



**European Approaches  
to Inter-Generational  
Lifelong Learning**

**Promoting Networking Among  
Generations**

**FINLAND  
Case Study Identity Card  
2007**



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## EAGLE CASE STUDY

# FINLAND

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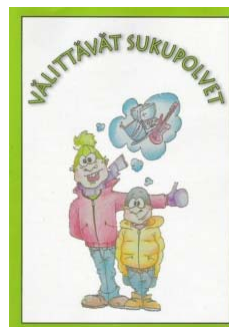
## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Executive Summary*

The goal of the project was promoting the well-being of children and adolescents by providing adequate adult contacts for children and young people and by supporting the everyday life of families with children. The adults involved in the project were volunteering as mentors or adult friends for the children and young people.

In this project the main goal was to put inter-generational relations in use by applying a method of mentoring across generations. Mentoring means "a relationship between a more experienced person and a younger person which involves mutual caring, commitment and trust". Mentoring across generations is kind of form of 'inter-generational work' which can be understood as a form of social work, which aims to support children and young people in their growing processes and everyday life by using inter-generational relations (outside family), exchange, and provision as an instrument.

Mentoring across generations is still a fairly unknown concept in Finland, unlike the U.S. and Great Britain for example. Mentoring across generations is one example of intergenerational practices. In this project childhood as independent phenomena and children as a social actor were strongly emphasized. That is the one main key in applying this method successfully.



## 2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

<i>Title</i>	Promoting Networking Among Generations (Sukupolvet verkoksi)
<i>Country/ Countries of origin</i>	Finland
<i>Duration</i>	Starting Year: 2002 End Year: 2004  <u>Comments:</u> This case study describes the first phase of the project. The intergenerational work has continued through a similar project called 'Välittävät sukupolvet' (The Caring Generations Project) that has funding for the years 2005 to 2007.
<i>Status</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Finished</li> </ul> <u>Comments:</u> This case study describes the first phase of the project. The intergenerational work has continued through a similar project called 'Välittävät sukupolvet' (The Caring Generations Project) that has funding for the years 2005 to 2007. This project acts regionally in whole Central Finland.
<i>Managing institution</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public organisation</li> </ul> <u>Comments:</u> The managing institution of the project was KOSKE – Keski-Suomen sosiaalialan osaamiskeskus (The Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare in Central Finland). It is a public body and one of nine know-how centres in social sector in Finland. The task of the Centres of Excellence on Social Welfare is to secure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The development and transmission of expertise needed in the social welfare sector;</li> <li>▪ The development of primary services and the development and transmission of special services and expert services presupposing higher expertise;</li> <li>▪ Multifarious connections between basic, postgraduate and further education in the field;</li> <li>▪ Research, experiment and development activities (Act on Centres of Excellence on Social Welfare 1230/2001).</li> </ul>
<i>Contact details</i>	Last Name: Moilanen First Name: Johanna Title: Project leader Position/Role: project manager Institution: KOSKE – Keski-Suomen sosiaalialan osaamiskeskus Street: Matarankatu 4 Town: Jyväskylä Mailing address: PL 35 (MAT), 40014 Jyväskylän yliopisto Phone: 014-260 4877 or 050-514 8573 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:jomoilan@yfi.jyu.fi">jomoilan@yfi.jyu.fi</a> URL: <a href="http://www.koske.jyu.fi">http://www.koske.jyu.fi</a>

<i>Funding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private</li> </ul> <p><u>Comments:</u> The project was funded by Raha-automaattiyhdistys – RAY (Finland’s Slot Machine Association). RAY was established in 1938 to raise funds through gaming operations to support Finnish health and welfare organizations. RAY has an exclusive right in Finland to operate slot machines and casino table games, and to run a casino. RAY’s activities are based on four values: reliability, efficiency, customer-orientation, and respect for the individual.</p>
<i>Partnership arrangement/organizational form</i>	Top-down programme/project
<i>Scale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local</li> </ul> <p><u>Comments:</u> The project was carried out in Keltimäki, Keljo, Myllyjärvi and Mäyräjärvi residential regions in Jyväskylä town as well as in Tikkakoski situated in the rural municipality of Jyväskylä.</p>

