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School, Culture and Well-being

*ArctiChildren Research and Development Findings from
Northern Finland, Sweden and Norway, and North-West Russia*

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PREFACE

This book is a result of the research and development project ArctiChildren 2003-2006. The articles in this book consist of findings from the research and development activities conducted during the project. The project is international and intercultural and also has a basis in the Northern Dimension of EU policy. The international co-operation network consists of the following organizations: the University of Lapland (Rovaniemi, Finland), the Luleå University of Technology (Luleå, Sweden), the Murmansk State Pedagogical University (Murmansk, Russia), the Finnmark University College (Alta, Norway) and the Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences (Rovaniemi, Finland). In addition, altogether 27 schools with cultural (minority/majority) and environmental (rural/urban) differences from all four countries have co-operated with the project (see map in Figure 1). The authors of the articles are researchers from the international co-operation network.

The consortium, co-ordinated by the University of Lapland, started ArctiChildren I - *the Development and Research Project of the Psychosocial Well-being of Children and Youth in the Arctic* – in April 2002. The project has been funded by the Interreg III A North Programme and by the Finnish Neighbourhood Area Funding programme. It has been implemented in two stages: Stage I 2002-2003 with Russian and Finnish partners, and Stage II 2004-2006 with the addition of Swedish and Norwegian partners. ArctiChildren I is coming to a conclusion at the end of November 2006. The goal of the project has been to develop a cross-border network model for improving the psychosocial well-being, social environment and security of school-aged children in the Barents Region. The network model consists of dialogue, research and development activities at the schools involved as well as training seminars. The challenges for promoting schoolchildren's well-being in the Barents Region will continue with the implementation of ArctiChildren II – *the Cross-border Training Program for Supporting School Education to Promote Psychosocial Well-being in the Barents Region* – between 2006 and 2008.



Figure 1 The Barents Euro Arctic region (Finnbarents 1998)

We would like to thank all the authors of the articles; you have made this book possible. On behalf of all the researchers we would like to thank all the schools, their headmasters and teachers involved in the project. Also thanks to the pupils and their parents for responding to our studies.

This book is divided into three parts. In the first part there are general articles about research and development of psychosocial well-being. The second part is concerned with children's psychosocial well-being in the school environment. And the third part includes findings and experiences of the teachers and parents involved in the project.

The authors have both scientific and professional interest in the field. Some of the articles in this book meet strict scientific standards while others are valuable for the information they present about the data collected in this project.

Finally, we would like to thank Rich Foley and Zoë Koivu for checking the language and Niina Huuskonen for designing the cover.

In Rovaniemi 20th of November 2006

Arto Ahonen
Kyösti Kurtakko
Eiri Sohlman

PART I GENERAL

PROMOTING SCHOOLCHILDREN'S PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to discuss about some conceptual frameworks of promoting psychosocial well-being in school context.

In recent years the term “psychosocial” has been used with increasing frequency to describe children’s health and well-being. Firstly achieving the psychosocial functions of children represents a normal developmental stage; it is one of the most important stages of the life span, a transition from childhood towards adulthood. Secondly – one featured more often in the media nowadays – it has to do with the indicators of children’s health status, which show that although their physical health has improved, psychological and social symptoms have increased. (Välimaa 2004, Rimpelä 2002).

Psychosocial well-being and psychosocial work are well known as concepts in social work, but nowadays discussion should focus more on what these concepts mean in promoting children’s comprehensive health and well-being. Another crucial issue is whether the schools could take on a more significant role in promoting children’s psychosocial well-being not only through work done by social and health care services, but also through work done by school education. Consideration should be given to the new approaches and working practices, reflecting on school education and its new possibilities to promote school children’s psychosocial well-being.

ASSUMPTIONS RELATING TO HUMAN GROWTH

There are different bases about human being and human growth. One of the bases to describe the view on the human being is according to humanistic psychology, in which the individual is to be seen as an open system; this system is self-regulating, frequently unique and constantly changing. The human being searches, investigates, weighs alternatives and is prepared for changes. The topics that best reflect the development of these dimensions include selfness, self-actualisation, creativity, love, values, individuality, a person's internal nature, spiritual growth and personal wholeness. (Rauhala 1993.) According to Miettinen (1999), the aim of humanistic psychology is to promote positive growth in the person, to help him or her become healthy and happy. This requires that the person's own resources be freed up to enable the internal growth process.

The concept of growth includes a view of development as a holistic process that proceeds on its own terms. Growth can be seen very much as a concept associated with the humanistic view on the human being as a growing, developing intentional being that can and wants to influence his or her own life. (Hirsjärvi & Huttunen 1997, Rauhala 1993.)

Holistic conception of man is based on the view that man is realized in three basic modes of existence: 1. bodily existence (existence as an organic process), 2. consciousness (existence as an experiencing being aware of himself), 3. situationality (existence as relationships to the world within one's individual life setting or situation). These three basic forms have to be presented and discussed as if they were separate but none of them can be reduced to another. Man is always realized as a whole, not only as either organic or conscious or situational. Because man's consciousness reflects his situation, his organic existence and action, the totality of his existence manifests in his consciousness as meaning relationships. Therefore, when consciousness is studied, the object being studied is not only consciousness as such but also the wholeness of a human being as it is organized into meaning relationships. (Rauhala 1978, 1989.)

The growth of the person is also closely linked to the concept of personality. “Personality” comes from a Latin word meaning to “resonate through”. We can ask what it is that “resonates through” my personal, unique characteristic features. Individuality is what resounds and endeavours to come out through not only physical structures but also unique ways of thinking and feeling. Personality refers to everything that individuals have internalised from the surrounding environment and that has gone into forming their unique features within the limits imposed by heredity. It is a value in its own right, one independent of a person’s talents or past. (Dunderfelt 1993.)

Both Abraham Maslow and Carl Jung have reflected on the problems of becoming an individual and a person. Miettinen (1999) describes how the key concept in Maslow’s theory is “self-actualisation”. The psychology of health and growth and the basis upon which all of society is regenerated is a biologically determined human nature, essential to which – in addition to lower-order needs – is the person’s need to develop him- or herself and efforts to do so.

Encounters in dialogue

Varto (1994) defines dialogue as follows. It is people encountering one another in their life-worlds with the purpose of creating something new in the interaction. The word *dia-logos* means “that which is between us” and it is more than just listening and meeting; it is the space for new knowledge that may be created between us. The idea is that there is something which emanates from two or more sources but which is located between them.

Värri (1994) defines dialogicity in Buberian perspective, whereby he considers a dialogic relationship to be the meeting of two persons, Me and You, in the present moment; this meeting is best realised in the speech in which the perspectives of the two parties meet. Dialogicity is not merely linguistic in nature, however; relationships without words and even silence can also be dialogic. In such cases, the term dialogicity refers to a hermeneutical and ethical attitude that enables one to take a

second perspective into account. It refers to the mutuality of the relationship, whose ideal manifestation is the Me-You connection, a dialogue respecting the other person as You. (Värri 1994.)

The ability to engage in genuine dialogue, to encounter another, requires control of the same attitudinal factors that are essential for all activity that supports human growth: genuineness, unconditional appreciation, and empathetic understanding. It is when these factors are present in human relationships that mutual trust and significant learning become possible. Genuineness means that people are honestly what they are holistically. They do not try to be or pretend to be different than they are. Unconditional appreciation is essentially wondering at and seeing everything as something new, a realisation of how changing our reality is. Empathetic understanding involves valuing another person and having the desire and courage to look at the world from his or her point of view. The crucial criterion here is what one considers important in the interaction between people – one's own ways of thinking and one's own goals or the expectations and views of others. (Lehtovaara 1996.)

The definition in this article of promoting school children's psychosocial well-being is guided by holistic conception of man and dialogue as the points of departure for human growth.

THE CONCEPTS OF “PSYCHOSOCIAL” AND “PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING”

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, “psychosocial” pertains to “the influence of social factors on an individual’s mind or behaviour, and to the interrelation of behavioural and social factors; also more widely, pertaining to the interrelation of mind and society in human development”. Evidently in this definition the emphasis is on the influence that social factors have on human thoughts and behaviour and also the influence of thoughts and behaviours on people’s social world. The interrelationship of two sets of factors is central in the definition. To Loughry (2003), the term “psychosocial” basically implies a very close relationship between psychological and social factors. Psychological factors include emotions and cognitive development – the capacity to learn, perceive and remember. Social factors are associated with the capacity to form relationships with other people and to learn and follow culturally appropriate social codes. Human development hinges on social relationships. Forming relationships is a human capacity and it is also a need. (Loughry 2003.)

The most comprehensive sense of “psychosocial” is seen in psychosocial work. It is a broad term encompassing all work done with other people where the object of the work is the client’s life situation, his or her internal and external reality. Psychosocial work refers to all work done with individuals, families and groups and where social and psychological issues are involved. A psychosocial orientation can thus be understood as a basic orientation in work that embraces human relationships. It characterises work that attempts to solve how social problems and psychological ill-being have become intertwined in the lives of individuals and families. (Granfelt 1998.) Psychosocial work relies on an approach that emphasises the healthy development of the person and applies the interventions at its disposal to create optimal conditions for human development. Psychosocial interventions seek positively to influence human development by addressing the negative impact of social factors on people’s thoughts and behaviour. They also seek to improve the effects of negative thoughts and behaviour on the social environment by

facilitating activities that encourage positive interaction among thought, behaviour and the social world. (Turner 1979, Loughry 2003.)

One of the most famous psychosocial theories is a theory developed by Erik H. Erikson. Erikson (1982) combines both internal psychological factors and external social factors. Each stage builds upon the others and focuses on a challenge (or crisis) that must be resolved during the stage in order to move effectively into the next. The eight-stage psychosocial theory describes individuals' developmental changes by life-period in relation to their social environment (Erikson 1982). In Erikson's theory individuals themselves - not only biological and environmental factors - contribute to their own development. Culture and societal institutions also have an important role in the individual's developmental process. (Pakarinen & Roti 1996.)

By Newman & Newman (1991) Erikson's psychosocial theory provides a rich structure within which to explore major issues of growth and development across the life span. It combines three powerful features. First, the theory addresses growth across the life span. It identifies and differentiates among issues of central importance from infancy through old age. Second, the theory assumes that we are not totally at the mercy of biological and environmental influences but have the capacity to contribute to our own psychological development at every stage of life. The theory assumes that people integrate, organise and conceptualise their own experiences in such a way as to protect themselves and direct the course of their own lives. Third, the theory takes into consideration the active contribution of culture to individual growth. At each stage of life, cultural goals and aspirations, social expectations and requirements, and the opportunities that the culture provides make demands on individuals. Psychosocial theory of development has been also criticised for its complex concepts and for the vague nature of the processes by which individuals progress from one developmental stage to another. Another aspect of the theory that has been criticised is what is seen as an excessively positive attitude towards the prevailing social institutions and support for activities that embrace prevailing values and norms. Moreover, the theory

fails to consider whether culture furthers or hinders an individual's development. (Newman & Newman 1991.)

