

Building Sustainable Societies through Educational Commons

Yannis Pechtelidis, UTh





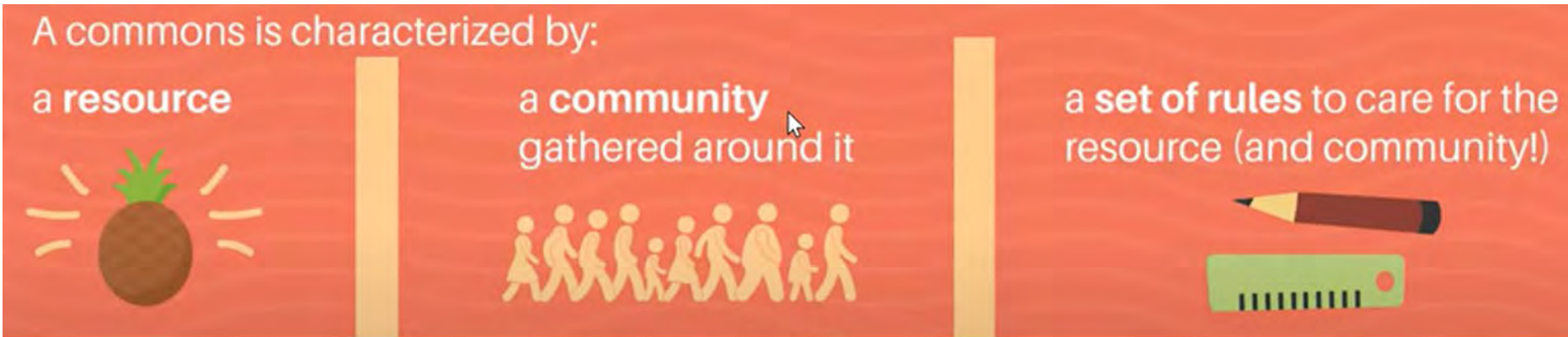
Sustainability through Educational Commons

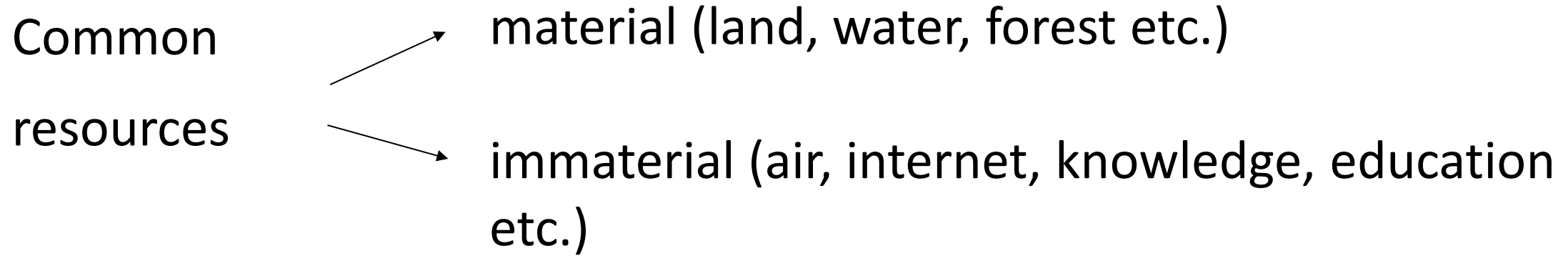
Global challenges:

Climate change, Inequality, and Resource depletion

The way we share and access knowledge plays a crucial role in shaping a sustainable future

What are the commons?







What are the Educational Commons?

- Educational commons refer to communities where decisions about the educational process are taken collectively with equal participation by teachers, youth workers, students and their guardians.
- Education becomes a common good or resource which is collectively shaped and managed by the members of the educational community in terms of equality, freedom, active and creative participation.



Commoning education

- Collective practice of creating, managing and shaping the common good of education
- Challenges enclosures related to gender, sexuality, nation, class, age, disability
- Fosters openings, equity, participation, synergy, pluralism
- Emancipatory tool
- Not a pedagogical doctrine; only different kinds of bottom up democratic experiential practices
- Less governance for both children and adults



Values of the (educational) commons

- Sharing
- Caring
- Cooperation
- Solidarity
- Bottom-up procedures
- Companionship
- Equal participation
- Self-regulating autonomy



The Young as a commoner

- Young people play a significant part in the decision-making processes and the formulation of the rules of their community
- Questioning prevalent beliefs and ideas about the political ability of youth, and their right to participate in public life on their own terms.