### 3 DESCRIPTION OF COLLABORATING GROUPS

<i>Collaborating Group I</i>	29 children from 21 families, i.e. there were seven pairs of siblings. Most of children (23) came from families with many children but six children did not have any siblings. Most of the families were single parent families, where the children were mainly staying with their mothers. Some of the families were immigrant ones.
<i>Total number of Collaborating Group I</i>	29 children and young people with their families
<i>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group I</i>	<u>Minimum Age:</u> 4 <u>Maximum Age:</u> 18 <u>Comments:</u> When the project started most of the children were 7-12 years old. Slightly more than half of children were boys.
<i>Collaborating Group II</i>	32 mentors took part in this intergenerational practise. Six of them were men and 26 women.
<i>Total number of Collaborating Group II</i>	32 volunteer mentors
<i>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group II</i>	<u>Minimum Age:</u> 19 <u>Maximum Age:</u> 67
<i>Collaborating Group III</i>	24 students in the field of social and educational studies. <u>Comments:</u> Eight of the students were studying social work at the university, and 16 were studying at the vocational high school (early education and social pedagogy, socio-cultural work). The role of these students in the project was to plan and organise common activities. In addition these students carried out the evaluation interviews related to the project. Other target groups of the project were local communities including NGO's and several professionals working with children, young people and families (social workers, family workers, youth workers, teachers and so on)
<i>Total number of Collaborating Group III</i>	24
<i>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group III</i>	<u>Minimum Age:</u> 19 <u>Maximum Age:</u> 42

## 4 DESCRIPTION OF INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING PRACTICES

The practice description of intergenerational learning practices serves a twofold purpose: i) a qualitative practice description of the case and ii) a quantitative assessment of additional case descriptors.

<p><i>Description of Learning Arrangement &amp; Learning Practice</i></p>	<p>The overall activity of this project was to create a model of preventive child welfare work through intergenerational practice - mentoring across generations.</p> <p>The concern for children's well being and the interaction between generations in current society was the driving force in the creation of the project. In fact, the issues of today's young people are issues for people all ages. It has been said that communities in general need to be strengthened. It is also extremely important to enhance children's possibilities to share adult's experiences and resources in communities and in society.</p> <p>The goal of the project was to promote the well being of children and adolescents by providing adequate adult contacts for children and young people and by supporting the everyday life of families with children. The adults involved in the project were volunteering as mentors or adult friends for the children and young people. Mentoring across generations is still a fairly unknown concept in Finland, unlike the U.S. and Great Britain for example.</p> <p>In this project the main goal was to put inter-generational relations in use by applying a method of mentoring across generations. Mentoring means "a relationship between a more experienced person and a younger person which involves mutual caring, commitment and trust". Mentoring across generations is kind of form of 'inter-generational work' which can be understood as a form of social work, which aims to support children and young people in their growing processes and everyday life by using inter-generational relations (outside family), exchange, and provision as an instrument.</p> <p>In the project, volunteers were mentors of one child or mentors of a group of children. In the Caring Generations Project, volunteers were trained, and support and guiding were offered during the volunteering. The project also helped to organize happenings for the families and other volunteers (for example an autumn event and a pre-Christmas party).</p>
<p><i>Location of the learning activity</i></p>	<p>Formal settings i.e. educational institute and non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)          Informal settings i.e. community facility/building and home based</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> The project promoted both work in pairs (junior &amp; senior) as well as group work. The pairs and groups met at each other's home, neighbourhood as well as in public institutions such as old people's home and libraries.</p>
<p><i>Learning activities (related to policy objectives)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community development, living &amp; safety</li> <li>▪ Education, training &amp; learning</li> <li>▪ Mentoring i.e. intergenerational support, services and consultancy</li> <li>▪ Social inclusion/participation, active citizenship</li> <li>▪ History and reminiscence</li> <li>▪ Arts incl. culture, theatre, play, music</li> </ul>
<p><i>Fields of Learning</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Skills for the Knowledge Society</li> <li>▪ Development and continuity of societal values</li> <li>▪ Productive cultural assimilation;</li> </ul>