Promoting school children's psychosocial well-being

Psychosocial activities at school are those that promote the psychological and social well-being and development of school children. Nicholson (1997) divides the school community into three different environments: the school environment, education and health services. The school environment includes

- 1.) the physical environment
- 2.) the policy and administrative environment
- 3.) the psychosocial environment, *which includes a supportive and nurturing atmosphere, a cooperative academic setting, respect for individual differences, and involvement of families*
- 4.) health promotion for staff, in order that staff members can become positive role models and increase their commitment to student health.

Pietilä (1998) defines that health is increasingly presented as a positive life resource and as a part of an individual's everyday choices and the totality of life. This means that the human communities closest to the individual constitute a major challenge for promoting health. The main starting point where school children are concerned is that the family and school community can serve as a resource in promoting children's health and well-being.

If we apply a positive perspective to mental, emotional and social health, we shift the focus from mental illness and emotional and social problems alone to include positive health and well-being. Within this perspective, the promotion of mental, emotional and social health is more than the prevention of mental illness and social and emotional problems, important though that may be. It includes, for example, increasing children's degree of happiness, vitality, sense of self-worth, sense of achievement and concern for each other. In the school context, education for

mental, emotional and social health becomes not just a question of preventing unhappiness, bullying, violence, and conflict; it also becomes a matter of encouraging all who learn and work in schools to achieve their goals, to love, to feel joyful, energetic, full of life and to care about each other. (Weare 2000.)

Konu & Rimpelä (2002) notes that well-being in school has not gained a central role in development programmes but it is mainly seen as a subject separate from the comprehensive schooling. The School Well-being Model constructed by Konu & Rimpelä (2002) considers health education and health promotion as important parts of schooling but not main issues. Pupil's well-being in school is a vastly wider issue. The model strives to study the school and schooling as an entity. Its main aim is to complement the perspective of achievements and processes with the well-being of pupils to fulfil the challenges set in The Convention of the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989): "... the education of the child shall be directed to: the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential". The School Well-being Model can be extended and specified in at least three directions: 1.) *teaching and education*, 2.) *learning* and 3.) *the impact of the surrounding community, including pupils' homes*. Teachers, educators and other education professionals in cooperation with other professionals have the competence to discover those teaching practises and learning processes that promote well-being in school.

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INTERVIEWING CHILDREN

An ethical discussion about the imbalance of power and suggestions on how to handle it

Catrine Kostenius

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INTRODUCTION

Both historically and internationally Swedish children have been and are considered in good health. However, there is a possible threat to this well-being by the declining mental health of children and youth (SOU 2000). In reports from the County of Norrbotten (Norrbottens Läns Landsting, 2002), the Ministry of schools (Skolverket, 2001) and the Child Psychiatric Committee (SOU 1998) the decreased psychosocial well-being of children and pre-adolescent youth in Sweden is described as a problem area mostly out of an adult perspective. According to Rasmusson (1994) this perspective, although of value, may differ from the child's subjective point of view. The United Nations Child Convention is underlining the importance of children's right to voice their opinion in questions concerning themselves (Save the Children, 1992). Children are in the position of not being able, to the same extent as adults, change their life circumstances which makes children to a key group for welfare politics (SOU 2001). A teacher can go on sick leave or change jobs but a schoolchild does not have the same options. Therefore it seems important to close in on the problem of the declining psychosocial well-being in children, ask questions and patiently listen to the ones that should but often don't, according to the background data, have the lead part - the children.

However, before conducting interviews with children one might want to stop and analyze the methodological choice posing a few questions concerning ethical aspects of this research method. It may also be more than the research method *per se* that needs to be analyzed as the researcher's values influence the use of a method. Not long ago I met a researcher that presented

findings from a questionnaire filled out by children age 10-13 years old. When the results did not coincide with the researcher's opinion the findings were dismissed due to them not being reliable because the children were most likely not telling the truth. Questions that entered my mind were; why would the children lie on one specific question? Were they afraid for repercussions? What had the researcher done to make sure that the children felt safe? Had the children been free to participate or rather free to decline participation and had autonomy been an option? All of these questions raise the point of trust and respect that is the base for research ethics.

PINPOINTING THE AREA AND DEFINING THE AIM

The questions concerning data collection with children in general and interviewing children specifically surfaced within the Arctic Children project, a development and research project of psychosocial well-being of children and youth in the arctic. The overall objective of the project is to develop a supranational network model for promoting the psychosocial well-being, social environment and security of school-aged children in the Barents area. Such a network model will increase dialogue and development efforts – shared learning processes, which will give more emphasis to the health and well-being of children and youth in the Barents area. In the Swedish project group a decision was made by the participating researchers to take on a child perspective, making the schoolchildren's voices heard in the process. A life-world phenomenological perspective made up the ontological base letting the schoolchildren's lived experience be the focus of the research. Methodological tools chosen with the intentions of giving children's life-world justice were open letters in combination with open-ended interviews.

Before interviews are conducted part of the ethical process is to collect informed consent from the schoolchildren. Before one can give their consent an understanding of the role of the interviewee should in a perfect scenario take place, but might not

always be the case. How can a researcher make sure that the written and spoken communication is on a child's level? Already in this situation, before the interview has taken place, there is not only a question of information and communication but also a question of power. Is the child in a position to decline? Is the child in any way feeling an obligation towards the adult or is the child driven by fear of repercussions? If the child starts participating because it sounded fun but does not feel at ease continuing how comfortable is he or she to say so? Respecting autonomy might be easy to say yes to as a researcher but how is it ensured? No researcher wants their interviewees to decrease in numbers, many times there is even a shortage of subjects to begin with, so is there a line to be drawn between informing children of the importance of their participation in the research project and the fact that they can choose not to? The ethical dilemmas when interviewing children are as noted above quite a few, all of them important to reflect on as well as crucial to address before engaging in research with children. In this paper, however, there will be no intention to address all of them. An important topic of ethical discussion is the interaction between the adult researcher and the child. Eder and Fingerson (2002) point out the power dynamic situation that becomes evident in an interview situation. As an adult conducting research with children one cannot get away from the imbalance of power in this adult/child interaction.

The aim

The aim for this paper is to explore more specifically the power imbalance when interviewing children led by two questions:

1. What are ethical dilemmas concerning the imbalance of power in an interview situation with a child/children?
2. Can these be addressed, and if so how?

ETHICAL POSITIONING AND VIEWS OF CHILD AND CHILDHOOD

Before getting into the actual interaction within the interview situation there are a few things to say about ethical positioning as well as children as research subjects that will have consequences for the interview situation. Plummer's (1983) positions on research ethics in a broad sense is represented by two categories: the ethical absolutists and the situational relativist. The ethical absolutist views ethical guidelines as a protection for the community as well as for the researcher while the situational relativist on the other hand takes the stand that there are no absolute guidelines but are to be produced in a concrete situation. No argumentation for one or the other was made but instead a middle path between the two was recommended, noting that ethical considerations should be situational as well as context specific. One needs to bear in mind that a danger with this approach is that ethical considerations can be handled on the bases of the researchers' convenience (ibid).

The researcher carries a set of values and can choose to view the research work to be done *on* children or *with* children. James and Prout's (1995) four "*ideal types*" (p.99) is a way to explain these different value based views of children and childhood. The four types of values a researcher might adopt are the developing child, the tribal child, the adult child and the social child. The developing child perspective is looking at the child as still evolving and the child's words might not be considered as important. If elicited the child's views or opinions are often not trusted. The developmental perspective designates children as incompetent and this strengthens the exclusion of children's participation in society (Hood, Kelley & Mayhall, 1996). The tribal child perspective sees a child inhabiting its own world, separate from the adult world. The child is a competent actor in their world but since the researcher cannot become a child the child is in some way "*unknowable*" (James & Prout, 1995, p.99).

The adult child perspective views the child as a competent actor in a shared adult centered world. Adults and children are

viewed as basically the same, however social status is not addressed (James & Prout, 1995). Eder and Fingerson (2002) argue researchers lack of understanding of children's lower status and lack of power in the Western societies poses a problem, as there exists a power dynamic between adults and children. With a perspective of the social child ideal type one sees the child as a research subject comparable with adults but with different competencies which they are confident in using, for example drawings, stories and written work. By letting a child tell about his/her meaning of a drawing or experience in a story gives the researcher an insight into their daily life (James & Prout, 1995). However, Matthews, Limb & Taylor (1998) points out that the sociological view of children focusing on the process of socialization, where the child gradually transforms into an adult is portraying children as evolving and incomplete. This social perspective of children and childhood *"promulgate a view that children are mostly passive in creating their futures and that their lives only gain meaning through adult values"* (p.312). By acknowledging the power dynamic and obvious imbalance *"recognizing the child as a minority group in society"* (Hood, Kelley & Maryhall, 1996, p.118) one can address the imbalance of power. It would be better to see children as different rather than lesser argue Morrow and Richards (1996).

The suggestion here and now is to add to James and Prout's (1995) four 'ideal types' yet another choice of viewing children and childhood calling it the empowered child perspective. Adopting this perspective as a researcher one agrees to an active roll in involving children in research, valuing their opinions as well as empowering them to take part in the development of our society. Argumentation for taking on an empowered child perspective as a researcher is presented below.

ETHICAL DILEMMAS WHEN INTERVIEWING CHILDREN AND HOW TO HANDLE THEM

To begin with children are disadvantaged by factors of age, social status and powerlessness (Morrow & Richards, 1996). They are also taught to respect and obey adults (Eder & Fingerson, 2002) and the vulnerability of children raises the need of protection by adults (Morrow & Richards, 1996), which increases children's helplessness and promotes them to less power. This might become a problem when children are being asked to participate in a research project making free participation and autonomy difficult to convey. According to an ethical law in Sweden informed consent must be collected from children under the age of 18 participating in a research project (SFS 2003).

In the ArctiChildren project this was done through written information to the parents as well as written and oral information to the children. The words used to communicate with the children was tested in a pilot study to ensure that children 10-12 years old could understand the instructions for the open letters and the interviews as well as the written and oral information of free participation and autonomy. The pilot study was found to be useful as the children gave feed-back on the written and oral information. Some words in the open letters were changed due to their comments. There was also one child who decided not to participate, and this could be taken as the researcher's message of free participation was clear enough making the child feel free to decline.

