. The teachers felt that the lack of dialogism and the shared social cognition, which are impacted by interaction skills and the readiness for crossing professional borders, were areas that required further development regarding cooperation.

Based on the results, it appears that the teacher culture of autonomy and coping alone is changing. Work support is sought when teachers reach their own limits related to helping and coping or when the methods implemented at school to support a child are proven to be insufficient. Discussions, sharing concerns and different views as well as concrete tips, instructions and advice are viewed as important and supportive for teachers. A shared understanding of a child's current situation as well as the goal the parties aim to reach using jointly agreed upon methods can be achieved through open discussions, interaction skills, professionalism and more efficient activities.

Kati Oikarinen, Master's thesis 2016: 'I can certainly see its value, but I have seen its limits as well' – Perceptions of classroom teachers regarding multidisciplinary cooperation

To be developed:

- The job descriptions and processes of the parties carrying out multiprofessional cooperation must be clear
- A multiprofessional work approach and interaction skills must be a more integral part of teacher training
- Using existing resources efficiently

Activities of student welfare group at the school



What are the characteristics of a functional student welfare group?

- ▶ Regularity
- ▶ Activity
- ▶ Different perspectives
- ▶ Observations
- ▶ Ideas
- ▶ Listening
- ▶ Discussion
- ▶ Openness
- ▶ Creativity

Wellbeing and its promotion are responsibilities of everyone in a school's community. Whether it is a child, a young person or an adult, each person can impact the promotion of wellbeing. Maintaining a shared and clean work environment and friendliness toward a classmate or colleague are examples of factors that impact wellbeing. The concept of wellbeing guides student welfare work and the activities of the student welfare group at schools. When comprehensive wellbeing is understood as a basis for learning and growth, it is easier to develop and strengthen it. Wellbeing is not self-evident; rather, it must be achieved. By applying preventive welfare work, students' wellbeing and mental health are strengthened.

Communal student welfare work performed at schools is a statutory, systematic and preventive activity. The school must have an educational institute-specific student welfare group. Usually, the school's principal or director convenes the group, and the group includes representatives from the teaching and guidance staff, school health care and student welfare staff and other co-operation partners, such as youth workers. Students and guardians can be full members of the group or can be invited at least twice each term.

The city of Rovaniemi's curriculum advises the group to meet at least three times each term, but this is not necessarily sufficient for high-quality student welfare work. Regular gatherings that are organised often enable active discussion, planning and evaluation. It is best to agree on the group's meeting times at the start of the term. The persons appointed to the student welfare group must be committed to their task and must be active par-

ticipants. Discussions and agreed-upon matters are recorded in a memorandum. Members can take turns preparing the memorandum. The memorandum is meant not only for the student welfare group but also for all members of the school community.

In a functional student welfare group, a discussion is the active expression of observations, opinions and ideas. A small observation about everyday school life can lead to a discussion, and the interaction could generate an idea or vision that advances to implementation through planning. The discussion is enriched when different experts participate in the welfare group (please note that a student and guardian are experts as well). The student welfare group is not only a discussion group and idea bank but also includes basic yearly tasks, such as developing a school-specific student welfare plan.

The student welfare group and the communal student welfare work in its entirety have an impact on the school and its operational culture. The school forms a community that participates in internal and external interactions. For example, an interactive community is positive, encourages participation and supports the strengths of children and young people. A healthy school community is a resource whose effects are reflected in the life of students far into the future.

” By applying preventive welfare work, students' wellbeing and mental health are strengthened.

Peer mentoring of student welfare staff



Development ideas that arose during peer mentoring

- ▶ Strengthening the resource perspective in school culture
- ▶ Preventive working methods that strengthen positive school culture are central in school social work
- ▶ Teaching welfare skills must be systematic, eg. an annual welfare clock
- ▶ Welfare guidance for teachers on certain themes
- ▶ Change requires time

During the project, the need arose to develop the contents, aims and working methods of school social work. The need was based on the reform of the Pupil and Student Welfare Act (1287/2013) and its communal emphasis. The aim was to promote the school's preventive communal work and to clarify the role of the school's different actors through the project, thereby strengthening the position of the school social worker and school social work. The expertise of the school social workers and school psychologists was utilised in the development work with peer mentoring.

The development of communal work was considered important because there were several communal needs at the schools that could not be effectively implemented through casework, including anti-bullying tactics, the development of social skills and promoting harmony in the classroom. One key development theme was the strengthening of the school social worker's role and position and making social work visible at the school. The expertise of school social workers could be utilised even more, especially in multiprofessional communal work.

During the meetings organised for the project, the school social workers analysed social work know-how using Ulla-Maija Rantalaiho's Dimensions of Social Work Expertise. They discussed how the school community's social capital could be advanced through community work and envisioned a communal school through the 'remembering the future' method. In addition, they discussed their own school communities in relation to the development of communal work emphasised by the Pupil and Student Welfare Act and structured it using the SWOT table. They also discussed work

methods with a class or group for both the whole school and for the school's different actors. An information package regarding the know-how of school social workers was compiled during the meetings to be presented to other professionals at the schools.