<i>Knowledge &amp; Learning Exchange/Flow between the target group(s)</i>	Balanced and/or bi-directional
<i>Interactions between the target group(s)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ one-to-one</li> <li>▪ group based</li> </ul> <p><u>Comments:</u> The project had activities organised both in pairs and groups.</p>
<i>Categories of the learning activity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Non-formal</li> <li>▪ Informal</li> </ul>
<i>OECD/DeSeCo Competences addressed by the CS</i>	<p>2 = Competence Category 2: Interacting in Heterogeneous Groups</p> <p>2.1 = The ability to relate well to others</p> <p>2.2 = The ability to cooperate</p>
<i>EC Key Competences addressed by the CS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication in the mother tongue</li> <li>▪ Interpersonal and civic competences</li> </ul>
<i>Success factors and barriers of the CS</i>	<p>The factors that enhanced the success of the project were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning and implementation of the activities in partnership;</li> <li>▪ Openness of all the activities;</li> <li>▪ Sufficient orientation for volunteers as well as tailored supervision of work if needed;</li> <li>▪ Continuous support and peer group meetings;</li> <li>▪ Careful planning of all the activities as well as solving problems occurred in cooperation among participants through the implementation of action research;</li> <li>▪ Continuous follow-up and evaluation of the activities;</li> <li>▪ An extensive network and exchange of resources between partners;</li> <li>▪ A limited number of participants, at maximum 25 children with their families/project/worker;</li> <li>▪ The regular organisation of common happenings for the participants</li> </ul> <p>The identified barriers of the project were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The project found too few volunteers in Tikkakoski, and the activities failed.</li> <li>▪ There was only one full-time employee in the project. The resources were quite limited taking into account the wideness of target groups as well as stakeholders of the project.</li> <li>▪ More time and resources would have been needed to develop a feed back system suitable for children and youngsters.</li> <li>▪ More time, resources and cooperation possibilities would have been needed to disseminate the information concerning the project in school classes.</li> </ul>

### *Results of the CS*

The overall activity of this project was to create a model of preventive child welfare work through intergenerational practice - mentoring across generations. In this project the main goal was to put inter-generational relations in use by applying a method of mentoring across generations. Mentoring means "a relationship between a more experienced person and a younger person which involves mutual caring, commitment and trust". Mentoring across generations is kind of form of 'inter-generational work' which can be understood as a form of social work, which aims to support children and young people in their growing processes and everyday life by using inter-generational relations (outside family), exchange, and provision as an instrument.

The concern for children's well being and the interaction between generations in current society was the driving force in the creation of the project. In fact, the issues of today's young people are issues for people of all ages, because communities in general need to be strengthened. It is also extremely important to enhance children's possibilities to share adult's experiences and resources in communities and in society.

The project proved that a person at her/his 20's can perfectly act as a mentor of a younger person, because every person has some experiences of life and living.

In today's world, the social work related to children youngsters, families and communities is facing great challenges. The model of preventive child welfare work through intergenerational practice (mentoring across generations) generated by the project is one way to meet these challenges. It is a new model of interactions between generations based on mutual agreement and on a voluntary basis. In addition, is one way to systematically analyse and organise voluntary preventive child welfare work. Unfortunately, these kinds of models are very scarce in Finland so far. This project used one type of intergenerational practise. Intergenerational practices are still a fairly unknown concept in Finland. However, this concept should be taking into consideration when searching answers to the well being of the ageing population as well as to the welfare of children and youngsters. Naturally more information and experiences are need on how work through intergenerational practice, mentoring across generations, can be used efficiently in preventive child welfare work today and in the future.