Ensuring autonomy in the interview is also an important part of respecting the child. By making a plan considering children not wanting to participate the children might feel more at ease to decline. Knowing what the child/children will do while the other children in the class are part of the interview needs to be figured out before the fact that somebody is declining the opportunity to participate. By handling this with a sense of "this is natural" and "we respect your choice" the child will be given more freedom to decide. Also by letting the child set the time for the interview, respecting the interviewee saying "I'm tired now, I want to go and

play” and having the flexibility to come back another day. To give the children freedom of choice when conducting interviews in the ArctiChildren project one week was set aside for interviews making it possible to schedule interviews at different times. During the interviews sensitivity to the child’s signals of being tired or uneasy was kept in mind. One time when the school bell rang in a middle of an interview the child was given the choice to go out with the other children on break or continuing the interview.

Matthews, Limb and Taylor (1998) argues that any interview situation with children is bound by power due to the fact that the adult’s body is larger than the child’s. Morrow and Richards (1996) adds that children are vulnerable because of physical weakness in comparison with adults. By being aware of this power imbalance in the interview providing a comfortable setting might be easier. *“When working with children (e.g. one-to-one interview, focus group), trying to sit at their level, not too close, not too distant, in a quiet comfortable place”* (Morrow & Richards, 1996, p.318) might decrease the differences in physical size. Since a child is growing the physical size may differ. Obviously there is a difference in physical size between a 7 year old and a 17 year old, which make the power imbalance less of a problem the older a child is. Eder and Fingerson (2002) suggest that starting with observations help the researcher to find a natural context for the interviews. Group interviews are more natural for children and might help children to voice their opinions since they have to argue their point and find support in their friends as they naturally do in everyday interactions. The obvious larger physical size of the adult is toned down in a group setting by the number of children. Using both single and group interviews the researcher might gain different perspectives from a child. When the best time for a group or individual interview is needs to be reflected on and most likely differ from one project to another (ibid).

The gap in age also affects the power dynamic (Matthews, Limb & Taylor, 1998). Being asked about things that they have not experienced due to the fact that they come from another generation make it easy for adults to label children ignorant or

even incapable of understanding argues Morrow and Richards (1996). The belief that children are wrong when their views do not conform with adults views is an obstacle to overcome (ibid). A suggestion on how to handle this problem is not taking children for granted or give them provincial status but meeting them with respect underlining that “*respect need to become a methodological technique in itself*” (Morrow & Richards, 1996, p.100). The lower status of children in our society has yet another affect on the power dynamic (Matthews, Limb & Taylor, 1998). Eder and Fingerson (2002) suggests that by treating the child with respect one empowers the child and builds a ground for mutual exchange. This reciprocity environment is increased by asking open-ended questions, using the children’s own words, terminology and language structure when writing.

In the ArctiChildren project an effort to build an open environment started with the methodological tools chosen to understand children’s life-worlds. Open letters in combination with open-ended interviews were used to collect their lived experience. According to van Manen (1990) when one wants to investigate a phenomenon the most straightforward way to do so is asking individuals to write down their experiences. In addition Dahlberg, Drew and Nyström (2001) suggest that written information can stimulate dialogue about a particular topic. Using the open letters as a foundation ensured that the researcher spoke about the topic at hand from the schoolchildren’s perspectives, as the child’s own words were used to start out the interview. The interviews based on the open letters were open-ended as the researcher tried to understand each child’s lived experience. Questions were asked to aid the child in telling their story, for example; “what happened then?”, ”how did you feel then?”, “what do you think about that?” and “tell me more”. The children were also asked if they would you have written the same story if they wrote the letter the day of the interview. If they would have written something else they were given the opportunity to tell more about it.

Reporting back findings of the research project not only helps validate the researchers interpretation of the interviews but also engages the children in the process (Eder & Fingerson, 2002)

ensuring that the children are not viewed as only informants with the risk of being exploited (Matthews, Limb & Taylor, 1998). There are arguments for engaging children even further in the research process involving them in the data collection itself as well as interpreting their own data (ibid). Ground rules to help avoid the “no power feeling” are important and these ground rules can easily be established when the researcher remember a situation when he or she has been without power or in a low-power situation (Matthews, Limb & Taylor, 1998). Not correcting or belittling anybody during the interview is one way to ensure an open atmosphere where children dare to speak their mind. Another way of doing research with children is to see one another as partners and thanking children for taking part in the discussions as well as stress the fact that without their assistance there would be no research study or project (ibid).

In the ArctiChildren project taking on an empowered child perspective included being aware of the imbalance of power between the researcher (the adult) and the interviewee (the child), making an effort to minimize its effects. Informing the children about the project and the study as well as their role as an interviewee in an empowering way giving them the option to take part or not was one way to handle the imbalance of power. Another was, as discussed in this paper more in depth, interviewing the children in an open-ended way eliciting their thoughts giving them the chance to influence what was important to talk about. Advantages with this could be understood according to Lippitz (1983) who describe the children being the key to their life-worlds and to successfully unlock their lived experience the researcher needs to participate and communicate with children not as the master of the situation but that of a learner and participant. The empowered child perspective was a read thread through out the research process which included more than giving well thought out information to the children and conducting open-ended interviews.

Before the interviews were held the children wrote open letters, just a few words about how the empowered child perspective was included. The open letters were used as a point of departure for the interviews in an attempt make the children able to choose

what lived experience to share with the researcher. The open letters were made up by open-ended sentences for example “Now I am going to tell you about one time when I felt bad, that was...” and “Now I am going to tell you about one time when I felt good, that was...”. The sentence, presented at the top of the page, was followed by open lines inviting the children to tell their own story, making them in charge of what was important to tell about. With the existing power imbalance it was important to send a message to the children that they had no obligations towards the researcher and also that the researcher was ensuring their privacy as well as keeping their stories confidential. The presentation of the open letters to the children was therefore more of a dialogue about the research process than a presentation to a group of research subjects. The open letters were distributed to the children by the researcher in envelopes to ensure privacy and to increase confidentiality each child was assigned a number only known by the researcher and the child. The children did the writing on their own, making original individual responses possible. The writing was done in school and the children were free to work on their open letters a number of times during one week to give time for reflection.

There was also a decision made to involve the children in the research process returning back to them after analyzing the open letters, asking them to give feed-back on the researchers’ thematic understanding. The reason for returning back to the children was twofold, to ensure the trustworthiness in the researchers thematic understanding as well as to empower the participating children sending a message that their participation made the study possible as well as that their stories were valuable.

FINAL DISCUSSION

I am convinced that values are one of the most important aspects of ethics, but also the toughest to make visual. For example, it makes a difference if the researcher believes that children's thoughts, views and opinions are trustworthy or not. Looking back at James and Prout's (1995) four "*ideal types*" (p.99) a researcher might be viewing the child as a developing child or the one of the social child ideal type. By seeing a child as evolving and incomplete trust in their opinions and experiences will not be strong. Let's pose that the researcher carries values with, what I chose to call the empowered child perspective, acknowledging the power dynamic and obvious power imbalance between the adult and child the collection of data through interviews will most likely differ, maybe like Rubeinstein Reich (1993). She studied circle time in preschool focusing on preschool children's experience. At first a statement from a child was dismissed but as she came to think about it the child's statement made a lot of sense. The point is not to decide whether the child's utterance has meaning but to identify what the meanings are (ibid). Alard (1996) argues that young people are empowered rather than exploited if there is a genuine desire to listen to what they have to say and if they want to be involved in the first place feeling a concern with the issue at hand. An adult acting as an advocate helping the children verbalize their opinions help this process.

Although changing one's values is not easy, it is not impossible. I do believe in agreement with Matthews, Limb and Taylor (1998) that discussions about ethics in research, like the one just held, will raise the consciousness of researchers' values. Ethic discussions are raising awareness, encouraging the refinement of procedures and the honoring of skills as well as challenging values (ibid). When conscious, values are subject to change if desired. I have argued for an empowered child perspective and with that offered some practical suggestions on how to handle the imbalance of power when interviewing children as possible solutions to children's powerlessness in research.

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SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS TO THE NORWEGIAN ENQUIRY.

The ArctiChildren Project: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC), The WHO Questionnaire.

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INTRODUCTION

The quest for acknowledgement, anonymity, and consent.

The project application to carry out the WHO questionnaire for the given social category of research has been evaluated and acknowledged by The Ethic Committee for Medical Research in Northern Norway (REK Nord). The committee had several objections and comments to our initially proposed research design. REK Nord's comments were, first of all, connected to the formulations in the text in the invitation letters to the schools and the parents. Only a few comments concerned the questionnaire itself, and no comments were put forward regarding the selection of the respondents. The invitation letters were corrected accordingly, and the enquiry could be carried out with REK Nord's acknowledgement. Methods of data collection, analysis and publication have from the start been adapted to the upcoming Act of Health Research in Norway as stated in NOU 2005:1. (Cf Skogseid, 2006).

The World's Health Organization (WHO) and the HBSC Questionnaire

The HEMIL centre at the University of Bergen has been a leading institution in the work of mapping Norwegian schoolchildren's psychic health. The centre is taking part in a international study where questionnaire forms are distributed and answered by school

aged children every fourth year to map health habits and subjective health. This survey has been established and is conducted with the cooperation of the World Health Organisation (2001).

Background of the Norwegian project in Finnmark County.

The population of Finnmark is multiethnic and has a minority of inhabitants constituted by the indigenous Saami ethnic group.(Cf Schjetne 2004). The strata dimensions in this enquiry are, however, not based on ethnic categories, but on habitat in the meaning that demography is linked to geography. To make the enquiry in Finnmark compatible to the ones in the three other countries of this INTERREG project the county is divided into the two separate strata of a) towns and b) countryside and coastal localities.

The selection of respondents is based on a preliminary examination of demographic data obtained from the Finnmark county administration, and the intention of the selection is to make the enquiry representative for the given strata of school-aged children and youth of Finnmark County as a whole. Most of the demographic information is available at the official web-sides; www.wis.no/gsi/(2005) and www.ssb.no/(2005) of National Bureau of Statistics.

The population of the county of Finnmark is about 74 000 inhabitants with 60 % living in small towns, (the biggest town, Alta has about 16 000 inhabitants), and 40 % living in coastal and countryside localities. Both kinds of populated areas are represented in the selection *pro rata*. That means that 60 % of the respondents are selected from towns.

METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES FOR A STRATIFIED SELECTION

In Finnmark, there are about 100 schools. The selection was stratified at the level of school districts. The schools were selected at random, which makes the data collected from the schools suitable for statistical estimation (Lysø, K.O. 2001:179).

With a stratified selection on school district level, the research work becomes more efficient. This data gathering method facilitates cooperation between researcher and teachers in the process. An alternative could have been a random selection in the National Register, but that would have meant a more time consuming process. In that case we would have had to cooperate with several more schools, and would have had to cooperate closer with the National Bureau of Statistics (SSB). A third alternative would have been to use the National Bureau of Statistics (SSB) to do the random selection, and send the questionnaire by post directly to the respondents. From experience, the withdrawal percentage might in such a case become quite big. This, in turn, could affect the validity of the representation of the selected pupils.