Next, there was a joint meeting with school social workers and school psychologists in which the previous work process of the school social workers was described. The process then continued with the participants discussing how communal student welfare work could be promoted at the school. The school social workers and school psychologists pondered how they could impact communality and school welfare through their own work. They also discussed their work through different levels (micro, meso, exo, macro, krono levels) and the impact of the levels to their work. During the second joint meeting, the school social workers and school psychologists used the function tree method to determine how communality and communal student welfare could be developed and what could be accomplished through one's own work and with one's own resources. As the work progressed, the best ideas were selected and placed on a timeline. At the end of the meeting, the school social workers and school psychologists received their own plans with targets related to communal student welfare. During the final meeting, the plans with targets were reviewed, and the work was evaluated. The continuation of the development and the work after the project was discussed as well.

Tips for communal work:

- ▶ Arjen arkki: www.arjenarkki.fi/menetelmapankki
- ▶ Materials to support grouping: www.ryhmayttaminen.fi
- ▶ The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare's materials for professionals: www.mll.fi/ammattilaisille
- ▶ MAST grouping guide www.mastohjaus.fi/pdf/Ryhmayttamispas.pdf

Toward a coherent school culture with team coaching



Tiimivalmennus täydennyskoulutusmuotona:

- Johdon tuki ja sitoutuminen on ensiarvoisen tärkeää onnistumisen kannalta
- Asiantuntijayhteisön oma osaaminen on kehittämistyön perustana
- Työyhteisön jäsenet toimivat tasa-arvoisina vertaismentoreina toisilleen
- Tulosten jalkauttamisesta ja vakiinnuttamisesta arkeen on huolehdittava tiimivalmennuksen jälkeen
- Toteutustavoissa on vain mielikuvitus rajana

At the school, teachers form an expert community whose know-how is worth utilising in continuing education. One way to promote further education is team coaching in which teachers work in small groups and the schools' principals lead the work with support from outside instructors.

The goal of team coaching was to promote a uniform school culture. Teachers served as peer mentors to each other. Team coaching was implemented with five joint planning times at approximately a one-month interval. The implementation included a beginning orientation and a written initial assessment, three small group work sessions and a summary of the output of the group work sessions. The subjects of the small group work sessions were consistency in school rules, harmony in the classroom and the significance of positive feedback. The principals formed the teachers into small groups and selected a team leader for each group. The leader was responsible for the completion of each session and for ensuring that everyone participated in the discussions and expressed their views. One of the group members was the record-keeper, and this role was alternated each time.

The project workers prepared incentive material for each subject (eg. a short Teacher TV video or a cooperative play session) and questions leading to the discussion of the subject. If desired, the group could complete the work by brainstorming at a nearby hiking trail, for example. At the end of each meeting, the output was recorded in Google Drive. For the summary, the project workers analysed the material produced by the teams, which was presented to the teachers. As a result of the analysis, five development themes were formed for the school: common approach-

es, communality and the co-operation with homes, harmony at work, systematic support for studying and attending school and multidisciplinary learning modules. The next term, teachers continued working on these themes and making them a part of everyday school life. The school formed new teams to work on/develop each theme for further work.

” At the school, teachers form an expert community, whose know-how is worth utilising in continuing education.

One example of the results of team coaching is the teachers' views on promoting harmony at work, which was one of the key themes of team coaching. Harmony at work is important for school and students as well as staff welfare. The teachers' discussions focused on the early impact on class atmosphere and emphasised the tier of general support, whose purpose is to guarantee good basic education for everyone and to promote safety and wellbeing at the school. A peaceful working environment leads to motivated students and good interactions between teachers and students. It is apparent from the materials produced by the teachers that high-quality pedagogy is developed by creating functional and flexible physical, mental and social learning environments, which enable learning for diverse learners. The key thoughts of teachers related to promoting harmony at work are summarised in the table.

Promoting harmony at classroom				
Teachers competences for teaching diverse students	Resources	Engagement and positive feedback	Routines	Common rules and communication
Everyone must find his/her own way to act	Modifiable classrooms for flexible groupings	Engagement and positive feedback strengthen positive activities	Routines promote the feeling of safety	The importance of peace at work and rules are justified for the students
What works for one group does not work for all groups	Multiprofessional cooperation supports the work of students and teachers	Feedback can be given verbally, in writing, with different symbols and rewards	The lesson starts with silence, and the teacher clearly ends the lesson	Teachers create an open atmosphere but there are safe boundaries
What works for one teacher does not necessarily work for another	Through collaboration during educational transitions, head teachers, school counsellors and special education teachers can influence on the composition of the groups	Peer feedback and the students' self-evaluations are important	Clear instructions are given	Students participate in considering consequences
One needs backup plans and flexibility during classes	Continuing education, suitable study materials, etc., support the teachers' work	Interesting classes and variation in teaching methods help to engage the student	Review the goals for the class/period and the rhythm of the class → the students know what to do	Students, teachers and guardians are regularly informed about common school matters
Diverse working methods			Although there are routines during class, the instruction can still be versatile and changing → the interest in learning is maintained	Teachers systematically intervene when rules are broken
			The teacher plans and prepares for the lesson carefully	Everyone is treated equally
				Cooperation between the home and school is crucial

When promoting harmony at work, it is important to note that the relationships between each teacher and the group's students are unique. Indeed, teachers must use their own personalities when interacting with students so that the interrelationships are functional. Regarding harmony at work, diverse working methods and content that interests students increase engagement and motivation. Cooperation with families also plays a key role, and common rules must be agreed upon with students and guardians. Everyone must commit to the rules and adhere to the agreed-upon procedures systematically. In the work community, it must be ensured that the teacher is not left alone to resolve issues related to harmony at work but rather that they receive help from colleagues and the multiprofessional network.