The role of the commoner

Children (pupil/student)

- Agents
- Peers
- Co-modulators
- Potential Citizens

Adult (Teacher)

- Facilitator
- Companion
- Critical Friend
- Peer
- Ignorant Schoolmaster

Commoning Education

- We examine the commoning practices at two interrelated levels:
- a. *decision making processes*
- b. *learning processes*



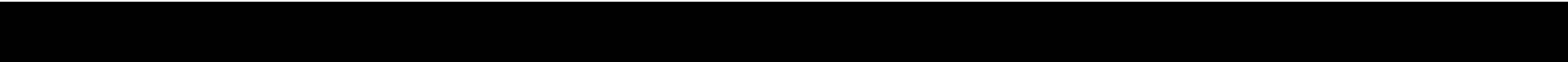
Pathways to Building Educational Commons

1. challenge adultism
2. enforce children's and young people's rights
3. tackle social inequalities
4. create participatory democratic environments
5. Community-Led Learning Initiatives
6. Collaborative Governance

SMOOTH H2020

- From 2021 to 2024, in the SMOOTH program around 50 case studies are being implemented in formal and non-formal education settings in eight different countries (Greece, Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Sweden). The case studies designed according to the logic and ethics of the commons.

<https://smooth-ecs.eu/>



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5gqdoJbtI0>



Wellbeing in educational commons



Saaremaa
Noorsootöö Keskus



When you hear the word
‘wellbeing,’
what comes to mind?



Educational Commons & Caring

**Wellbeing through
caring & inclusivity**





Real-Life Practices



'It's unfair for her to lose!
Her shoe was off!'



To Listen is to Care



Active Listening Demonstration

Whether in a kindergarten or a school setting, caring for others strengthens not only the group but each of us as individuals, promoting our wellbeing.



References

- Bauwens, M., & Kostakis, V. (2014). From the communism of capital to capital for the commons: Towards an open co-operativism. *TripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique*, 12(1), 356-361.
- Bollier, D., & Helfrich, S. (Eds.). (2015). *Patterns of commoning. Commons Strategy Group*.
- Bourassa, G. N. (2017). Towards an elaboration of the pedagogical common, στον τόμο των Means, A., Ford, D. R., Slater, G. (επιμ.) *Educational commons in theory and practice*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- De Lissovoy, N. (2011). Pedagogy in common: Democratic education in the global era. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 43(10), 1119–1134.
- Korsgaard, M. T. (2018). Education and the concept of commons. A pedagogical reinterpretation. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 51:4, 445-455.
- Korsgaard, O. (2018). Educating humanity – Bildung in the global age. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 50(13-14), 1301-1312.
- Pechtelidis, Y. (2018). Heteropolitical Pedagogies, Citizenship and Childhood. Commoning Education in Contemporary Greece, in C. Baraldi and T. Cockburn (eds). *Theorising Childhood: Citizenship, Rights, and Participation*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pechtelidis, Y. & Kioupkiolis, A. (2020). Education as Commons, Children as Commoners: The Case Study of the Little Tree Community. *Democracy and Education*, 28 (1), Article 5. Available at: <https://democracyeducationjournal.org/home/vol28/iss1/5>, 2020. [01/04/2023].



Educational commons in schools & Sociocracy: Case studies from Greece



Saaremaa
Noorsootöö Keskus



Co-funded by
the European Union

Naya Tselepi
Post-Doctoral Researcher & Educator

YWIS
Mikkeli, 13.3.2025

Educational commons in schools & Sociocracy



This presentation is part of the contribution of **educational commons** to students' empowerment and active participation.

Aim: Logics & practices of the commons blended with methodologies of Sociocracy can contribute to democratic education and broader change.

Three (3) cases studies under **SMOOTH Horizon20 Project** in various levels of education in Greece

Three (3) seemingly disparate examples:
-a private kindergarten,
-a private primary school &
-a public High School
in & nearby Thessaloniki, Northern Greece.

Case studies from Greece:

- School in Nature (kindergarten)
- Big Bang School (private primary school)
- 14th High School (public high school)

CS 1: 'House in the forest', School of Nature

Private pre-school
Suburbs of Thessaloniki

Kindergarten class
22 children
(4,5 to 6 years old)

CS Goal_through the collective creation of the HF
to support children in learning & experiencing:

- peer-governance.
- how to be autonomous & collective beings
- diversity, interdependence, adaptability, unity etc.