The chosen alternative of random selection resulted in 12 schools located in 9 different municipalities. Among the selected schools, two have pupils on grade 8, 9 and 10. Two schools have pupils from grade 1 to 7, and eight schools have all the grades from 1 to 10. The last mentioned are so called combined schools.

The population of the target group, grade 7, 8 and 9 make in sum 3331 pupils. The pupils are randomly selected at each grade in each school district.

This gave the following results.

Grade	Born	Population	Selection	Towns	Countryside
7	1992	1044	120	70	50
8	1991	1144	120	70	50
9	1990	1143	120	70	50
In sum		3331	360	210	150

The selection is made up of 360 pupils with at the maximum 11 % of the population. According to the selection strategy used

in this case, I have reason to believe that the selection is representative to the group it is selected from. (The point is that the selection is not “tailor-made” for the questionnaire).

A problem is that the selected schools and grades not necessarily want to participate in the questionnaire enquiry. Schools are exposed to many kinds of national and government directed tests. A general resistance both among pupils and some teachers to involve themselves in even more tests and enquiries has emerged. The many tests and questionnaires in the Norwegian school at the time being may affect the willingness of respondents to participate in the WHO enquiry. A return of about 80% of filled in questionnaires will according to my opinion satisfy the needs for reliability and validity of the data.

Another methodological problem is the reading skills of the pupils. Approximately 5% of the pupils may have serious reading difficulties which hamper them in understanding the questions. Reasons for this can be mental retardation, dyslexia, lack of competence in the Norwegian language, etc. The category of research population includes all kinds of pupils. The instructions for filling in the questionnaire make possible the exclusion of pupils if their reading skills are too inadequate. It is, however, the teachers' responsibility to make this decision. If some pupils are excluded, the teacher is requested to mark the questionnaire “excluded” and return the empty questionnaire to the project administration. This ordinance is to ensure statistic control of the number of withdrawal cases due to inadequate reading skills.

The issue of “consent” and implementation of the enquiry.

The instructions for teachers, the questionnaire and an information letter about the research to the parents were sent to the selected project schools.

The information to the parents as I interpret the conditions of the ethical committee, imply that it is not necessary to obtain neither passive nor active consent from the parents to do the research. An orientation on the enquiry to the parents would be adequate. Due to the anonymous preconditions of the research,

the pupils themselves could out of free will decide on whether or not they would like to participate. (Cf Skogseid 2006).

At each project school a chosen teacher was given the responsibility to manage the administration of the questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to the schools in April 2005 with an expectation that they would be returned in June or August.

All material necessary for the research was distributed to the cooperating schools. That means: information on the research, a number of questionnaires matching the number of pupils participating, and a stamped answer envelope.

For the pupils the participation is voluntary. They can drop some of the questions and they can choose to deliver the questionnaire without answering at all. The return of the filled in questionnaire is taken as consent in participation.

When the filling in process is finished, the pupils put the questionnaire in an envelope and seal it. It is important to the pupils and for their protection of their rights to privacy that school staff and third persons cannot read the answers. It is to hope that such measures will prevent withdrawal from participation in the enquiry and that they will promote honest answers.

Ethical considerations and the quest for standardization

Independent of the medical ethic committee there has been going on a discussion both within the Norwegian research team and between the research teams of the four participating countries whether or not it would be right to use some questions that had been dropped in the original, Norwegian version of questionnaire. E.g. one question was about the age of sexual debut, and another question was about the use of illegal drugs. The HEMIL Centre at the University of Bergen dropped these questions in the original Norwegian edition of the WHO-questionnaire (Torsheim et al: 2004, Appendix B) because they thought it would cause a drastic reduction in the numbers of respondents. Another reason for elimination of these questions was that the researchers' fear of dishonest answers. For the same reasons the given questions were eliminated in the Finnmark version of the WHO questionnaire as well.

The issue is of an ethical nature due to the high level of abortions among young females in the county of Finnmark. In a national comparison the county has the highest level of abortion among teenagers. The numbers of abortions were highest in Finnmark in 2003 with 30,5 abortions per 1000 teenagers, and lowest in the County of Vest-Agder with 12,2 per 1000. (<http://www.ssb.no/emner/03/01/20/abort/tab-2004-07-14-04.html>)(2005). In other words, the given enquiry could have been one of the first steps to obtain more adequate information from the teenagers themselves through the WHO questionnaire. For purposes of standardization and the difficult issue of ethics, the concerned questions were excluded from the questionnaire.

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CHALLENGES FOR THE SCHOOL-SYSTEM TO CARE FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN MULTI-ETHNIC BARENTS REGION

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INTRODUCTION

The approach in this presentation of multicultural issues in the Barent's region is from a school - system perspective. Our schoolsystems represent a central arena in the children's "life world". Children spend a considerable amount of their childhood at school, and the educational and social context, plays an important role for the socialisation and acculturation processes in their development.

The way the concept "life world" is used here, refers to Husserl and the phenomenological tradition and socio-psychological and sociological constructionist thinking (Berger and Luckman 1966). This also connects to the psychological tradition represented by the "Concept of Activity Psychology" presented in the works of Vygotsky, Luria, Leontev and Bruner. This theoretical tradition has been central in cross cultural psychological studies (Cole et al. 1983, Cole & Bruner 1971 and Cole & Scribner 1974) and the development of a Cultural Psychology concept e.g. in the works of Schweder. (1986)

The ability of the school system to create a "growth promoting" environment, socially, psychologically and pedagogically is crucial for the psychological well-being for the children. In my work as school-psychologist I have experienced how such a positive environment can offer a compensating, conflict free and development opportunity for children living in difficult family-situations. This is a daily challenge to all personnel in the school-system. An active cooperation with the children, their families, school and health and social services in the schoolsystem and community is essential. In multicultural environment it demands cultural sensitivity and constant attention concerning dangers in ethnocentric thinking and values.

The not well-being situation

A “not wellbeing” situation will call on the attention of teachers that notify the helping professions in school and community. Sometimes the families are the first to discover a problematic situation and may take different actions according to this. The Norwegian helping services connected with the school-system were the former school psychological service – now PPT (Pedagogical Psychological Service). Strategic work with the future role of this Service (1995) defined the objectives to be “helping the school-system to realise their main educational/political goal of being a school for everybody. Norwegian schools are inclusive, aiming at giving all children, also physically, mentally and multi-handicapped children the best possible education to maximise their developmental capacity. Children and adolescents at risk or showing severe behaviour problems have the same right to education. To stay away from solutions that mean segregating those pupils is strongly recommended.

My long time work as system oriented family therapist, part of my school-psychologist duties (Schjetne 1975), has shown that a healthy development for the child psychologically, to a large extent is dependant on socio-pedagogical well-being. This however, can not be separated from environmental influences of cultural/ethnic, socioeconomic, ecological qualities that constitute the children’s life world. A holistic approach is a great challenge for the school-system to care for the psychological and psychosocial wellbeing of the children. The nature of the therapeutic and counselling cooperation with families, teachers, Health service, Community Social Services, Police etc. is closely related to action research. Here theories and models are tested out, evaluated and bringing new hypotheses, and developing new models for intervention along, new testing, evaluation etc. Action research will be a main approach in our qualitative pedagogical work with the project schools.

Evaluation of effect and a systematic use of action models in the schools have proved being of critical value for offering the children and adolescents a functional and effective help in anti-social behaviour. The help should be given and organised within their normal social and educational environment. As much as pos-

sible, forming groups of children and adolescents with a long history of severe disturbances should by all means be avoided. In preventing and moderating severe behavioural problems are no easy solutions or miracle cures – however many promising models have been developed, there is need for continuous work. What makes this ArctiChildren project unique is the focus on bringing quantitative and qualitative data on to intervention programs in cooperation with the children, their families and the helping professions in the community.

Multicultural challenges

Multicultural societies are mostly like in Finnmark made up of one dominating culture linked to the national state and institutions – in daily practice referred to as “greater society and “det Norske” (the Norwegian). The interchange between this “dominating culture” and the different minority groups like indigenous people (Sami), national minorities (Kvæn, Tater-travelling people and Romans) and migrants (immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers) is referred to as asymmetric (Høgmo 1986, 1995). This gives the dominating culture a position of “definition power” in dealing with different “life worlds” depending on social and ethnic identity and identification.

In Finnmark we have 5 communities defined as “Sami – communities where sami-culture and language takes a central position, there is a special Sámi- Læreplan (school curriculum). The Sámi-Parliament and a special Sámi district– court for inner Finnmark adds to the development of Sámi-institutions, thus breaking the dominance of the National-state institutions.

A multiethnic society with focus on ethnic diversity and identification can beat risk of sharpening inter-ethnic differences an “everyday racism” (Høgmo 1990, 1998) and can spill over in conflicts like bullying episodes in the schools. This requires great sensitivity and attention on the teacher’s side on ethnic and cultural matters, own ethnic background and how this is given meaning in the social and educational interaction. (Schjetne 2000)

People involved in antisocial behaviour and bullying seeks to

a large extent legitimacy in majority-minority relations, political or economic dominance and differences in cultural values that sharpens inter ethnic conflicts (Høgmo 1998) The history of Finnmark shows how beliefs and attitudes from the Norwegian majority society has been passed down by generations and still influence attitudes in interaction between ethnic groups today. An episode of rather severe bullying of two Inuit children in school in Sami core area, Kautokeino presented in the leading national newspapers as “everyday racism” among indigenous people, shows how easily antisocial behaviour in school and community can be simplified and used politically. In fact, this situation was the result of severe antisocial behaviour both among the children as well as their families and close relatives. The school-system had so far been unable to deal with this massive problem.

The Barents region has a unique possibility to profit from a long historical tradition of cultural and economic interchange over the borders. Intermarrying has produced Sámi/Russian/Norwegian/Finnish/Swedish family relations over generations. This is an experience that should be a positive value in meeting today’s new migrants. Work with children and adolescents with mixed ethnic background (both parents and grandparents may represent a variety of ethnic roots) shows that they see themselves as “multiple selves” that present different sides of their identities depending on interaction with persons and contexts. There are a growing number of young people today, who chose themselves to define their ethnic belonging by existing and constructed cultures. The outcome of those processes is not always successful and intervention from the helping professions is needed.

Research conducted in Finnmark in the first part of 1990-ties (Kvernmo 1999) focused on the influence of ethnic factors on behavioural problems among indigenous Sámi and majority Norwegian adolescents. The young people as well as their parents were asked. The results showed a general high frequency for both groups, while the Sámi adolescents showed a higher frequency of behavioural problems in ethnically assimilated communities. This found made her conclude that ethnic factors seem to significantly influence behaviour problems among indigenous adolescents. Those data are, however quantitative and call for further qualitative research. Those data were gathered ten years ago and the

teenagers of today probably meet a different reality. In this light we regard our project to be very important. We have great hope in reaching significant results that will lead to development of intervention models suited to care for the psychological health and well-being of the Children of the Arctic.