CHAPTER 2: Working methods including proactive strategies

YCommunal school welfare in the classroom: A school social worker's perspective



Successful classroom work

- ▶ Good advanced preparation and planning in cooperation with the school social worker and teacher
- ▶ Students and parents have a role in the phase of planning
- ▶ The teacher plays an active role so the topic is upheld in everyday life as well as between meetings
- ▶ Procedural evaluation during work
- ▶ Feedback discussions and evaluations at the end

Successful shared classroom work requires advanced preparation by the school social worker and teacher. First, the reason classroom work is needed and its goal are discussed and clarified. The school social worker must obtain information on class dynamics and the students' cooperation skills. The students should also be aware of the goals of the work. Consequently, all parties would have an understanding of the reason a change is required.

The teacher's active role in the classroom work is a key factor because without it, lasting effects in the classroom cannot be achieved. To make the effects of classroom work more efficient, parents can be included. The participation of parents increases effectiveness, such as in bullying concerns or issues related to harmony at work. Cooperation with parents can begin with an evening meeting to which both students and parents are invited. The roles of the parents and students are strengthened during the meeting. For example, students could prepare short plays that illustrate the challenges in class to be presented to the parents. The situation can be discussed in groups based on these plays. It is beneficial to form the groups in such a way that they contain parents and children, but the students should not be in the same groups with their own parents. The school social workers and teachers could prepare an outline to support discussions as well as questions to help begin discussions. The discussions and suggestions of the groups act as the basis for future classroom work.

As the school social workers visit the schools only a few days per week, it is important to plan how the teacher should uphold

the themes and strengthen skills already learned between the meetings. Partial goals and interim exercises, which the teacher guides and monitors along with the students, can be established so that the meetings are relevant in everyday life. It is important to note that the partial goals that have been achieved should be celebrated. The active role of teachers is key because they uphold learning goals in all study subjects and everyday situations. As the cooperation progresses, the partial goals and exercises become more specified.

Although a specific plan is initially developed, the plan is reviewed before each work session. After each work session, time is also reserved for a feedback discussion between the school social worker and teachers. At this time, they can discuss the realisation of the interim exercises and ways to achieve the goals and can specify or modify the plans based on the discussions.

Once the work session is completed, teacher and student feedback and evaluation of the work is reviewed together. If a meeting with the parents was arranged before the work began, another meeting with the parents can be arranged. Students can play an active role during the meeting. For example, they could produce different types of presentations, posters or essays about the process.

” The teacher's active role is key during classroom work.

Supporting grouping and a harmonious working environment in the classroom



Why is it a good idea to implement classroom work in this way?

- ▶ The teacher does not manage classroom issues alone
- ▶ The class acquires multiprofessional know-how
- ▶ Communal and preventive work
- ▶ Working in pairs enables a different perspective of work for the teacher
- ▶ Students are provided with the opportunity to experience the joy of succeeding

The goal of student welfare is consistent with the amendment to the Pupil and Student Welfare Act (1287/2013) to perform increasingly more communal and preventive work. One form of cooperation is classroom work with the teacher based on the needs of the class, which can be addressed by multiprofessional cooperation. Along with the school social worker, special needs teacher, school nurse and/or school psychologist, the teacher can plan and implement beneficial activities during class.

This text presents one example in which harmony in the classroom and grouping were supported. Initially, the cooperation between the teacher and project worker was based on various long-term problems in the classroom, which were related to social skills, harmony in the classroom and participating in a group. Restlessness, self-centeredness, violence and disagreements reduced the welfare of the class and made it more difficult to achieve the goals of the curriculum. The 'Classroom work to support grouping and peace at work' entity designed by school psychologist Iina Herrala was selected as the method to be implemented within the classroom.

The work was carried out throughout the spring term. Cooperation occurred regularly, and the teacher's commitment and consistency were prerequisites for success. Each session had its own theme, and a short clip from the Moomins Model television spots related to the theme was viewed, and the issue was discussed as a group. This was followed by exercises and games related to

” Long-term work was visible for students both at the individual and group levels.

the theme. The teacher and the class agreed on a common goal, whose realisation was monitored until the next meeting time. The goal was made visible and concrete in such a way that the children had both individual and common goals. The children received a mark for success and a pearl for their own jars. The realisation of the common goal, was monitored by collecting cones in a large glass bowl.