CS2: 'Council for the Upgrade of Humanity', Big Bang School

Private Primary School
Suburbs of Thessaloniki

6th grade
(11-12 years old)
15 children

CS Goal_through the CUH, to support children
in learning & experiencing:

- their learning activities without the assistance of the teacher(s)
- how to work as autonomous beings & self-organized groups
- peer-governance: how they can organise their councils' meetings, make decisions together and put their decisions into practice



CS3: Intervention in the school yard with participatory method

14th High School of Thessaloniki,
4th Class of High School
18 youngsters/ 15-16 years old

CS Goals_

- A. To strengthen and raise awareness to students, so that they can take an active stance on school issues and make decisions for issues of their concern
- B. To implement construction transformations and interventions in the yard area through participatory design
- C. To prepare and empower the students for the effective management of the school yard's infrastructures



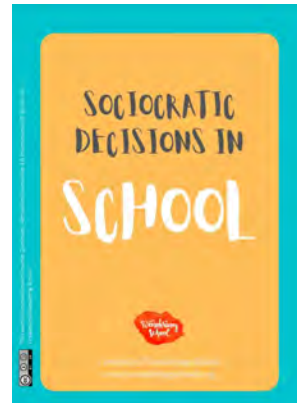
Sociocracy ...

... in schools!

- A participatory method
- A method of dynamic governance
- A method of organising efficient meetings
- A method of equal participation & decision-making

- ★ Discussion in circles under facilitation
- ★ Visual Agenda
- ★ Decision making with consent
- ★ Open election & roles
- ★ Structure & methodology for the organisation of the entire school community (students, teachers, people working, parents, local society)

"Sociocracy, or Democracy as it should be"
Kees Boeke





Circle Structure

Communication is made
in circles, one after the other,
under facilitation

All voices & needs matter, thus,
it is important to be heard

Everybody is asked, however,
it is not obligatory to speak





Decision making with consent

There is no significant and justified objection!

All agree in a certain proposal after facilitated rounds of certain structure

The decision is always serving the common aim!

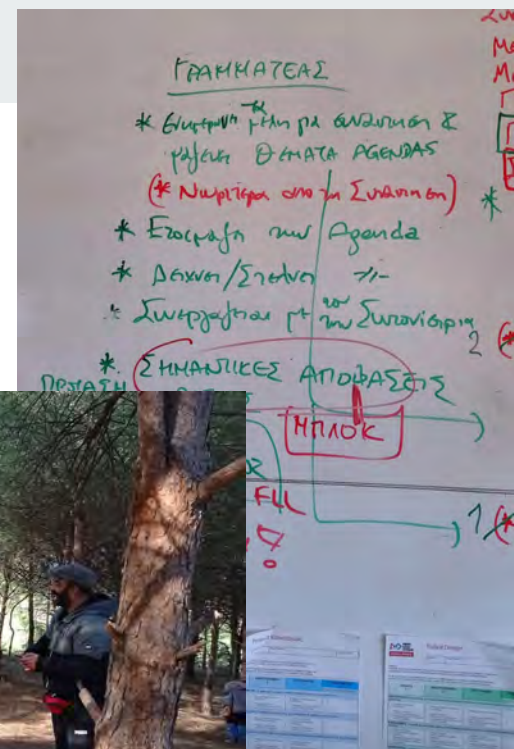
All members are feeling content enough to commit to the decision's tasks.





Open election for roles distribution

Election of functions and roles
with consent
after an open discussion
with positive argumentation



Final results: House in the Forest



Final results: Council's sharing



Final results: Reclaiming the schools' spaces



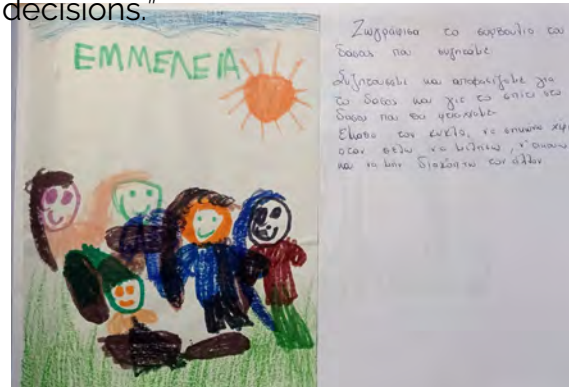
Evaluation - Feedback: The meaning of the Circle

“To hear when others talk to me & not to pop up.
To hear the opinion of the others and the others to hear
mine.”

“When I hear the other, I learn more.”

“We were discussing and deciding how to build a house.
There was a need to cooperate. Not everyone would do what
they want.

We were saying our opinion and making the right decisions.”



Overall, why sociocracy in schools?

- ★ Speaking in circles; all children has time/space to talk & listen
- ★ The sociocratic 'circle' ensures equality & equity as well as Inclusion of all voices & needs; 'All voices & NEEDS matter'
- ★ Decision making for issues that affect children
- ★ Consent instead of majority, no winners & losers! / means no "minority" can be overpowered!
- ★ Children learn to take roles & tasks and be responsible in them
- ★ Alternative open processes, with positive argumentation, for election
- ★ The whole school community can be trained & participate in collective processes & the educational commons





Thank you!