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PART II SCHOOL, CHILDREN AND WELL-BEING

THE WORK AGAINST PEER BULLYING

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INTRODUCTION

The ArctiChildren project is a development and research project. One purpose is to map psycho-social health conditions among children and youth in the Barents Region. Another aim is to plan and make interventions in the field of health and to evaluate the effects of the measures taken in order to develop new methods to increase the students' psycho-social well-being. The project will enlighten the perspectives of the majority as well as the minority, the latter means the Sámi students in the four countries.

In Sweden one local comprehensive school with grade 6-8 students (from year 2006 grade 1-9) and a Sámi School are involved. Because there are too few students the Sámi School will only participate in the development program.

As a psychologist with roots in child psychiatry and a researcher in the field and discourse of peer bullying my task in the project has mainly been to help the school to decrease peer bullying by working together with the anti-bullying teams as a consultant and as an informer and lecturer for personal, students and parents in the participating schools. *Olweus' Core Program against Bullying and Antisocial Behaviour. A Teacher Handbook* (Olweus, 1999) has been used as one tool for the development work in the schools. *Olweus' Questionnaire against Peer Bullying* (Olweus, 1998) was administered and evaluated for research matters in 2004 in grade 6-8 with a follow-up study with former grade 6 students one year later. The aim of the article below is to present the work in the schools and the analysis and results of the questionnaire from 2004.

BACKGROUND

Peer bullying and harassment are world wide problems in school (Forsman, 2003; Hasday, 2002; Rigby, 2002; Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Smith, Morita, Junger-Tas, Olweus, Catalano & Slee, 2001). In spite of The United Nations' Declarations of Human Rights, The Swedish Law, The School Law, The Work Environment Act and curricula, the existence of peer bullying threatens the foundations our democratic society is built upon.

Protection against student violence, assault and peer bullying are the three most important issues to deal with in school according to Swedish student attitudes today (Friends, 2006). The Ministry of School consider it to be the schools' biggest problem (Skolverket, 2004). In Sweden 2006-05-11 one School Board, for the first time in Swedish school history, decided to close an upper secondary school. The school had failed to create safe learning conditions for the majority and stop damage, carried out by a small number of students.

The municipality, the school district, and the smallest local school are in Sweden by law obliged to establish, follow-up and constantly evaluate their anti-bullying documents in order to prevent and take measures against peer bullying. Grave shortcomings in interest and competence to deal with peer bullying have been noticed among those responsible to guarantee safe learning conditions in school (Forsman, 2003).

The Swedish Government passed in 2006-04-01 a new law that strengthen the obligations of the school to offer students safe learning conditions without discrimination, social ostracism and violations. The Ministry of Schools, a newly installed Ombudsman called the Child- and Student Ombudsman, The Ombudsman for equality (JÄMO), The Ombudsman against ethnical discrimination and others are responsible to check and follow up the intentions of the law. The head of the school will now be obliged to prove that the school has done everything possible to prevent and take measures against peer bullying, harassment and discrimination. Neglect from the school to act properly could result in a considerable, by Swedish standards, claim for damage for the victim (Regeringens Utskottsbetänkande 2005/06: UbU4).

The plight of the vulnerable and victimized, for some like a nine year Golgata walk from the very first to the very last day in the comprehensive school (Rannelid, 1997) could cause life-long disabling injuries. The victims' learning options could be considered totally unacceptable due to the stress and they often suffer from deep depressive disorders (Forsman, 2003). A state of learned helplessness emerges quickly with a total lack of self esteem and victims internalize very soon a negative attribution style where they at the end just have to blame themselves (Pervin & John, 1997). Bullied students do have six times more often suicidal thoughts (BRIS, 2006). Every year some students commit suicide as a final solution to being exposed to peer bullying (Forsman, 2003).

In guarded terms Skolverket (2004) expresses the opinion that peer bullying is declining. A common attitude from the field is that violence in school, on the contrary, has increased. Earlier findings that the frequency of peer bullying decreases by age and maturity (Sharp & Smith, 1994) must also be questioned. Whether victims' anxiety and parents overprotection should be considered as reasons and explanations of peer bullying (Olweus, 1998) or it could rather be an effect of the intimidation (Forsman, 2003) ought to be investigated further. During the last three years there has been a 50 percent increase in reports of peer bullying (BRIS).

Using the metaphor *School is a mirror of the society* we can expect more violence in school because of the number of reported assaults and violence is increasing in society as a whole (Brottsförebyggande rådet, 2006). Hallberg and Strandmark (2004), Berlin and Engqvist (1998) and Einarsen, Raknes, Matthiesen and Hellesøy (1998) report that bullying is a big problem in working life which makes it even more important to put all efforts into an early teaching and guiding of students to relate properly towards each other.

The scientific interest in peer bullying started in the late 60s, first in Sweden, with Heinemann (1972), Olweus (1973), Pikas (1975) and later Leymann (1986) who was most interested in the adult set of clients. Heinemann might be the researcher that most clearly has pointed out peer bullying as a group phenomena. There is an estimated number of 100 000 students or between 3 –

20 percent of students in the Swedish comprehensive school, depending on definitions and different research methods, who are involved in peer bullying as victims, perpetrators or both (Olweus, 1998). Compared with the other three countries in the project, peer bullying, however, is considerably less frequent in Sweden (HBSC, 2004).

The most well-known researcher in the discourse of peer bullying is Olweus. His anti-bullying program is used all over the world. In his massive evidence-based research he has found out that the full implementation of his program could decrease peer bullying between 40 – 60 percent. As an extra bonus it will result in a more positive psycho-social climate in the school (Olweus, 1998, 1999). Olweus stresses that the program must continue over time. Although schools often refer to Olweus anti-bullying program little is seen in their anti-bullying documents how the implementation in their daily work should be executed (Forsman, 2003).

Criteria for definitions of peer bullying must involve imbalance in power to the disadvantage of the victim, an intention to harm, any kind of violence and that the infringements should be systematic and lasting over time. Synonyms to peer bullying are harassment, infringement, intimidation, scapegoat identification, victim, violence, whipping boy and whistle blowing. In Sweden we use the word “mobbing”. In Russia there is no specific word for peer bullying. Racism, ethnical discrimination, sexual harassment and offending language are common expressions of intimidation among Swedish students (Forsman, 2003). Unacceptable behaviour and discriminating language must be dealt with by resolute actions, otherwise peer bullying risks being a banality, not worth bothering.

New ways of harassment have occurred by using cell phones and e-mails sending and publishing discriminating messages and photos. Increasing new phenomena in the discourse of harassments are stalking and the imposition of duties or fines for real or faked accusations on suitable victims.

Hasday (2002) has found relations between so called school shootings and peer bullying where victims take a dreadful revenge on bullies and teachers that have not protected them from intimidation. Sweden has so far been spared from such experiences.

DEVELOPMENT WORK

The development work in the Sámi School

The Sámi School is located north of the Arctic Circle. It is a small 0-6 grade school with around 60 students. Myself I grow up in Sápmi (the Sámi name for their territory) in the verdisystem¹ and have good cultural competence.

My task in the school has been on a consulting basis working with the staff members about once a month for two to three hours. For me it has been important to relate to research and theories as a way raising the professional level in the group. Before the meeting the staff decided what topic or theme should be on the agenda. I have given lectures about peer bullying for the staff as a part of their competence education. In two occasions I have met parents, lecturing about peer bullying and informing them about the project and my task. Both the staff and the parents the problem of peer bullying very seriously and were very much interested in working for improving their Sámi Schools' psycho-social climate.

Although it is a very small school there are conflicts influencing relations and learning. In Sápmi there is a long-lasting debate about the right of reindeer pasture contra the Swedish state as well as between different sitas². The children could therefore inherit the parents' conflicts which could be seen in the relations between class mates from different sitas. Discussing and coping with cultural diversities has often been a frequent theme. The schools' anti-bullying document related very much to the basic values of school and values (Orlenius, 2001) have often been on the agenda during my visits.

Peer bullying is a severe crisis for those affected (Cullberg, 1973) and during the discussions with the staff it has been possible to link the presented cases of suspected and confirmed peer

¹ The verdisystem implies mutual services between settlers and reindeer herding people. Reindeer herding families stayed in settlers' houses during periods in winter. The system came to an end in the 60s when the Sámi people were able to have houses of their own.

² Sita is a Sámi village consisting of several families herding reindeer in a cooperative

bullying to coping theory (Lazarus, 1993). My doctoral thesis (Forsman, 2003) was a useful reference in the discussions about the nature of peer bullying and how to prevent and take measures against harassment and violations in school. The book *Den onda dagen* by Hildefors, Hök, Meister, Molloy and Wahl (2004) has been used in a study circle and has given many good opportunities to deal with inappropriate behaviour in the school. The school will investigate the options to involve drama pedagogies in the anti bullying work in the classes.

The staff is planning an academic course (7,5 ECTS) in conflict treatment and solution. A representative from The Sámi School Board participated in the ArctiChildren Conference *Sharing Good Practice* held in Luleå in 2005. Promising contacts have been taken between the Swedish and Finnish Sámi Schools and there is an interest in establishing some kind of exchange between all Sámi schools involved in the *ArctiChildren Project*.

The development work in the local school

The school with around 400 students in grade 6-9 recruits students from several villages in the fringe areas of the town. This means there are some problems with creating close connections and relations with the families. There are plans to invite the parents to grade meetings where I will inform and discuss the problem on peer bullying. I have given lectures of peer bullying for both personal and students mostly connecting to Pikas' (1998) and Fors' (1995) attitude that the most important is not to find scapegoats but everybody has a responsibility to contribute to a good solution of the problem.

I have mostly worked with the anti-bullying team consisting of three teachers and frequently met the head of the school. During these three years we had planned meetings three to four times each semester. As in the Sámi School I functioned as a consultant and during our meetings the team presented different cases of what is or could be peer bullying which we then discussed. Their model, recently revised, could be described as a mixture of Olweus' (1998), Pikas' (1998) and Ljungströms' (1997) ways to work with peer bullying. Some of the cases involved frequent

contacts with parents and my nine years experience as a family counsellor was very useful. In some discussions we considered to different techniques, for example Banduras' *Guided Model Learning* (Bandura, 1986) as one method for the team to cope both with behaviour of students involved and their parents. Bullies could also be involved in criminality (Brottsförebyggande rådet, 2006; Olweus, 1998) and one in the anti-bullying team had good and frequent contact with a specific police representative.

In several cases it was also obvious that the victims of peer bullying could be described as provocative victims (Olweus, 1998; Pikas, 1998). After a lot of work with the group involved, including perpetrators, bystanders and victims one result could be to recommend that the parents of victims as well as bullies contact a Child Guidance Clinic or social authorities.