Positive changes in the classroom were achieved through classroom work. According to the teacher's experiences, the work in the classroom promoted the students' self-control and consideration of others in a group and thus supported the model and guidance provided by the teacher. Dividing the exercises into concrete goals (for example, spontaneous greetings in the mornings) helped students understand the impact of one's own behaviour on the group's atmosphere, activities and welfare. Long-term work was visible to students both at the individual and group levels. The most notable change was the disappearance of daily violence and arguments, which were replaced by occasional incidents that the students were often able to resolve by themselves. Another significant change was the acceptance of differences. The students began to realise that there is something to appreciate about all classmates, including unique qualities. Consequently, rather than settling constant arguments, there was time to work on achieving the learning goals of the curriculum. The school days contained increasingly more common activities and a joy of learning.

Key approaches to success:

- ▶ A shared view with another professional regarding aims
- ▶ Regularity and consistency
- ▶ Monitoring the goals of the work
- ▶ Highlighting successes and rewarding participants both as individuals and as a group
- ▶ Activities must be planned in a way suitable for the group

Practising friendship skills in a group



Why a friendship skills group?

- The aim was to improve relationships between students in the classroom
- Students had the opportunity to get to know each other better
- The aim was to motivate the students to ponder friendship and related matters, such as trust, empathy and fairness

Communal and preventive work can be carried out in many different ways. One experiment that was done during the project was forming a group for some of the students in a class. The purpose was to help students get to know each other better, improve the relationships between them and discuss friendship. The work was carried out along with the school social worker and project worker. It would be possible to carry out the activities with the teacher, school assistant or special needs teacher as well.

The group met during the school day in classes agreed upon with a teacher. Matters related to friendship were discussed in the group meetings, and students were challenged to get to know each other better. As all of the participants were girls, Jenni Pääskysaari's book *Girl You Are...*, which features good observations related to friendship, was used as supplementary reading material.

The group convened five times during the autumn term. The themes of the meetings were getting acquainted, friendship, trust, empathy and fairness. At the first meeting, the purpose and goals of the group were explained to the students. Students were divided into pairs, and they were asked to interview each other and to think about the strengths of their pair. Next, students presented their pair to others in the group. As a result, students came to know each other better through grouping exercises, and at the end, a homework assignment was given to them.

The outline for each meeting included problem-solving or grouping exercises, reading an excerpt from the book *Girl You Are...* and discussing it and a homework assignment. The 'Secret Friend'

task was used as the homework assignment. At the end of each session, a secret friend was drawn for the students. The secret friend was assigned different types of exercises, such as performing good deeds, writing a letter, finding strengths and encouraging the secret friend.

The group was fairly large, and it contained 16 students. Initially, the students found it challenging to talk within the group, but dividing the students into small groups and providing them with questions to facilitate discussions improved the situation. As the meetings progressed, the students found it easier to participate in the grouping exercises, and they clearly began to function better as a group.

” The group convened five times during the autumn term. The themes of the meetings were getting acquainted, friendship, trust, empathy and fairness.

Key approaches to success:

- Clarifying the goals for the participants
- Regularity and consistency
- Providing suitable challenges and experiences of success
- Discussions initially in small groups and then with the whole group
- Locating suitable premises for the meetings

Practising social skills and interpersonal skills in primary school



Why practice social skills and interpersonal skills?

- Children must learn to get along with different types of people
- Although the school is a social environment, there are differences in interpersonal skills among students
- Strengthening the self-awareness of the students facilitates working in a group

Social skills and interpersonal skills are practised daily in everyday school life in different ways during classes and recesses. At times, it is useful to pay attention to how well everyone is included in a group and how others are taken into account outside the school as well. During the project, many different classroom work sessions were carried out, and the purpose was to present the work carried out in the higher grades of primary school along with the classroom teacher and project worker.

The goal of the classroom work was to strengthen the students' social skills and to promote the welfare of the class. Applicable material from 'Feeling Good Together - A Handbook for Promoting the Mental Health of Primary School Students' and Aseman Lapset ry's (Children of the Station) 'Friends' were used to support classroom work. The topics were friendship, emotional skills, acceptance of differences, own strengths and those of the classmates and acting in a group.

When discussing the friendship topic, the students were asked to think about various definitions related to friendship and to write them down on paper. Next, students compared the definitions with the person sitting next to them, and a new list was made including the definitions of both students. Small groups were then formed again, and a common group list was made of the definitions of friendship. Finally, all definitions were written on the board and discussed together.

” The goal of the classroom work was to strengthen the students' social skills and to promote the welfare of the class.

For the exercise related to emotional skills, students were divided into groups of four and asked to consider four emotions: joy, sorrow, fear and hate. Students wrote down situations in which the different emotions occur and where and how the emotion is felt in the body. In addition, the students considered what helps one cope with negative emotions. The work was continued the next week under the direction of the teacher because one lesson was not sufficient to cover the topic.

Students were challenged to find similarities and differences in each other during the lesson dealing with the acceptance of differences. The topic was discussed in class, and students completed exercises in which they interviewed all students in the class. Strength Cards were utilised in connection with the strengths topic. Students were asked to draw a sun, inside of which they wrote their own name on a piece of paper. First, the students considered their own strengths and wrote them in the rays of their own sun. The students then went around the class and wrote a strength that described another student in their sun rays. The strengths were selected from the Strength Cards, and the teacher also wrote a strength on each student's paper. As homework, students were asked to present their own sun to their parents and ask them to write their child's strength on the paper.