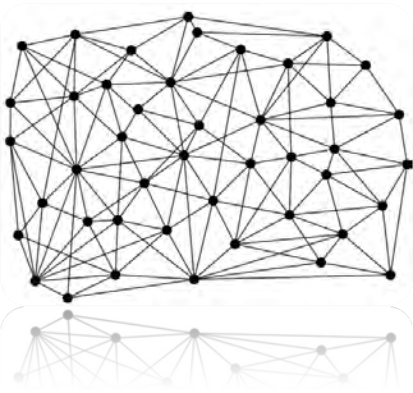
Bottom-Up Democracy through Commoning Education

Stelios Pantazidis,
Adjunct Lecturer, IHU
Sociology of Education lab, UTh



Contents

- School Learning as a process of commoning
(Pantazidis & Bantiou, Preprint)
- Educators as Agents of Commoning
(Pantazidis & Moisiadou, Preprint)
- Researching as a commoner
(Pantazidis & Pechtelidis, 2025)



1st research

School Learning as a process of commoning

Learning

In-Curriculum Thinking skills

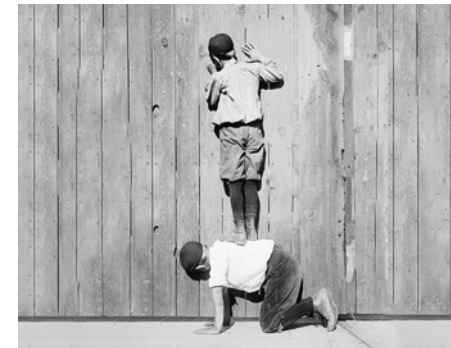
- Peer Learning
- Creativity & Meaningful Learning
- Solidarity & Reciprocity

Governance

Beyond-Curriculum Thinking skills

- Co-decision & Self-organization
- Interpersonal skills (Care & Empathy)

(Pantazidis & Bantiou, Preprint)



2nd research

Educators as Agents of Commoning

- **Restoring Relational Learning**

Education as a space of care, trust, and mutual support rather than competition.

- **Democratizing Knowledge**

Teaching from top-down instruction to shared meaning-making and collective inquiry.

- **Fostering Dignity & Agency**

Students and teachers as co-learners, reclaiming education as a process of empowerment.

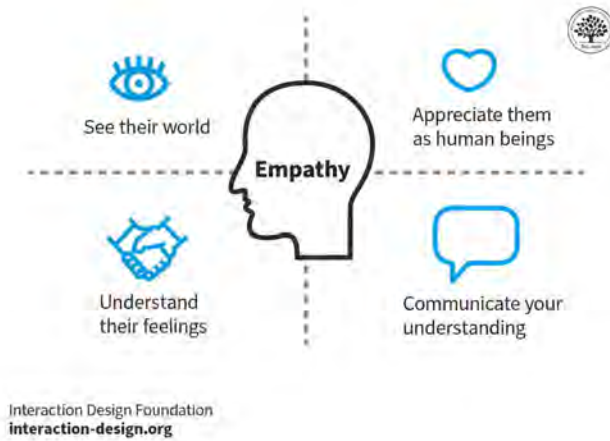
- **Resisting Dehumanization**

Educators challenge standardization and reclaim education as a deeply social & ethical practice.

(Pantazidis & Moisiadou, Preprint)

3rd research

Researching as a commoner



- **Active Participation**

Moves beyond observation to co-create knowledge within commons-based practices.

- **Co-Responsibility & Care**

Ethically, prioritizing mutual respect, shared ownership and relational commitment.

- **Bridging Research & Action**

Research is not neutral; it fosters agency, social change, and collective empowerment.

- **Embodied & Affective Engagement**

Recognizes emotions, positionality, and lived experiences as integral to knowledge production.

(Pantazidis & Pechtelidis, 2025)

Pantazidis, S., & Pechtelidis, Y. (2025). Researching as a Commoner: Affect and the Lives of Underprivileged Mobile Youth in Greece. *Social Sciences*, 14(1), 19.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14010019>

Pantazidis S. & Bantiou M. (Preprint).

Commoning History Education: Developing In-Curriculum and Beyond-Curriculum Thinking Skills. *Thinking Skills and Creativity* <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/thinking-skills-and-creativity/about/call-for-papers>

Pantazidis S. & Moisiadou S. (Preprint).

Reclaiming schools through commoning and critical action learning: Insights from Freinet teacher learning networks. *Action Learning and Democracy*.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14767333.2024.2359230>

Thank you
for your
attention!



Children learn kindness
through experiencing kindness,
not by being instructed
to perform kindness.