The head of the school participated in meetings and conferences in Finland 2004 and in Sweden 2005 informing about the benefits of participation in the project in the work to improve the psychosocial climate. An important aim for the schools' management is to make the bullying problem a concern for all students and personal. A lot of effort has been put into raising the courage to take a stand, not only among student bystanders but also among teachers to react and act against harassments (Olsson, 1998).

As in most Swedish schools the general knowledge about peer bullying was moderate. Many reported the appearance of so called inner pictures of potential and real victims of peer bullying from my lectures. They said that they got useful hints and tools to deal with the problem of peer bullying in their work. Here also I introduced the book *Den onda dagen* (Hildefors et al, 2004) together with my doctoral thesis (Forsman, 2003). The head of the school also recommended all personal to read the book.

The staff and the anti-bullying team reported during the years an increasing number of mental disorders among students which they related to higher level of stress and harassment. This seems to be an overall tendency among Swedish students. A common expression of harassment in the school is the oral sexual abuse, mainly of girls by boys. The school has adopted a zero tolerance in this matter and a lot of effort has been taken to get, especially the boys, to realize that their sexually offending language, per definition, is harassment.

Another effect of participation in the project is the schools initiative to invite the organisation *Friends* (Friends, 2006) to the school one day to inform about peer bullying and work with the students and staff doing different exercises. A positive result of that day is that the school now has student representatives with special responsibility, so called mate supporters. These were recommended by their mates and with some adjustments those with positive status and good personal courage (Bergecliff, 1999) were selected by the anti-bullying team. With supervision and guidance from the anti-bullying team these *mate supporters* have a specific task to report and if possible to react to harassment among their mates. Grades 1 to 5 in the local school announced in 2005 their interest in joining the anti-bullying work and a cooperation project will start in autumn 2006.

RESEARCH

The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1996) consists of 39 questions in the version for grade 6 – 9 and higher (SO1-SENIOR). There is also a SO1-JUNIOR version aimed for grade 3-5. Some questions could have as many as eleven options to choose between. The questions measure different aspects of peer bullying, which in Olweus' term is when *one or several individuals repeatedly and over time are exposed of negative actions from one or several others* (The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire, page 3, Olweus, 1996). Clear instruction to teachers and a Teacher Handbook (Olweus, 1999) offers good administration possibilities for the questionnaire as well as for the work in classes and schools to prevent and take measures against peer bullying.

Evidence-based data from more than 150 000 students have shown a decrease in peer bullying by up to 50 percent and more during the first year of implementation. Also there is a decline in anti-social behaviour such as vandalism, fights, boozing and truancy. Other noticeable results were the improvement in the classes' social climate, better order and discipline, more positive friendship and a more positive attitude to school and school work. Additionally Olweus found an increase in the students' school satisfaction (Olweus, 1998).

The questions could be divided into four themes. The first considers general issues about peer bullying. The second theme is about feelings, attitudes and coping strategies towards peer bullying. The third focuses on the other persons involved and the environment. The last theme deals with mates and how the respondent likes or dislikes school. One important condition to obtain these results and sustain them is the involvement of all the staff in the school, the involvement from the politicians, students and parents and that the core program is kept up to date.

Analysis of The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire in grade 6-8.

In May 2004 *The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire* (Olweus, 1996) was administered to grade 6-8 students in the local school. The aim was to map the conditions concerning the problems of peer bullying in the school in order to take proper measures in the anti-bullying work.

Totally there were 283 respondents and five questionnaires in grade 8 are disregarded because it was very obvious that these respondents' answers were faked. In several of the questionnaires up to seven answers were missing.

<p>N = 278 (283)</p> <p>Grade 6 = 26 (11 girls and 15 boys)</p> <p>Grade 7 = 149 (65 girls and 84 boys)</p> <p>Grade 8 = 103 (61 girls and 42 boys)</p>

Figure 1. Respondents in the study

Each question in the questionnaires was transferred to the *BVQ-STAT Program* (Olweus, 1999) which gave an exact number for every alternative in the question. The program could be used to make a conclusion and analysis of the answers.

The results show that one of ten students report being bullied in school the last few months and more than 13% have a fear of being bullied. This is similar to the interval of victims that Olweus' research has shown (Olweus, 1998). There is a slight proportional overweight and an increasing number of bullies and victims among the boys which also international research confirms (Smith et al, 2001).

There are thefts of money and other items in the school and none of the 271 respondents report that they had taken money or items or destroyed items belonging to other students. There is also a negative correspondence between the number of victims and answers about questions about bullying others. These data could be explained by the theory of social desirability (Pervin & John, 1997).

Boys to a higher extent than girls do not tell anyone about harassment. Einarsen et al (1998) have found out that it is com-

mon that boys do not report being bullied especially if the bully is a girl. Although the students consider they should help the victim of peer bullying a third will not interfere. The lack of personal courage and the acceptance of violence in school is obviously still prevalent (Olsson, 1998). Every fifth boy is not sure if he would participate in bullying a student he does not like. This supports the findings of an increasing tougher climate in school (BRIS, 2006).

In his research Olweus (1998) has found out that victims are more anxious and overprotected by their parents. None of the questions in the questionnaire, however, cover this aspect. From my meetings with parents and victims the low self-esteem and anxiety of the victim and the parents' involvement to protect their children could as well be a consequence of the harassment. Also Lincoln and Guba (1985) are sceptical of too easy emphasizing causality as a viable concept.

More than 40% think the class teacher does little or nothing to prevent and take measures against peer bullying. My cooperation with the teachers in the project, however, has shown that a lot of work from their side is not public and therefore unknown to many students.

Nearly 85% like school *well or very well* which corresponds with the HBSC report (WHO, 2002) and the Skolverket investigation (2004). It is alarming that more than one of twenty students has none or just one pal. The analysis shows that there is an overrepresentation of victims in these figures.

The answers disregarded make up to 3% of the total answers. They should therefore not have any influence on the analysis.

SUMMARY

The results of these two years in the ArctiChildren Project have been promising. The involvement of the EU and the Municipality of Luleå, the Sámi School, the County Council and the University of Technology, Luleå, have had a great impact on the staffs' and the students' involvement in the participating schools. The symbolic value of such a concentration of resources must not be neglected. There are several statements from teachers, parents and students about the importance of improving the psychosocial climate in school and their willingness to do so.

In April 2006 The European Union (EU) granted funds for a prolongation for the project with the aim to work out and construct a sustainable method to improve the psycho-social health among youth and children in the Arctic. The involved schools' work to create better learning conditions has thereby got two more years of academic supervision and support. The prolongation of the project means that it will be possible to match and connect research results with the development work in the schools in all four countries.

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EXPERIENCES OF CLASSROOM RESEARCH TO INCREASE SCHOOLCHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

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INTRODUCTION

The work with developing learning environments in schools is an actual topic in the development of children's health and learning conditions in the Swedish society. It is found to be the responsibility of the Swedish schools (Swedish Government Prop. 2001/02:14) to create good learning environments that facilitate knowledge processes and personal growth for children and youth. From such a perspective it is interesting to ask questions about the health situation for children and their families of today.

According to The National Board of Health and Welfare (2003), which has presented a report on health, economical and social condition for the people, the health situation in Sweden is still improving. But there are some areas that signal that conditions are not so good. The National Board of Health and Welfare presents two perspectives in their report: the first is on social and economical conditions, and the second is on health. In Sweden the rates of unemployment have increased slightly during 2003. It is also found that the number of people who are out of work because of sick leave have increased dramatically.

Regarding the health condition The National Board of Health and Welfare (2003) reported that the health condition of the Swedish people is improving from a physical perspective. However, the number of people expressing psychosocial problems has increased amongst working ages, thus also amongst those who are parents to schoolchildren. According to the report, this can be a temporary change, but there are some signals concerning the fact that people have more psychological worries and also that the alcoholic consumption has increased. The most troublesome aspect is that this is especially prominent amongst young people. It

seems as if life conditions amongst youths show a more negative trend than before.

Several studies (Berntsson, Köhler & Gustavsson, 2001; Borup, 1998; Marklund, 1997) show that psychosomatic complaints, such as headaches and stomach pains and emotions of depression, are increasing amongst schoolchildren even though many children experience themselves as healthy. Questions can be asked if “somatizing” is a way for schoolchildren to express something important about themselves and their problems. In another study by Danielsson and Marklund (2001), it was found that the number of young people, in the age of 11, was increasing amongst those having psychosocial ill-health. The findings by Clausson, Petersson and Berg (2003) indicate that the schoolchildren in Sweden are physically healthy and psychosocially unhealthy. It was established that the schoolchildren were mainly bodily healthy, with few physical health problems. Psychosomatic complaints were more common as well as problems with low self-esteem. Schoolchildren seemed to have great needs to talk and trust in someone. According to Clausson *et al.* (2003), health and ill health could also be related to the school situation, a situation dominated by increasing stress rather than well-being. This speaks in favour of research which focuses on schoolchildren’s psychosocial health and well-being, in a similar way as is adopted in the ArctiChildren 2004-2006 project.

According to the Swedish Education Act (1985:1100), all children and youths shall have equal access to education and shall enjoy this right, regardless of gender, where they live, or social or economic factors. The Education Act states that education shall provide the pupils with knowledge and, in co-operation with the homes, promote their harmonious development into responsible human beings and members of the community. Consideration shall also be given to students with special needs. The National Agency for Education (2003) is constantly working with questions regarding school development in Sweden. The Ministry of School development (2001 and 2003) has also highlighted that children’s learning goes hand in hand with health. However, the need for more knowledge about relationships between health, learning and security has also been identified.

The Ministry of Education and Science (SOU 2000:19) has stated that the starting point for children's learning is their need for understanding, participation and influence and that the same conditions are needed to support good health. To be able to create a good learning environment, staff and children need to talk, discuss and reflect on their work and communication in school. From such a standpoint it is interesting to find out what and how members of staff at a school learn when participating in a research and development project.

The aim

The aim of this article is to illuminate the experience of participating in classroom research with an intervention focusing on increasing schoolchildren's well-being.

METHOD

The point of departure for this study was the “*Development and Research Project of Psychosocial Well-being of Children and Youth in the Arctic – ArctiChildren*” which was based on collaboration with researchers in Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden. The Arctic Children project in Sweden embraced several studies. In this article one part of the Arctic Children project is presented by a qualitative study of a classroom intervention aiming at increasing schoolchildren’s well-being. One school in a schooldistrict from the North of Sweden participated voluntarily during one year in the research.

Ethical considerations

Written and oral information was given to the staff at the school, to the parents of the children in the class and to the children themselves. By such a strategy the involved participants could read but also ask questions and confirm their understanding of the research before taking their decision of participation. The participants in this study were reassured that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without giving any explanation. Approval for carrying out the research project was received from the local Research Ethics Committee, Luleå University of Technology, Luleå, Sweden.

