

## Finland

**Tenth Formers, Upper Comprehensive Learners and the Foster Home Youngsters - New Innovators for the World.****A Development Project of the Social Learning Environment.**

*This government-funded school of the Home Mission Society of the Church of Finland was established to support the social and mental welfare of students who need special support because they show maladjustments to the normal basic education, are rehabilitating of drug abuse, etc. Activities aim at improving motivation, reducing absenteeism and helping the learners finish their basic education, to improve their self-control and improve their possibilities to live a normal life. The learning is situated in a homelike environment (apartment with rooms and a kitchen). Students work in small groups, guided by a special teacher and a school assistant, and remedial teaching is available if needed. Work forms include classroom discussions, student-teacher interactions, private study and web courses. Teachers aim to increase the number of success experiences at school and to work on the learners' social skills. Assessment is used during the courses as a tool to guide and encourage students, helping them to form a realistic image of their development.*

**Main focus of Innovation:** LEARNERS, RESOURCES

**Other keywords:** equity

**General Information**

**Name of the ILE:** Tenth Formers, Upper Comprehensive Learners and the Foster Home Youngsters - New Innovators for the World. A Development Project of the Social Learning Environment.

**Location/Address:** The College of the Home Mission Society of the Church of Finland, Huvilakatu 31, 76130 Pieksämäki. Finland

**Website:** [www.sisop.fi](http://www.sisop.fi)

**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 essential aims of the project are:

1. To teach the learners according to their special needs
2. To study and discuss the different learning methods that learners have
3. To improve the grouping within the learners

The concrete aims of the project are:

1. To help the learners to get the school-leaving certificate from comprehensive school
2. To help the learners to apply for and to get into further education
3. To help learners to learn how to learn
4. To help learners to identify their own learning methods or strategies
5. To create a safe and pleasant learning environment
6. To co-operate with other schools, colleges and organisations
7. To create and produce material for supporting the learners
8. To provide tuition for teachers and school assistants, the ones who work with the target groups

**Evidence**

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

Learners have succeeded in finishing their basic education and getting the school-leaving certificate from comprehensive school. Learners have improved their motivation to study, for example, absenteeism from school has diminished.

**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)*

There are different kinds of challenges in supporting the learners of small-group teaching at the higher comprehensive, learners in the 10<sup>th</sup> form and the young in youth homes specialising in rehabilitation of drug abusers, to be able to get along in life.

The learning aims of the project are as follows:

- To confirm learners' self-esteem by increasing the number of the experiences of succeeding at school
- To increase learners' social skills
- To diminish learners' absenteeism from school
- To improve learners' learning results
- To help the learners to finish their basic education
- To encourage the learners to continue their studies after comprehensive school
- To confirm learners' capabilities to self-control one's life
- To prevent learners' marginalizing from the surrounding society

**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?*

The target groups of the project are:

1. Young people who don't have the school-leaving certificate from comprehensive school.
2. The tenth formers; less than half of the group need special support
3. The young studying at the comprehensive school and having the lack of motivation, being unsociable and /or in the need of different kinds of special support.

Part of the young people in these target groups has great difficulties in their own lives, especially with family affairs. They have maladjustment to the normal basic education. Some learners are also socially excluded and/or taken into care and placed in foster homes. The amount of learners: Small-group teaching: 8 learners, consisting of four girls (three 16-year-olds and one 15 year-old) and four boys (aged 14, 15, 16 and 17). 10th form: 17 learners, consisting of 12 girls (nine 16-year-olds and three 17-years-olds) and 5 boys (three 16-year-olds, one 17-years-old and one 18-years-old).

**Facilitators**

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

Small-group teaching is led by a special teacher. In the 10th form the teaching is led by Mr. Jukka Keituri, a class teacher. Also subject teachers teaching: English, Swedish, art, Home economics, religious education and music work with the learners. The project manager of this project is Mrs. Minna Hynninen-Tuovinen.