...Rachel Samson

Triangeli

Youth-Oriented Family Cooperation in Education Institutions



**Euroopan unionin
osarahoittama**



**MANNERHEIMIN
LASTENSUOJELULIITON**
Järvi-Suomen piiri



Juvenia



Triangeli

The main goals of Triangeli

Interactive exercise with Youth oriented method

Two examples of Youth oriented Family cooperation



**Euroopan unionin
osarahoittama**



**MANNERHEIMIN
LASTENSUOJELULIITON**
Järvi-Suomen piiri



Juvenia



**The Triangle forms from
the cooperation between:**

1

young students in
secondary education,

2

their guardians and
other loved ones,

3

and educational
institutions.



Tri Δ ngeli

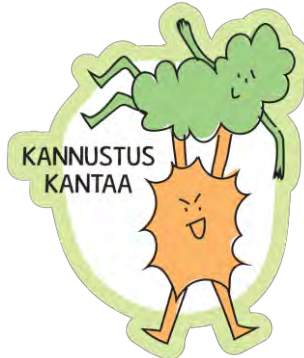
Youth-oriented support

***- strengthening communication between youth,
home and educational institutions at the upper
secondary level***

Our main goal is:

- **to increase young students' support from their loved ones** in their upper secondary education - in high school and in vocational education.
- What have we developed together with youth, guardians and school professionals?
 - New youth oriented approaches to do Guardian collaboration at schools
 - Functional and interactive methods for professionals
 - New methods to express wishes of support

Please our international quests, come and choose a nice sticker for you.
Then find yourself a finnish friend and try to figure out the meaning on the text.



Example Paukkula, "Läheisten ilta"

Idea, that came up among the students of Paukkula

Students wanted to invite all their loved ones to their studying environment and have a good time. All together.

Functional, casual, Youth oriented collaboration



Example Leipurit, "Läheisten ilta"

Three steps process:

1. Starting the group process functionally
2. Planning together the content of the evening
3. Evening for loved ones





Conversation

Please, ask us any questions or
Come up with an idea!

Thank You!

Helinä Juurinen, Hanna Laitinen



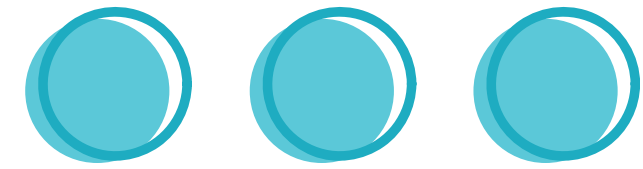


School youth work – Case Saaremaa/Estonia

Eve Aasa, Liis Kaal, Liise Kukk, Arti Allmägi

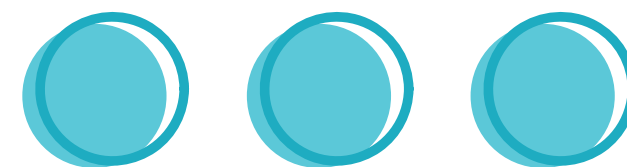
13.03.2025 Mikkel

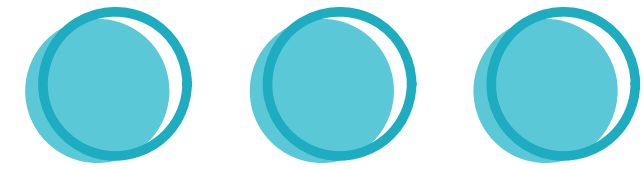




Background of youth work

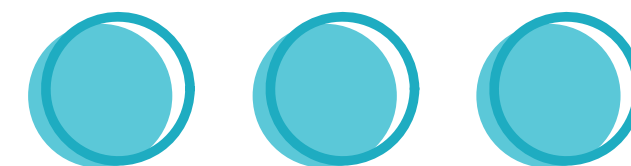
- In 1999, the first youth work law was adopted.
- In Estonia, according to the Youth Work Act, youth work is the creation of diverse opportunities for young people outside of formal education, family, and working life.
- The target group of youth work is young people aged 7-26.

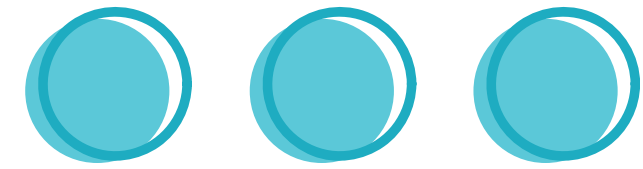




School youth work

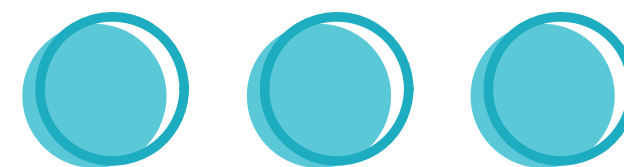
- Huvijuht- hobby leader
- Member of the board
- Class teacher, subject teacher, substitute teacher
- Event, celebration and school life organizer
- Student council support
- Link between teachers and students
- Project writer and coordinator
- Information distributor, youth participation, primary counseling, hobby activities etc.