Research context, participants and analysis

The research project took place in one school class, with 20 children in grade four. In accordance with what Park (2001, p.88) describes, participatory research was in this project seen as a form of praxis helping to “*actualize our potentials and develop ourselves as a human community*”. Furthermore, Park emphasizes that in action research it is also relevant to think of what we do as agents of change during the research process. In the present study the ‘agents’ were one principal, one teacher and one classroom researcher. The whole research process was going on for over two

terms and the intervention was implemented during one month within the second term.

According to the idea of the Swedish part of the project, the decision was taken to adopt a child's perspective during the research process. It was also decided to use a qualitative research paradigm to gain an understanding of schoolchildren and staffs' lived experience of the classroom intervention. This study was based on phenomenological philosophy and methodology (Bengtsson, 1991). A close relationship between researchers, the school staff, schoolchildren and parents was desirable and also a fact during the project in accordance with what Tiller (1999) suggests. The planning, developing, implementation and documentation of well-being interventions in the classroom, have been provided in a close relationship between the researchers and the school staff. According to Gallagher (1995, p. 33) the researchers' awareness of, and openness to, the complexity of the life world are important factors when collecting and analyzing data.

In the present study the teacher and the principal shared their experiences of being involved in the research project with a classroom intervention to increase schoolchildren's well-being. Individual narrative interviews were conducted six months after the end of the research project and transcribed verbatim. A phenomenological analysis was performed (c.f. Strandmark & Hedelin, 2002) by first obtaining a sense of the whole during the reading of the transcripts. In the next step the text was differentiated into meaning units and later, in a third step, transformed. This third step was based on a process of intuition, reflection and free imaginative variations. In the last step, the transformed meaning units were synthesised into a consistent statement of the structure of the phenomenon.

FINDINGS

When analysing the data three themes emerged that created an illustration of school staff's experiences of participating in classroom research increasing children's well-being. The themes were; (a) allowing children to be part of classrooms activities; (b) creating a supportive learning environment and (c) learning through deep reflection.

Allowing children to be part of classrooms activities

During the project the psychosocial well-being of the children were in focus. The work to create good experiences of well-being in the classroom's learning environment was developed out of the schoolchildren's state and their progression in the class. It was not a programme adopted beforehand. Even though the teacher and classroom researcher had gained knowledge from literature in the subject, it was decided that it should be the children who set the agenda. However, the theoretical knowledge was used more like a source for inspiration, as the teacher mentioned:

“It is difficult to follow an already existing manual about working with psychosocial issues when you are working with the children, because it is not sure that their [the children's] needs are the same as the text book author's.”

Instead, listening to the children and having a sensitive ear were issues experienced as being the most important in the work with developing good well-being experiences during the research project. It was the teacher who introduced ideas about developing their own well-being activities, but it was the children who fulfilled them.

To follow the children or letting them take responsibility was based on the teacher's interest to do so. The teacher's interest in following the children's own signals was also a necessary prerequisite. During the project it was experienced that the more the teacher left to the children, the more they took responsibility in organising and providing their school work. By letting the chil-

dren take more control, they increased their longing not only for taking part in activities of well-being, but also in their schoolwork in general. It became evident, that if a teacher wants to give the children influence over their own work the children also need to take their own responsibility. This insight implies that teachers have to have the confidence to dare to let go of some of their own control. One example of how children's own influence over their work can be increased is seen in the following:

"We have discussions about bigger project, such as one about Europe. I provide the frames but it is all the time a school for the children to take on their own responsibility. But when you are working towards a goal and you know all the time where you are going it becomes easier [for the children]. I can see a development in all children in this respect."

By letting the children take on more responsibility their progression within the class became more visible. From the principal's perspective, the schoolchildren's changed attitude and actual outlook towards each other became more evident the longer the project lasted. The schoolchildren's increased responsibility also created a strong feeling amongst the children. The teacher emphasised the importance of creating positive feelings amongst the children when thinking about school.

Creating a supportive learning environment

The teacher and classroom researcher created the frames for the activities of well-being that took place during the project. It was however together with the children the frames were filled with concrete ideas and implemented in the classroom. One activity that was developed was the cosy reading and massage, the children were assured by the teacher that it was alright to relax and achieve stress reduction. By using massage as one form of activity but also classical music relaxing was achieved in the classroom when the children's needs and present state indicated a need for it. Through this, a calmer environment was created that facilitated the schoolchildren's regular school work. The principal ex-

perienced changes in the classroom environment when visiting the class that was difficult to explain. They were changes expressed in the form calmness, for example, that influenced the schoolchildren's learning and their increased responsibility and awareness of the importance of being a student.

One other activity developed through the teacher's confirmation of the children was the good communication. It was experienced as very good use of the time in the classroom to support the children to meet and genuinely listen to each other. When the teacher listened five to seven minutes to a child's spontaneous conversation, the creation of a genuine meeting could begin. By creating such an environment of active listening and talking every child also knew that there always was someone present in the classroom who wanted to listen. By learning to listen to each other the children could share each other's experiences and were coming closer to each other. Such a good talking climate created a feeling of security where the children dared to reveal uncertainty but also talk about their success. One example of the significance of developing a good talking climate is presented in the following quotation:

“The talking does not only generate the exchange of feelings but also an exchange of knowledge because when the children learn to listen to each other they also learn to respect each other, and I can see it in this group that they are allowed to share things they have learnt but also express themselves when they feel insecure...”

Learning through deep reflection

Within the project it was decided that documentation of activities, actions and outcomes would be used as one way to follow the progress during the development and research process. This documentation was done on a regular basis every week by the children and by the teacher in their logbooks. The documentation was meant to serve as a base for the classroom research but turned out to be a valuable tool for reflection. Regular documentation was experienced as a valuable tool for meeting every individual

child. The deep thinking during the teacher's writing process related to the individual child, was time-consuming and demanded a great deal of effort parallel to experiences of being involved in an energy demanding process. However, it was experienced as being worthwhile since the process of writing created a foundation for deep reflection. Reflections were made by the individual teacher but also together with the researcher and together with the principal.

By being able to share one's documented experiences with others or with oneself, a deeper understanding of one's own role as a teacher was created. The awareness of developing a personal reflection during the project is described as follows:

"I have developed my ability to reflect upon my role during the project; I do not write in the same way as last autumn, but I believe that the start [of the project] has lead to that I have it inside me now. But I am also contemplating because of the children's reflections since I am mirroring my teachership by the children's reflections in their logbooks".

The writing and documentation that have been done are experienced as being a catalyst for reflection. Both the teacher and principal could more easily follow the whole process of the project to increase the children's influence in their schoolwork. The documentation made the experience accessible and by reading, thinking and analysing it, a base for better understanding the process of increasing the schoolchildren's well-being was created. The children's progress in the class became thus more visible. Besides documentation, discussions with the classroom researcher facilitated reflection. By being able to discuss with another person, thoughts on quality and content during the classrooms experiences were brought up. Such discussions created new understanding and learning about teaching and learning processes in the class. As expressed by a teacher: *"The most important thing has been the deep reflection I have gone through which has taught me much."* This suggests that participation in a classroom research project creates learning through reflection.

The experiences made during the implementation of activities of well-being were perceived as something internal and present

after the project period. These activities that were developed during the action research project are still used six months after the research has ended, at least once a day. To participate in a research developing project was also seen as one form of further education. The model developed in the classroom together with the children and a researcher created valuable knowledge that felt important to share with other.

Comprehensive understanding

When trying to understand what constitutes the thematic findings in this study one type of understanding seems more likely. The meaning of being part of a research project, as in the present study, seems to be to *achieving a sensitive ear*. This can be understood out of both the process of *achieving* ‘a sensitive ear’ but also out of *the meaning of having* ‘a sensitive ear.’ Such a type of understanding is found as an imbued message within all the three themes.

The achieving of ‘a sensitive ear’ is something that schoolchildren can acquire by a teacher allowing and supporting them to take more responsibility and to teach them to listen to each other. This in turn seems to be one ingredient in increasing schoolchildren’s well-being. By focusing on and paying attention to individual schoolchildren’s needs, interest and present state of well-being as well as their expressions, the school staff developed their listening parallel to the schoolchildren developing their listening. But ‘a sensitive ear’ seems also to be able to develop during a writing process. When a teacher is providing documentation it is found to embrace also an inner dialogue. This kind of inner dialogue is held with the individual child in focus during the writing, thus is an inner listening occurring. Another way of achieving ‘a sensitive ear’ is by focused listening during regular discussions, as was initiated in collaboration with the researcher during the project. Such listening can maybe also be learnt by discussions with other interested colleagues.

Theories about inter-subjectivity offer valuable insights when trying to understand the meaning of having ‘a sensitive ear.’ According to Mead (1976) the process of language is essential for

the development of the self. But, the self is not present when a child is born; rather the self is developed in social experiences. By conversing with others an awareness of one's own speech is present as well as awareness about decisions that must be taken about what to say next. Mead means that significant speech is action that influences the individual herself and that this effect for the individual also influences her own communication. From this perspective, the meaning of 'having a sensitive ear,' can also be found to be supporting the development of the self. By being supported to talk in an active listening climate, children can also receive their own feedback by listening to themselves while talking, in addition to the feedback that comes from others' responses.

During the research process attention was paid to support schoolchildren to listen to each other talk. Consequently, their listening became a turning of attention towards what von Wright (2000, p. 90) calls as "*taking the perspective of another*," which in speech is visible to all listeners. If such attention of the other's perspective increases then it is also possible that their willingness to take responsibility for each other increases. Von Wright (2000) interprets Mead's writings and suggests that the teacher must catch the students' attention but also their selves to be able to provide an ethical form of teaching and learning situation with an emotional connection.

DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that participation in a classroom research intervention focusing on increasing schoolchildren's well-being allowed the children to be partners, created a supportive learning environment and increased learning through deep reflection. This can also be understood as learning involving the depths of the individual person in a similar way as Tiller (1999) writes is desirable for learning.

The findings reveal the process to let the schoolchildren take their own responsibility. It was discovered that when increasing the school children's individual responsibility it led to the children more actively participating in their own school work. It is however the teacher who has been setting the goal and frames for their school work. These frames can be regarded as open in a sense similar with a description of Marshall (2001, p.433), who writes that "*each person must identify and craft his or her own qualities and practices.*" The process to let the schoolchildren take increased responsibility was supported by the participation in a research project. As Marshall (2001) writes, the actors, in classical action research format, take a step backwards and reflect on their experiences and on their actions before they go further in their practice. Such rhythm of moving back and forth between action and reflection within the action research was also present in this study. It seems that the teacher describes how the reflection that initially were based on the provided documentation of activities, during the research process of one school year, rather became an way of acting without the need of written documentation.

