

## Finland

**Fiskarin malli / Fiskarin koulu****(The Fiskars model / Fiskars elementary school)**

*The definition of the learning environment in the Fiskars Model encompasses the whole village community in which the small primary school is situated (students aged 6 to 12). Artists and handicrafts from the village give workshops for the students on diverse topics, for example, woodworks, fine arts, or glass blowing. Main pedagogical methods are learning-by-doing and active learning in authentic “real life” contexts. The local museum also organises workshops on historical periods, during which the children dress according to the covered period to feel as if they are “travelling” in time, and students contribute to local cultural activities, like theatre productions or exhibitions. Positive effects of the collaboration between school and village are that community members are aware of the whereabouts of the children, that generations are connected, and that the students learn about the historical and cultural heritage of the village. The school is developing a guide book that can be used by other schools.*

**Main focus of Innovation:** TEACHERS, CONTENT, RESOURCES, ORGANISATION

**Other keywords:** learning space, non-formal/blended

**General Information**

**Name of the ILE:** Fiskarin malli / Fiskarin koulu (The Fiskars model / Fiskars elementary school)

**Location/Address:** Fiskarin koulu, Koulutie 5, 10470 Fiskari, Finland

**ILE submitted by:** Project Secretary

**Rationale**

*Why do you suggest that it should be included in the project? How does it respond to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning challenges?*

The public elementary school Fiskarin koulu located in the city of Raseborg has broadened its definition of learning environment to encompass the Fiskars village / community in which the school is situated. The school's learning environment includes the Fiskars village as both a historical, cultural, social and physical place. The school has been exploring how the vicinities of the school / the village can be used to support the learning and teaching process. The village has about 600 inhabitants of which 107 are members in The Artisans, Designers and Artists Cooperative of Fiskars.

The school has developed ways in which the knowledge of the local artisans, artists and other community members are integrated into the curriculum and teaching of the school.

The artisans' knowledge and the historical and cultural heritage of the village are used to support the teaching and learning taking place in Fiskars elementary school. This way of defining learning environment takes into account the wider context in which the pupil is involved and in which learning takes place and in this way seeks to improve the quality of the learning process.

This Innovative Learning Environment responds to the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning challenges by taking a holistic stance to learning. The village is not only seen as the physical place in which the school building is situated but as an entity of knowledge, skills and heritage to draw from. One of the ways in which the surrounding environment/vicinity is incorporated is through art and craft workshops developed together with members of The Artisans, Designers and Artists Cooperative of Fiskars. The workshops have been developed to suit the different grades (1-6<sup>th</sup> grade and the "esikoulu" (last year of kindergarten)) and are part of the school's curriculum. In the art and craft workshops the pupils get acquainted with the profession of the artist leading the workshop and with his or her workplace. They also get to make something themselves under the supervision and guidance of the workshop leader. The workshops are combined with preparation work in class before the actual workshop. Depending on the subject of the workshop the teacher can also choose to continue to elaborate on the subject in class after the actual workshop. In the Fiskars School learning environment active participatory ways of learning are combined with more traditional classroom teaching.

Benefits of the workshops:

- 1) The workshops take active use of the children's different senses in the learning process.
- 2) Diversifies and deepens the teaching and learning taking place in the school.
- 3) During the workshops the pupils learn through 1) following the work of the artist/artisan, 2) doing herself/himself, 3) experiencing the authentic working environment of the artist/artisan, 3) seeing the art form or craft in its wider context (livelihood), experiencing the different steps from raw material to finished product, 4) their interaction with the artist/artisan, 5) their participation in a group.
- 4) Connections between the wider community/village and the school are created and maintained.
- 5) The pupils learn in "real life" contexts / authentic environments.
- 6) More adults in the village are aware of the whereabouts of the children and follow their education which creates a safer learning environment.
- 7) Knowledge and skills of other professionals in the village are used in the educational work and goals of the school.
- 7) The workshops link the new generation / the school's pupils to the village's history as a village of craftsmanship / craft production.
- 8) The pupils learn practical skills and are trained in their creative problem solving abilities.