The final session of the classroom work was organised as a checkpoint track. In small groups, students went around three different checkpoints that contained exercises related to problem solving and trust. At the end of the session, the success of the work and how the topics could be handled in the future were assessed with the teacher.



CHAPTER 3: :

Good practices for streamlining and supporting transitions

Let's Go to the 7th Grade activities



Experiences of the effects of the activities in everyday school life:

- Multiprofessional cooperation increases
- The activities are naturally linked as part of peer student activities and support the school's communality
- Grouping and streamlining the transition is more systematic
- Knowledge of students increases
- Tried and tested activities have already become established as part of the everyday life of project schools

'Let's Go to the 7th Grade' activities was to streamline the transition from primary school to upper comprehensive school. The activities focused on supporting students who were transitioning to upper comprehensive school to get to know each other and their future school. The activities strengthened the students' grouping skills and experience of communality and alleviated the anxiety nervousness related to the transition.

Let's Go to the 7th Grade in Enontekiö

The development of the Let's Go to the 7th Grade activities that began during the School Coach project was continued in the EMOK project. In Enontekiö, students transition from village schools to the Hetta Comprehensive School. Although students from the Kilpisjärvi School do not transfer to the Hetta Comprehensive School, Kilpisjärvi students did participate in the activities. The purpose was to address the lack of peers for schools with a low number of students. The activities were carried out in a multiprofessional way: participants included classroom teachers, a project worker, a special needs teacher, a youth worker, upper comprehensive school subject teachers and peer students.

The concept of the Let's Go to the 7th Grade activities was that the students would meet each other both in their own schools and in their future upper comprehensive school. The 6th grade students planned their own school's Let's Go to the 7th Grade activities with the support of adults. The guiding objectives of planning were that the activities would support familiarisation and grouping and that they could be implemented using the given resources. In addition, the students responded to the 'What Makes

You Wonder?' survey concerning the transition and wrote letters to their future homeroom teachers. Teachers received tools for grouping in everyday school life through the survey and letter. There were 3-4 actual meeting times, of which the final meeting was planned by the adults. At that time, it was possible to answer the students' concrete questions about school rules and studying in the upper comprehensive school among other questions. After each session, the students were asked for feedback, based on which the activities were developed and information was obtained regarding whether the goals of the activities were achieved.

During the spring of 6th grade, the participation of the students and parents in the upcoming transition was supported by the personal study plan. It was made together with the teacher, the student and the guardians during parent meetings. The personal study plan also functioned as a tool in the transformation of information from the primary school to the upper comprehensive school. One goal of the use of the personal study plan was to highlight the students' strengths.

Support for the transition to upper comprehensive school immediately continued the next autumn term with the 'We're in the 7th Grade' activities, whose goal was to support the formation of a group to facilitate a functional class community. For example, grouping classes and joint trips were implemented for the We're in the 7th grade activities. During 7th grade, it is important to monitor the activities of the group and the formation of social relationships and to react to possible issues if necessary. For instance, teachers can assign activities that support grouping in everyday school life by paying attention to the composition of group and pair work and discussing themes related to social relationships.

Let's Go to the 7th Grade in Rovaniemi

Based on the good results in Enontekiö, the Let's Go to the 7th Grade activities were also carried out in Rovaniemi. Alakemijoki area primary schools, from which students transferred to the Muurola Comprehensive School, participated in the activities. Activities were planned and carried out by classroom teachers,

What the activities provide to the students:

- Increases student participation and opportunities to make a difference
- Promotes the formation of the students' social relationships and alleviates anxiety before beginning upper comprehensive school
- Enables safe meetings and familiarisation with the premises of the new school
- As a tool for the transfer of information during the transition, the personal study plan strengthens the students' right to be heard

upper comprehensive school peer students, a guidance counselor, a project worker and a youth worker. At the beginning of the project, the project workers mapped out the students' thoughts and feelings related to the transition. One key factor was that the area's 6th graders did not know each other, which guided the planning and implementation of the operational model. In spring 2016, there were three Let's Go to the 7th Grade days, and two were offered in spring 2017. The themes of the days were getting to know other students, strengthening grouping and communality and becoming acquainted with the new school and teachers. From the students' perspectives, it was also important that they learned about each other's primary schools and the environments of the different students.

Observations on the Let's Go to the 7th Grade activities

In the Let's Go to the 7th Grade activities, it is important to note that the actors should have a common overall view of the implementation. For the activities to be successful, school transport, meals, packed lunches, the effects of period numbering systems on schedules and possible needs for support must be organised and clarified. Responsibilities for practical arrangements must be clearly allocated in advance. The number of students has an effect on which types of activities can be carried out, as activities for 14 students are different from those with 50 students. Examples of the programme outlines for the meeting days in both Enontekiö and Rovaniemi are presented on the following pages. When planning the activities, the scheduling should be considered in such a way that at least some of the meetings are organised after the 7th grade class divisions are completed. The scheduling of activities can be flexible and can change annually because the number of students, the number and location of schools participating, the possibilities of using remote connections and partners affect the activities. Activities that promote grouping can also be arranged through remote connections during lessons in everyday school life. Successful grouping, which continues throughout the school year with the We're in the 7th Grade activities, relaxes students, creates a good atmosphere for the class and improves the functions of everyday life.