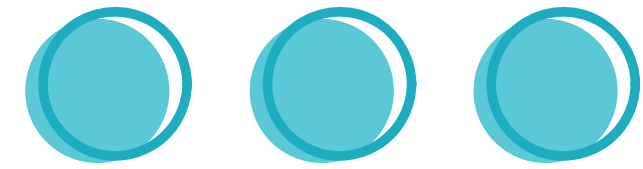




School youth work

- Youth work in schools supports the development of young people and at the same time creates added value that supports learning and makes school a place where people are happy and motivated to go.
- The competencies of a hobby leader are similar to those of a youth worker, the main difference is the work environment – school.
- The hobby leader must know the principles and mechanisms of school operation and be guided by pedagogical work.

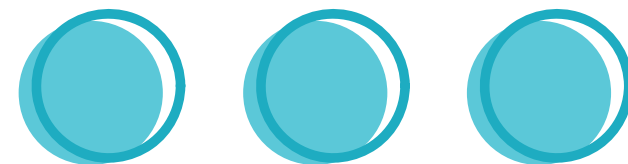




Salme Basic School



- The school building is located next to the Salme River
- 95 students, about 30 teachers and other school staff
- Maximum 12 students per class
- Schools in Motion and Entrepreneurial school
- Extracurricular work, i.e. hobby education lessons – music, art, technology, sports, cooking
- Student council
- Ceremonies, guest speakers, workshops, activities during breaks
- County based traditional student events



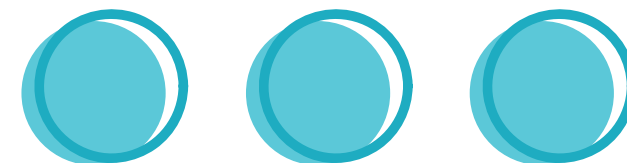


Lümanda Basic School



Photo: Horret Kuus

- the westernmost school in Estonia
- since 1896
- grades 1-9
- 88 students, 20 teachers, 8 staff
- special orientation: nature
- piloting Get acquainted–Be genuinely present–Listen
(Strengthening the sense of community)



Kuressaare Hariduse School



Photo: Kauss Arhitektuur OÜ

- located in center of town
- since 1919/2021
- grades 1-9
- 705 students, incl. 88 students with special needs & 18 Ukrainians, 84 teachers, 30 staff
- 33 hobby classes in 7 different fields
- student council (14 elected students)
- Schools in Motion and KiVa anti-bullying program
- lots of events for students during schoolyear

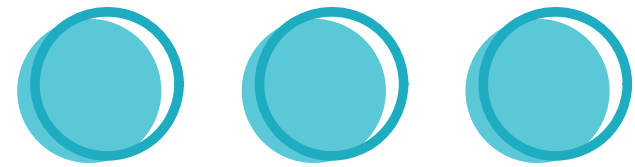
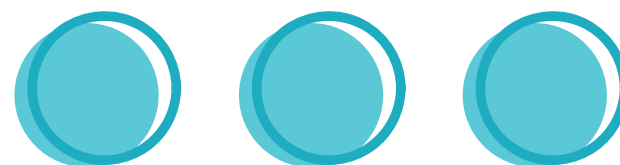
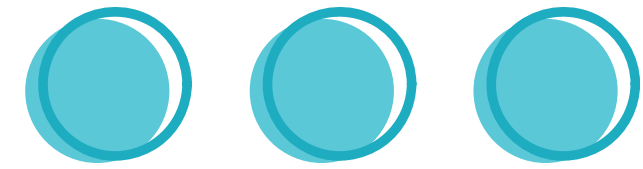
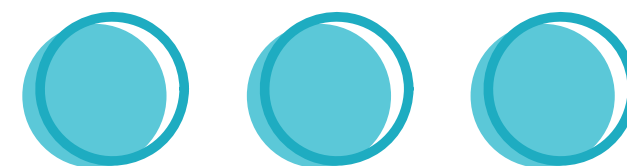
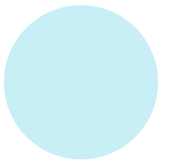


Photo: Arti Allmägi





Thank You!