## THE WORKSHOPS

Esikoulu (last year of kindergarten/year before starting 1st grade) - paper - making of paper - paper art  
 1<sup>ST</sup> grade - wood - woodworks - woodworking  
 2nd grade - painting - fine art  
 3rd grade - textile - knitting design  
 4th grade - ceramics - design  
 5th grade - nature - environment - linen workshop / or blacksmithing  
 6th grade - glass - blown glass

The vicinities of the school are also incorporated into the curriculum in other ways. The school's pupils take part in "travel in time" -workshops ("aikamatka") created by the local Fiskars museum. During the workshops the pupils learn about different periods in the village's history and about earlier professions and crafts. During the workshops they "travel to another place in time" with the aid of dressing according to a certain period and profession.

The pupils of the school also take part of other cultural activities. In the year 2008 they participated in a community theatre production that took place in the open air in different parts of the village. In the production participated community members of all different ages.

In this year of 2009 the pupils of the school are participating in making an exhibition about the local environment together with one local artist. In this project they also take use of what they have done /learnt in the art and craft workshops.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE WIDER LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF FISKARS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Fiskars village was founded by Peter Thorwöste in 1649, when the Dutchman was granted permission to set up a blast furnace and bar hammer in Fiskars. Most of the buildings in the village were built in the nineteenth century, when the ironworks under Johan von Julin was focused on refining iron. Fiskars was together with the other ironworks villages of the parish of Pohja the center of iron manufacturing in Finland in the seventeenth century. The first fine forging workshop was built in Fiskars 1832 and the country's first machine workshop in 1837. Plows manufactured in Fiskars contributed to the development of Finnish agriculture. The Fiskars village was also ahead of its time in healthcare and education. The ironworks village had its own doctor in 1860 and in 1892 a hospital. In 1826 a school was built and from 1833 the school followed the progressive teachings of the Bell-Lancaster system. The inhabitants of the ironworks village could take part in various sports and music associations. In the year 1883 the Fiskars limited liability company was founded.

In the 1980s the village history took a new turn. Production of the Fiskars Corporation was moved to nearby Billnäs. As industry moved away from the village so did its inhabitants and the village was nearly emptied. Various development plans were created for the village in attempt to keep the place alive. As the result of several factors a new wave of inhabitants started moving to the village. The beautiful setting and countryside appealed and by 1993 professionals from more than 20 fields had moved to the village and filled the old buildings. The village history as an ironworks village is still very much present in the village. Most of the old building are intact and are now the homes, studios and workshops of the new inhabitants.

### **Evidence**

*Is there any evidence or indications showing that this initiative achieves the outcomes that it is aiming at?*

We have not yet reached the final evaluation stage as we are still working with developing further the integration of the broader learning environment into the curriculum. The positive outcomes of this kind of learning environment are also quite difficult to "measure". We do know however that the pupils have been very excited about the workshops and what they have learnt there. Also the teachers have been very excited and motivated to work with this wider leaning environment and enjoyed cooperating with the artisans and other professionals in the village.

We strongly believe that widening the learning environment in this way supports the pupils learning processes. We strongly believe that the children learn more easily when learning is supported by authentic environments that provide examples, visual memory aid and contexts. When a craft or a historical occurrence is placed in its wider context learning is easier. The knowledge and skills of the other professionals active in the village provide an extra support to the teaching at school.

### **Learning Aims / Intended Learning Outcomes of the ILE**

*What are the core learning aims and which knowledge, skills or attitudes are to be acquired? (These may include outcomes related to learners' social, interpersonal, or meta-cognitive development)*

This learning environment aims to make pupils learn more deeply. It is concerned with improving the quality and conditions of learning. Pupils are given a more active part in their own learning process. This learning environment also aims to fulfill the learning requirements of the Finnish national curriculum for elementary schools. Please also see Rationale, for more information.

### **Learners**

*Which group(s) of learners is it aiming at? Who is eligible to take part? How many learners are there? What are their ages?*

Elementary school, 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade and "esikoulu" (last year of Finnish kindergarden, grade 0)  
All the pupils of Fiskars elementary school take part. There are 72 pupils in the grades 1-6 and 10 pupils in the "esikoulu".