Let's Go to the 7th Grade programme outline



The goal of the Let's Go to the 7th Grade meetings is to group future 7th graders and help them get to know each other before beginning upper comprehensive school. At the meetings, the students get to know each other through various name and familiarisation games, common activities and other games. The students also get to know each other's primary schools and learn about their previous environments. Becoming acquainted with the future upper comprehensive school and the school rules and customs as well as grouping strengthen the experience of communality and thus streamline the students' transitions to upper comprehensive school. The necessary transport to schools is arranged in connection with school transport, and students are also able to practice travelling using school transport in a timely manner. In Rovaniemi, at the final meeting, the transport was carried out with local transport buses that the students would use when beginning upper comprehensive school.

An example of the Rovaniemi programme outline

1. Meeting: Becoming acquainted with the other students in March-April

10:45 a.m.	Bus transport leaves
11:15 a.m.	Opening words, what is the purpose of the meeting and dividing into groups
11:30 a.m.	1. Checkpoint Alias
11:50 a.m.	2. Checkpoint Rope riddle
12:10 p.m.	3. Checkpoint Assembling a tower from newspapers
12:30 p.m.	4. Checkpoint Familiarisation games
12:50 p.m.	5. Checkpoint Turning the carpet around
1:10 p.m.	6. Checkpoint Human-mine detector
1:30 p.m.	Convene one more time, closing words and feedback on the day
1:50 p.m.	Bus transport leaves

2. Meeting: Grouping in April-May

10 a.m.	Bus transport leaves
10:30 a.m.	Opening words, outline for the day, division into classes
10:45 a.m.	Grouping exercises as a warm-up under the direction of the teacher or peer students. The exercises: getting in line in alphabetical order or based on hair colour or shoe size
11:00 a.m.	Pair interview: pairs interview each other with supporting questions and present their pair to the class
11:30 a.m.	Future home room teachers and peer students introduce themselves and discuss the forthcoming. Students can ask them questions.
11:50 a.m.	Visiting a nearby lean-to. For the walk, the students can be given some exercise, through which they get to know each other more. Relaxing around the lean-to, eating packed lunch and grilling sausages.
12:30 p.m.	End game led by peer students, closing speeches by the teachers and collecting feedback
1 p.m.	Returning to the school, from where the buses leave

3. Meeting: Becoming acquainted with the upper comprehensive school in May

8:15 a.m.	The local bus leaves
9 a.m.	Gathering in the school auditorium: greetings by the principal and the guidance counsellor
9:30 a.m.	Dividing into classes, after which the peer students show the students around the school and introduce students to each other
9:50 a.m.	Recess
10 a.m.	The presentation of the school and introductions continue
11 a.m.	Gathering in the auditorium and a small review exercise of the day
11:20 a.m.	Lunch
11:40 a.m.	Getting to know one another and spending time at the youth centre, which is connected to the school
12:10 p.m.	The local bus leaves

An example of the Enontekiö programme outline

1. Meeting at Karesuvanto School in April

9:30 a.m.	Arrival at the Karesuvanto school
9:35 a.m.	Tour around the school
10 a.m.	Name and familiarisation games in the gym
10:30 a.m.	Curling tournament in teams in the gym
11:15 a.m.	Lunch
11:35 a.m.	Quiz in groups
12:30 p.m.	Tour around the village of Karesuvanto and visiting a store
1:35 p.m.	Return transport