School youth work
MIKKELI

BACKGROUND

STARTED IN JANUARY 2021

**CURRENTLY SIX EMPLOYEES
(RANTAKYLÄ, LYSEO, SAIMAANPORTTI,
KALEVANKANGAS, RISTIINA, AND
SECONDARY EDUCATION)**

**"IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOUTH WORK IS
WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE." SCHOOL
YOUTH WORK REACHES THE MAJORITY
OF YOUNG PEOPLE.**



GOALS

An approachable and safe adult contact

Enhancing school enjoyment and the sense of belonging to the school community

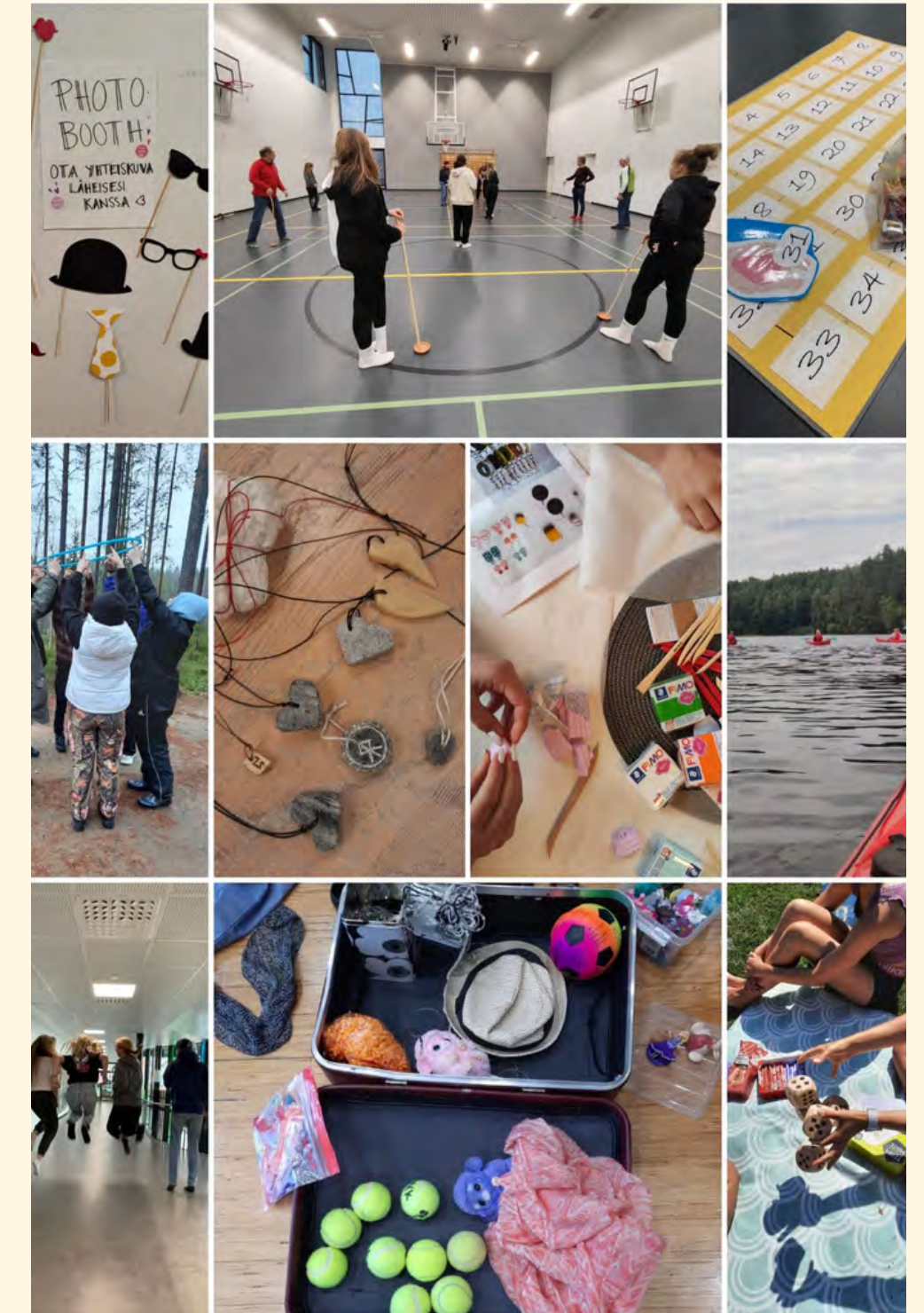
Increasing participation and engagement

Promoting student well-being

Strengthening school attachment



Outreach work during free time (holidays)



COLLABORATION NETWORKS

Student welfare services (school curator, school nurse and school psychologist)