The pupils ages are 6 years to 12 years of age.

Whilst continuing with its work to integrate its wider learning environment into the school curriculum the Fiskars school is also developing a learning environment model for other schools. The aim of the model is to show elementary schools how they can incorporate their local vicinities into the teaching and learning taking place at the school. At this moment the Fiskars school is trying parts of the model together with elementary schools in Karjaa and Pohja two other parts of the Raseborg city.

### **Facilitators**

*Who are the teachers/facilitators? Who are the leaders? What are their professional backgrounds? What are their roles?*

Principal/head teacher Ethel Mattila, Masters Degree in pedagogy, qualification in class teaching  
Teacher/Art teacher Katri Pailos, Master of Art, art teacher qualification, qualification in class teaching  
Kindergarten teacher Sirpa Haikarainen, artisan, completing a Master in art education  
Project Secretary Johanna Illman, Master of Social Sciences, Bachelor of art in design (fashion design), doctoral student in Social Anthropology  
Ethel Mattila, Katri Pailos and Sirpa Haikarainen coordinate the part of the learning environment developing work that is concerned directly with the Fiskars School. Johanna Illman coordinates the part of the learning environment developing work that is connected with other schools in the Raseborg city and takes cares of reports to the Finnish National Board of Education and the municipality / city.

### **Organization of the ILE**

*How is learning organised? How do learners and facilitators interact? What kind of pedagogy do they follow? What curriculum is used?*

Please go to Rationale, for further information. The curriculum used at the Fiskars schools is a combination of the normal curriculum used by all public elementary schools in Finland and the "Fiskars model", the special model of using the wider learning environment that has been developed at the school.

**Learning Context**

*In which context does learning take place? What does the physical learning environment look like? Are community resources used to facilitate learning and how?*

Please go to Rationale, for response.

**History of ILE**

*Who initiated it? For what reasons was it started and with what purpose? Have these changed since?*

A group of active village members consisting of teachers, parents to pupils of the school, local politicians and members of the of The Artisans, Designers and Artists Cooperative of Fiskars came together in the year 2006 and started to think about how to develop the school. The Fiskars elementary school together with the municipality of Pohja then applied for "Learning environment development" funding from the Finnish National Board of Education. The school received funding for the years 2008-2009. The aim of the development work has with time become clearer and more focused.

**Funding of the ILE**

*How is it funded?*

The Finnish National Board of Education and the municipality of Pohja/city of Raseborg.

**Learning Outcomes**

*What are the learning outcomes achieved by the ILE, including academic, social, interpersonal and meta-cognitive outcomes? How is learning assessed?*

We continuously gathering data about the learning environment development work. One way of collecting data is through questionnaires aimed at the teachers involved and the workshop conductors involved. After having taken part in a workshop the teacher of the class and the workshop conductor fill in the questionnaire. The questionnaires also contains questions that require observation of the pupils in the workshop and their comments/reactions. The workshops have also been discussed with the children and the written material about their participation in the workshops has been gathered. This data will be used for developing and improving this learning environment further, for aiding in the process of integrating the wider learning environment even more into the curriculum and for developing the model that can be used by other schools.

Sirpa Haikarainen is writing her masters thesis in art education about the model and about the teachers experience of using this form of workshop working method for working with the learning environment. For her thesis she has made interviews with the teachers of the Fiskars elementary school about working with this kind of learning environment. Her study aids in assessing this learning environment and its outcome.

**Documentation describing or evaluating the ILE**

*Is there documentation on this learning environment? Is there a website? Films? Research reports or evaluations? Other forms of documentation? (please supply references or links)*

Please see the answer to Learning Outcomes. We aim to make a guide book about the Fiskars model that can be used by teachers, policy makers, education department staff of the municipality/city and other people working with educational issues.

**Other information you consider to be relevant to describe the ILE**

Kindergarten teacher at Fiskars school Sirpa Haikarainen is writing her masters thesis about the "Fiskars model" as a learning environment. Maybe her research could be of use in the cases studies and research made by OECD/CERI.