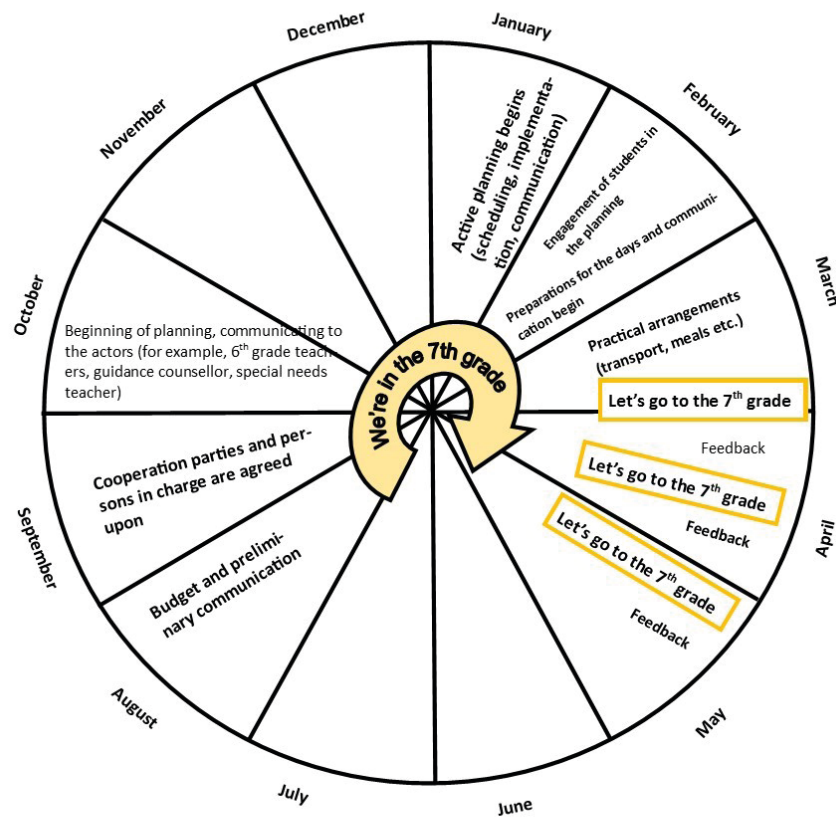
2. Meeting at Hetta School in April

8:25 a.m.	Arrival at Hetta school
8:30 a.m.	Preparing mocha squares in the home economics class in groups
10 a.m.	"On the Island" online game in pairs
10:45 a.m.	Some physical exercising: foosball, table tennis
11:15 a.m.	Lunch
12:00	School orienteering in groups
1:30 p.m.	Eating mocha squares in the home economics class. Games in the classroom or outside eg. "Every one plays" game.
2:45 p.m.	Youth centre info and hanging out at the youth centre, snack
4:20 p.m.	Return transport

3. Meeting at Hetta School in May

8:25 a.m.	Arrival at Hetta school
8:30 a.m.	Peer student class and distributing the information package to students
10 a.m.	"An almost impossible task" – becoming acquainted with the school and village in groups
11:15 a.m.	Lunch
12:00	An almost impossible task continues
12:35 p.m.	Hanging out at the youth centre
2:45 p.m.	Return transport

Let's Go to the 7th Grade annual clock



Actors participating in the Let's go to the 7th grade activities:

- * Students
- * Peer students
- * Classroom teachers
- * Subject teachers
- * Special needs teachers
- * School social worker/school psychologist
- * Youth workers/youth leaders
- * Parents

Skills to support the transition for 9th graders



During the project, activities that support the transition to secondary school were carried out for 9th graders. During the school year of 2015-2016, half of the project school's 9th graders answered the transition survey, which aimed to clarify the students' thoughts, feelings, wishes and needs related to the transition to secondary school. Based on the survey, an entity that supports life management skills was implemented for one pilot class. The key themes were personal relationships, leisure time, relaxation and sleep and student welfare. Students worked on the themes at different checkpoints, where they considered the topics and discussed them.

Observations that arose from the transition survey:

- The students were in a good mood as they waited for the upcoming transition and felt that moving on to further education is important and safe
- The most positive aspects of the transition were studying a field that interested the student and new friends
- The demanding nature of the studies concerned the students about further education
- The students especially wanted to learn about the experiences of secondary school students regarding studying

In autumn of 2016, a study entity that supports workplace skills was implemented for all 9th graders at the project school. The school's subject teachers and guidance counsellors planned lessons related to the topic for a month in such a way that lessons were held both before and after the TET (work experience) period. Different interview situations that the students would encounter for both education and work were discussed in mother tongue classes. Matters related to the Finnish population and livelihoods were discussed in geography classes. Matters related to the theme were widely discussed during guidance counselling. For example, students created imaginary journeys for their own futures, familiarised themselves with the rules of working life and various job advertisements and learned to identify their own strengths. Issues related to mental health, crises and recovering from them and coping at work were the focus of health education classes. During civics classes, students acquainted themselves with the rights

AMIS9 activities and accompaniment when transferring to secondary education



and obligations of working life and various job applications and practised making CVs. After the TET period, students received further information on the rules of working life and examined topics such as the role of unions, the realisation of equality in working life and issues related to employment relationships.

In late 2016, the transition survey, which was modified and planned by six 9th graders in addition to the project school's employees, was administered again. This time, almost all 9th grade students participated in the survey. Based on the answers, students wanted more information on time management, stress management and anxiety outand the need for rest. The school welfare group decided that workshops related to welfare that support the transition to secondary education would be implemented in spring 2017. Time management and mental welfare were selected as the themes. In the time management workshop, students familiarised themselves with the use of various calendars and the Bullet Journal technique as well as scheduling everyday life at the weekly, monthly and annual levels. The mental welfare workshop was implemented using the Learning Cafe method. Students discussed matters related to sleep and rest, nutrition, personal relationships and feelings, exercise, hobbies and creativity. The Finnish Association for Mental Health's 'Train Your Mind to Be Strong' booklet was also used.

” Students wanted more information on time management, stress management and nervousness as well as the need for rest.