**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?*

Education is based on the core curriculum, which is confirmed by the National Board of Education (FNBE) and on the curriculum confirmed by the provider of education, the College of the Home Mission Society of the Church of Finland. Studying takes place in a small-group. Learners study daily in the guidance of the special teacher and a school assistant. In addition to the cognitive learning there are lots of discussion and interaction between the learners and the teachers. Some of the learners are willing to discuss openly about their life. If needed, the learners have the possibility to get remedial teaching.

**AMENDMENT ON EVALUATION**

Pupil Assessment of the Basic Education given in the Small-Group at the College of the Home Mission Society of the Church of Finland

Part of the basic education is arranged in a small-group at the College of the Home Mission Society of the Church of Finland in Pieksämäki. Teaching and pupil assessment of the group is based on the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004, which is confirmed by the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE).

In the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004, the pupil assessment is divided into assessment during the course of studies and into final assessment. The two perform different roles. The tasks of assessment during the course of studies are to guide and encourage studying. In addition, it is a task of assessment to help the pupil form a realistic image of her or his learning and its development. In other words, to help the pupil form a realistic image of herself/himself as a learner.

The task of the final assessment is to define how well, at the conclusion of her or his studies; the pupil has achieved the objectives of the basic education syllabus in the different subjects.

#### Assessment during the course of studies

During the course of studies the emphasis of assessment is on supporting the learning process and on guiding and encouraging the pupil.

Learning is seen as an individual process as well as a collective process of constructing skills and knowledge. In this process versatile and ongoing assessment feedback plays an important part. Pupil assessment during the course of studies is formative assessment; pupils get feedback from teachers and they are guided to make their learning more effective by telling how to improve their performances. Learning, pupil's progress and work skills are assessed.

In making assessment, methods can/are to be used by which the pupil is capable of demonstrating her or his performance as well as possible. For example, an exam can be answered orally instead of writing the answers down. There is also a possibility to study or fill in an exam in privacy.

Pupils are guided and encouraged to take an active role as learners. Furthermore, pupils' capability for self-determining and self-assessment are supported.

The tasks of assessment are to depict how well the pupil has met the aims and to advice and inform her/him about the studies. A confidential relationship between a pupil and teaching staff is of great importance. Furthermore, a special knowledge of the pupil is needed from the teaching staff.

#### Final assessment

The task of the final assessment is to define how well, at the conclusion of her or his studies; the pupil has achieved the objectives of the basic education syllabus in the different subjects. Criteria for final assessment in basic education have been prepared for all core subjects. The final assessment criteria define the level of knowledge and skill needed for a grade of eight (8).

The certificates and reports used in the course of basic education in small-group are intermediate reports and school year reports. A basic education certificate is issued at the end of basic education to a pupil whose performance in all graded subjects has been at least adequate.

#### **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?*

There is a homelike environment created for the use of small-group teaching. Teaching takes place in an apartment consisting of four rooms and a kitchen. There is different kind of furniture in the apartment, for example, desks, sofas and armchairs. In special occasions or with a special need, the learner can study in privacy, too. One aim of the Development Project of the Social Learning Environment is to create a safe learning environment where grouping of the learners is possible. Furthermore, it is also possible to study with the help of web courses.

#### **History of ILE**

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

The Development Project of the Social Learning Environment has been established in order to support both the social and the psychical welfare of the learners. The core aim of the project is to create a learning environment, where it is easier to learn and which provides different kinds of support for studies and for life as a whole.

**Funding of the ILE***How is it funded?*

The Development Project of the Social Learning Environment is funded by the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE). The Development Project of the Social Learning Environment is funded by the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE).

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

Learner will have better possibilities to live a normal life as an independent member of the surrounding society. She/he will learn how to self-control one's own life and to follow rules and directions. The learner will also have better possibilities to achieve the school-leaving certificate from comprehensive school and to continue studies further.

**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)*

The project has started on October 2008. There is a PowerPoint-representation in Finnish about the project.

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

The College of the Home Mission Society of the Church of Finland provides also education for learners who need help in choosing the career. The core aim of this education is to help learners to select a suitable vocational school or college to continue their studies. For example, in spring 2008 all the learners studying within this programme were admitted into vocational schools or colleges. This group is supervised by a study counsellor, a vocational special teacher Mr. Pasi Frilander. There is also a school assistant working with the group.