Special education teachers, study counselors, teachers, and other school staff

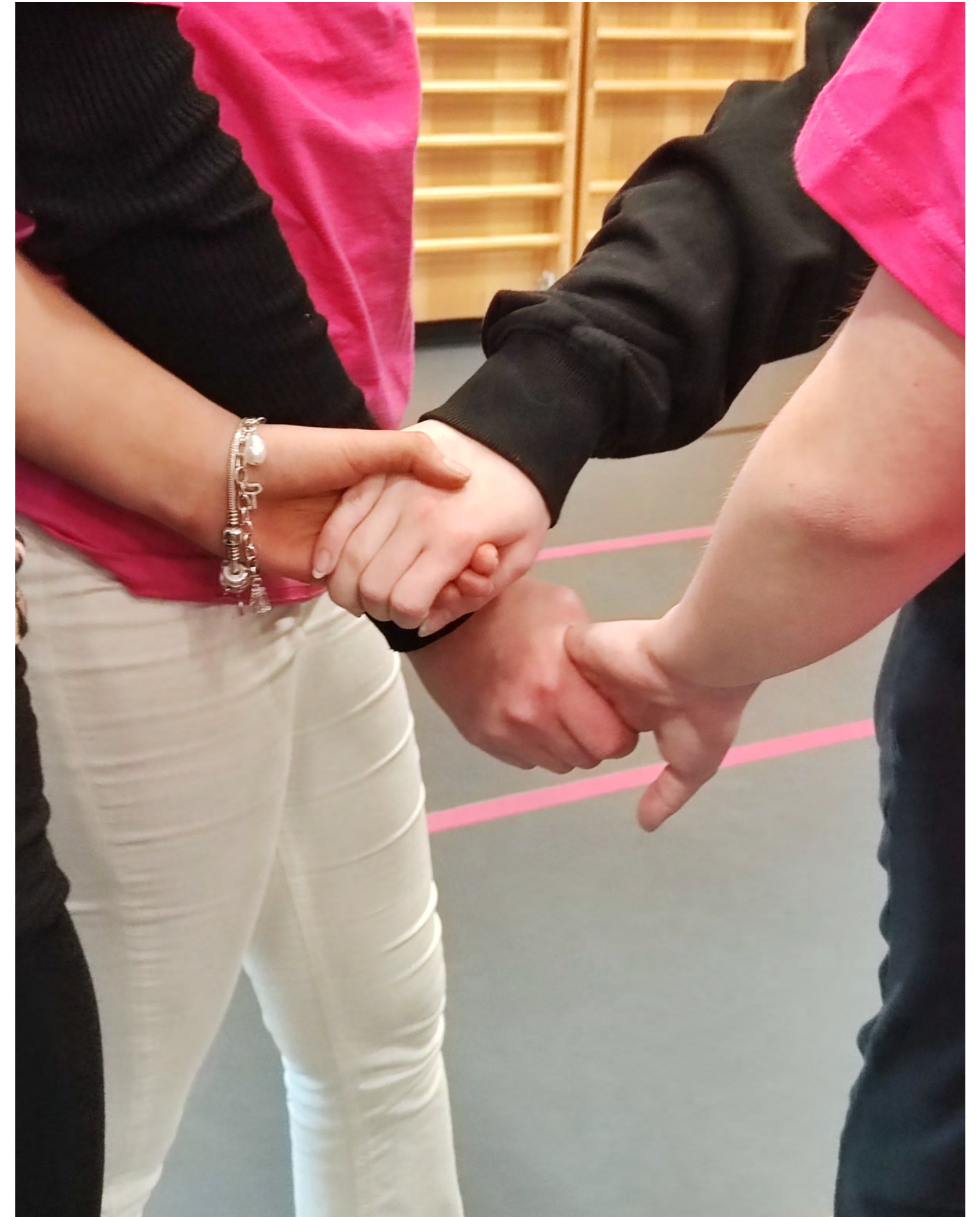
Students' parents

Peer tutors and the student council board

Mikkeli city Youth services

Different organizations for example Youth info center (Ohjaamo Olkkari), Non fighting generation ry, Mannerheim League for Child Welfare, Nuoska, South Savo Mental Health Association (Mieli ry), Free from Violence Association (Viola ry), Mikkeli Cathedral Parish Youth Work

Youth workers from other cities



Feedback is **IMPORTANT**

Presence, engagement, and support are essential.

"I've always felt safe when I've seen you around in the hallways and when you've greeted me when we've met." - Student

Community-based work as a builder of a positive atmosphere.

"The different events that have been organized have greatly brightened the school routine." - Student

Youth work is seen as something that can be utilized to support teaching.

"You have been exactly the kind of essential extra help in everyday life that we teachers can't provide during lessons. An irreplaceable and easily approachable adult in the students' school life." - Teacher

"PREVENTIVE ACTION IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE
YOUTH-SERVING APPROACH.

FROM AN ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE, IT IS
COST-EFFECTIVE IN THE LONG RUN.

PRIMARILY, IT IS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN
HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE AND SUPPORTING
THEIR GROWTH. A THRIVING YOUNG PERSON
IS MORE FOR EVERYONE."

-Teacher

Thank
YOU!



koulunuorisomikkeli