Materials and methods used in the workshops:

- ▶ The Finnish Association for Mental Health: 'Train Your Mind to Be Strong'
- ▶ Virtu.fi: Everyday schedule
- ▶ Bullet Journal method
- ▶ Pomodoro technique
- ▶ To do lists

AMIS9 in a nutshell:

- ▶ Is naturally linked to guidance counselling; can be carried out in connection with guidance counselling classes as a parallel activity for those going on to secondary education and vocational education
- ▶ The activities are planned and carried out according to the needs and wishes of those in the AMIS9 group each year
- ▶ Multiprofessional cooperation and networking is essential for the activities to be successful
- ▶ Key themes include living in a student accommodation, funding studies, secondary education, hobbies and leisure time activities and youth services in a new locality

AMIS9 activities address the young people's thirst for knowledge about secondary education and necessary everyday skills. The joint application to secondary education focuses the thoughts of young people on changes brought on by the new stage of life. Young people living in the small municipalities of Lapland must often move to another locality for education. The distances from home can be up to hundreds of kilometres. If education requires a move to another locality, there is an added element of excitement related to post-comprehensive school studies for both the young people and the parents. The purpose of the accompaniment and the AMIS9 activities is to prevent the social exclusion of young people by supporting adjustment to a new stage of life. Possible interruptions in studies are prevented, and a young person's independence and smooth transition are supported by the accompaniment activities.

The young people's need for information is emphasised when they move to another locality. Young people want information on their future educational institution, their own field of study, future classmates, student welfare and the new locality. Advanced information on leisure time activities and information regarding where to receive help when needed for different situations strongly support the adjustment to a new locality. Accompaniment activities that streamline the transition of young people were developed in the municipality of Enontekiö. Young people seeking vocational education in Enontekiö move to another locality for their studies,

though it is possible to complete upper secondary school studies in the home municipality. The AMIS9 activities were planned and implemented multiprofessionally in cooperation with the guidance counsellor and youth worker. The young people were divided into two groups: students seeking upper secondary school education and those seeking vocational education, with the project activities emphasising the latter. The parents were also taken into account, and they were given information regarding which services are offered at the student's location of study. As part of the transition support, the young people could contact the youth worker of the home municipality even after the transition. The accompaniment and knowledge of the fact that the young person has a safety net in the new locality also alleviated the parents' concerns regarding the coping abilities of their children.

The AMIS9 activities can be carried out during spring terms in connection with guidance counselling. At the start of the activities, themes that concern the young people are mapped out and then discussed in the meetings. Themes that are discussed in the AMIS9 activities may include living in a student accommodation, funding studies, the structure of the secondary education studies and matters related to moving to a new locality. In addition, AMIS9 activities may include visits to secondary education institutions and familiarisation with various youth services. Opportunities provided by remote connections to become acquainted with various actors may also be utilised during the activities.

” Advanced information on leisure time activities and information regarding where to receive help when needed for different situations strongly support the adjustment to a new locality.

Successful AMIS9 activities:

- ▶ Supports and streamlines a successful transition
 - ▶ Prevents school interruptions
 - ▶ Promotes adjustment to a new locality
 - ▶ Increases access to information on available services
 - ▶ Alleviates anxiety related to the transition for both the young person and the parents
-

Kilpisjärvi School's AmmattiTET (period of work experience)



One of the most central tasks of the school is to help students choose and build their future professional path. In addition to guidance counselling, the comprehensive school features the TET, i.e. work experience periods. They are a key part of the knowledge of working life provided by the comprehensive school. The schools offer work experience periods of different lengths, during which a diverse image of the fields that interest the students can be offered to support their vocational plans.

The goal of the work experience periods is to improve the students' knowledge of working life. By participating in the periods, students can observe and learn about what it is like to work in different professions in practice. Personal experiences related to working life support the students' motivation to pursue further studies and the choices related to them.

The work experience period implemented at the Kilpisjärvi School is a variation of practical training aimed at 9th graders. For example, it is suitable for students who have considered their field choice for some time or who have difficulties choosing between two fields of education that are similar. For instance, an ICT installer, a data processor and an electronics installer are job descriptions that are similar. Separating them based on vocational school brochures or career days is difficult.

During a one or two-week work experience period, a student can become acquainted with two fields that are similar by participating in the fields in a vocational school with full-time students. Consequently, the differences between the fields become clear.

AmmattiTET:n järjestäminen

- ▶ Based on student's long-term thoughts regarding their future fields of study
 - ▶ Contact with the vocational institution's guidance counsellor well before the joint application
 - ▶ Communication with home is important
 - ▶ Completing necessary background information forms for the vocational institution
 - ▶ The receiving educational institution determines the date
-

er before the joint application, which helps the student make a choice. After the work experience period, some students may realise that both fields were different in practice; however, in most cases, the experience confirms the selection of the preferred field of education. The work experience period must be implemented well before the joint application.

Implementing the work experience period requires a long-term and good understanding of students. Carrying out training also requires close cooperation with the specific educational institution. Implementation of the work experience period must be negotiated individually, and it must be carried out so that it suits the schedules of the vocational school because the secondary education schools do not have sufficient resources to organise training for all 9th graders.

Thus, organising a work experience period involves tailoring the period to each student. The student's knowledge and cooperation between the guidance counsellors of the educational institutions are therefore emphasised. The decision also requires cooperation with families if students live in a student accommodation during the period. The final decision regarding the potential organisation of a work experience period is made by the receiving educational institution.

” During the work experience period, the student can become acquainted with two fields by studying the fields in a vocational school with full-time students.



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