The project was carried out in the form of an action research where the activities planned beforehand were continuously tailored according to the feedback received from the field. The project worker continuously monitored, guided and documented the progress of the project and reported the results of the project by interim reports, writing articles on the newspapers and by giving presentations on the work carried out in the project.

The final evaluation of the project was carried out through interviews. In total 61 children, youngsters, parents and mentors were interviewed in the summer of 2004. Nineteen project partners were interviewed in January 2005. The aim of the interview was to collect opinions on the success of the project. The project worker and the students in the field of social and educational sciences carried out the interviews.

The experiences of the children and youngsters on mentoring were positive, because according to then one could have a nice time with the mentor. The mentor provided company when mother was working late, it was possible to tell stories and secrets to the mentor as well as to play and do things that one could not do with other mates. In addition, the mentor was helping with homework.

The parents pointed out that the most important thing in this project was that their child got a trustful friend, the feeling of safety and confidence as well as some variety in the everyday life. For parents it was also important to get more time for themselves and more relaxed feeling as well as a new network through the common activities. The activities generated by the project were seen important for the well being of the whole family especially for broken homes and single parent families where the parent does not have a lot of time for her/himself. At its best this kind of activity gives new relationships and a

workable system to support the family and the social and emotional development of a child.

The best things in the project for mentors were new relationships, gaining the confidence of a child as well as everyday life with the children. One important element in this inter-generational practice was reciprocity.

The fluidity of this kind of practice is based on sufficient support and guidance, which were received mostly from the project worker or in the peer meetings. Sufficient orientation and continuous training, mutual voluntary engagement, awareness of the background history of the volunteers, careful planning, organization and implementation of the activities as well as stable funding of the activities guarantee the successfulness of the activities. (Heinonen & Parviainen 2004, Moilanen 2005).

Additional sources of continuous monitoring and evaluation were documents produced by the project worker, e.g. casebook, thematic observation diaries as well as documentation produced by families and mentors (feedback letters and questionnaires). One part of the project evaluation were the dissertations carried out on the project, e.g.:

- Blomberg, Anu & Marttila, Maia (2004). Sukupolvet verkoksi –projekti: Yhteisöllisyyttä ja sukupolvien välisiä suhteita tukemassa. Jyväskylän yliopisto, Yhteiskuntatieteiden ja filosofian laitos, Sosiaalityön yksikkö, Sosiaalityön projektiopinnot. Unpublished.
- Heinonen, Taina & Parviainen, Henna (2004). Sukupolvet verkoksi projekti – mentoreiden kokemuksia ja ajatuksia sukupolvien välisestä mentoroinnista. Jyväskylän yliopisto, Yhteiskuntatieteiden ja filosofian laitos, Sosiaalityön yksikkö, Sosiaalityön projektiopinnot.
- Jonninen, Tarja & Sormunen, Titta (2004). 'Jos ei olis kavereita, ei mulla olis mitään tekemistä'. Sukupolvet verkoksi -projektiin osallistuneiden lasten sosiaaliset verkostot. Opinnäytetyö, Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulu, Sosiaali- ja terveysala. Unpublished.
- Blomberg, Anu & Rämänen, Minna-Maria (2005). Muistojen sukupolvisuhteet. Merkitykselliset aikuiset lapsuuden sosiaalisessa maisemassa. Jyväskylän yliopisto, Yhteiskuntatieteiden ja filosofian laitos, Sosiaalityön yksikkö. Afoot.
- - Lampinen, Pauliina & Lehtonen, Heini (2005). Vanhainkotijuttu. Portfolio, Jyväskylän yliopisto, Yhteiskuntatieteiden ja filosofian laitos, Sosiaalityön yksikkö, Sosiaalityön projektiopinnot. Unpublished.