In addition to documentation, discussions with the classroom researcher are findings that were concluded to facilitate reflection and create new understanding about the teaching and learning processes present in the class. Why reflection can contribute to new understanding can be explained by Dewey's (1997/1916) writing of thinking/reflection as a conscious striving to discover specific connection between what we are doing and the outcomes of the actions. Reflection seems to create a space for professional development similar with Dewey's thinking and also an avoidance of using routine and capricious actions. If such reflection is

facilitated by the conversation with the classroom researcher is not answered in this study. Rather one understanding of the findings is similar with Watson and Wilcox's (2000) presentations which suggest that colleague collaboration can provide a fresh perspective on that which is familiar to us.

But another reason to why reflection was initiated and found to be useful when participating in the classroom research project can be due to the new ideas the project inspired. Via the project discussions, new horizons on well-being can be opened up and thus new thoughts created. The need for a new understanding of the concept of well-being is pointed out by Sarvimäki (2006). Reflection can accordingly be one way to create a new understanding of well-being in a learning environment. From past and present experiences the focus can be shifted towards the future when discussing how schoolchildren's well-being can be developed in the best way.

Methodological considerations

This study contributes to an understanding of the experience of participating in classroom research with an intervention focusing on increasing schoolchildren's well-being. However, it is not possible from this study to say anything about the long-lasting effects of such experiences and learning. If such insights had been desirable, a study with some other design would have been more appropriate. Rather, this study presents qualitative findings relevant for the persons involved. The present study may certainly be valuable for other settings and can hopefully provide other readers familiar with classroom activities with new insights.

This study assumes that the meaning of having 'a sensitive ear' contributes to individuals' development of the self. From experiences of being supported to talk, in an active listening climate, people can receive their own feedback by listening when talking and by listening to others' responses. Such an interpretation is not based on any implicit demand of objectivity. Rather, the interpretation in this study is based on arguments similar to those of Kvale (2005) about the need of readers using the same viewpoint when reading the text as the researcher, and then ought to see the same things as the researcher does.

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SCHOOL - A PLACE FOR HEALTH?

Sámi children's experiences of school

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INTRODUCTION

In the northernmost part of Europe the Sámi people live, an indigenous people with their own culture and own languages. The Sámi people are numerically small, only approximately 70.000 divided between four nations – Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The territory in which the Sámi people live is called Sápmi and it is the land of the Sámi people even though it is not recognized by the nation-states. The largest Sámi population is in Norway, approximately 35.000 persons. In Sweden there are approximately 17.000, in Finland approximately 5000 and in Russia approximately 2000. But how has the schooling for Sámi children been through history?

In the Sámi area “hut-schools” were established in 1913. In the north the children had to live in hut-like cottages that resembled the traditional Sámi hut, and they were taken care of by housewives for months. The Sámi children got a shorter and poorer education than other children, which the nomadic Sámi early protested against. During the 1940s the huts were replaced by more modern boarding schools, and the quality and length of the schooling gradually increased. The language taught by the teachers was always Swedish, but sometimes Sámi could be used to explain things, if the teachers knew Sámi. Until 1962 there was no education in the Sámi language.

In 1962 the Nomadic School became a school for all Sámi children who wanted to go there. The name was later changed to Sámi School. The government decided, in 1980, to establish a Sámi School Board, with a majority of Sámi. It is the Sámi School Board who is responsible for the Sámi education today. The national goals of the education are made real in the daily work at the Sámi schools, the Sámi pre-schools and within the in-

tegrated Sámi teaching given at the municipal schools (SamS, 2006).

Today there are Sámi Schools in six places in the northern part of Sweden – Karesuando, Lannavaara, Kiruna, Gällivare, Jokkmokk and Tärnaby – for pre-school children up to grade 6. At the age of 13-14 the children go to the ordinary compulsory school with the possibility of studying certain subjects like social science, history, art, and the Sámi language with other Sámi pupils. The upper secondary school in Jokkmokk offers certain programmes with a Sámi profile.

TO CATCH CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES

Children's experience of school can be presumed to have an effect on their learning and on their coming life. In the text of the schools' management documents, for example the latest curricula for the Swedish school system, the importance of taking pupils' experiences as a starting point in teaching situations is stressed (The Ministry of Education, 1994, 1998). Moreover, educational legislation and municipal school planning documents stress the importance of taking children's experiences as a starting point (SFS, 1995:63).

The aim

This paper attempts to elucidate Sámi children's experience of school and to interpret the meaning of their experiences, with special concern for health aspects.

Method

The Sámi children's experience of school is made apparent with the aid of creative activity in the form of the production of drawings, combined with subsequent oral comments.

The drawings were collected during ordinary school activities, and the children who were included in the study lived within the

County of Norrbotten in northern Sweden. The participating children attend the same school, a Sámi school, and they were of the age of 9 – 12 years old. A total of 24 children took part in the study, 13 girls and 11 boys.

During the data collection the children had the opportunity to think and reflect on their experience of school, but instead of putting their experiences into words they were asked to first make a drawing depicting what came to their minds. It is essential to stress that the children were told that it was not important how skilful they were at making drawings. The important issue was to elucidate one's experiences, and to do this they had to use paper and pencils, crayons or watercolours. To avoid the children influencing each other when making the drawings, they were divided up into smaller groups and spread out over the classroom.

In direct connection with producing the drawings, the children also had the opportunity to give oral comments on the experiences that they had given form to in the drawings, when they were each asked what he or she was thinking about when making the drawing. It is here essential to note that the question was not *what they had drawn*, but *what they were thinking about* when the drawings were being made.

But what can a drawing tell? According to Nordström (1991) a picture can be regarded as a sort of language which can be interpreted, and van Manen (1990) argues that an object of art can be seen as a text. This text does not consist of a verbal language, but nevertheless it is a language and it has its own grammar, and therefore a drawing can tell us something. Dewey (1991) emphasises that language includes much more than oral and written speech. He mentions for example paintings and visual pictures and illustrations. “... – *anything consciously employed as a sign is, logically, language*” (Dewey, 1991, p 170). Consequently, it is advantageous, in a study about experiences, to use more forms of expression than only verbal or written language.

The analysis of the drawings tried to elucidate the meaning of the experiences which the children gave form to. During the analysis the drawings and the subsequent oral comments were viewed as a whole, and when the concept of “drawings” is used, it also comprises the oral comments.

FINDINGS

According to the analytical procedure, all the drawings were analysed repeatedly and thoroughly. Each drawing was viewed as a unit where qualitative similarities and differences, patterns and structures were noticed. The patterns and structures that were noticed were then combined in different themes, taking the central and common characteristics of the patterns and structures as the point of departure.

During the analysis of the drawings five different themes emerged, which are presented without any order of precedence.

The themes are – *experiences focusing on;*

- *tasks*
- *the future*
- *relationship*
- *time*
- *health*

Experiences focusing on tasks

The drawings within this theme depict different situations where the tasks of the school are in focus. It can, for example, be a drawing depicting the school's textbooks on different subjects, or home work. Or as one of the children expresses it: "I think about the text book in maths, and that one got tested on it." But it can also be a drawing depicting a teaching and learning situation in a classroom (figure 1). In this drawing the teacher has the main responsibility for the learning situation by asking the question, while the child has to answer. The question in the drawing is also a question that has a correct answer.

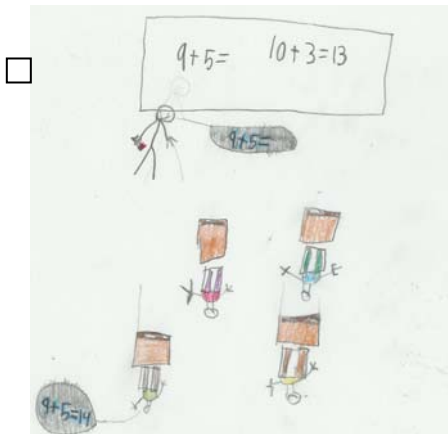


Figure 1. A classroom situation.

Experiences focusing on the future

Some of the drawings in this theme have text written on them, stressing that school in some way is important for the future. One drawing has a written text in the left corner saying: "*In school you learn to get on in life*". Another way of depicting the future is to depict what the children think they are going to work with when finishing school, as in figure 2. This drawing depicting a possible occupation in the future, in this case as a reindeer herder.



Figure 2. A drawing depicting the future in form of a possible occupation.

Experiences focusing on relationship

The drawings within this theme depict different types of social relations within the school, and focusing, for example, on relations between friends as very important. One of the children is saying, *“I’m thinking of my friends”*, in connection to the drawing and in one of the drawings it is written *“One needs to have friends”* (figure 3). Another important relationship in school is the relation between the teacher and the children, as one drawing depicts.



Figure 3. *“One needs to have friends”* is written on the drawing.

Experiences focusing on time

This theme comprises drawings depicting different dimension of time. In the drawings this can, for example, be represented by a variety of watches and clocks. The time-dimensions can also be depicted by an alarm clock, which rings early in the morning as one of the drawings below depicts (figure 4). *“I’m thinking of ... I have to get up so early in the morning to go to school”*, as one child expresses it.

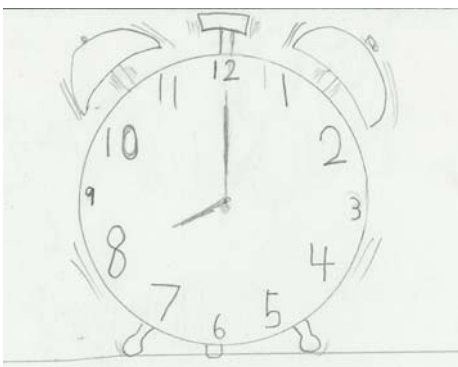


Figure 4. An alarm clock ringing in the morning.

Experiences focusing on health

Within this theme are the drawings which depict different health promoting activities, for example sports activities as swimming or jogging, or just to be out doors in the forest (figure 5). One of the children expresses it as: *“You learn in school, and it is so good to have sports, swimming lessons and take a jog on the jogging track”*. The drawings in this theme are also depicting lunch time, stressing the importance of having school lunch every day¹, but also the break when the children are eating fruit. *“I’m thinking about the break at 9 o’clock in the morning when we have a fruit.”*



Figure 5. Different types of health promoting activities.

¹ In Sweden every student between the age of 6-19 is provided with hot free school lunches every school day.

DISCUSSION

It can be established that the results which emerged, in the form of the Sámi children's experience of school, indicate that the children's experiences have many nuances. If these multi-faceted experiences are to be taken seriously by the school, it is necessary to take them into account in teaching situations. However, let me highlight and discuss the children's experiences of school as a place for health.

The children in this study stressed social relations within school. Relations between friends are experienced as very important and emphasised in a very distinct way. Good relations between children in a school are in fact very important for the climate of psycho-social wellbeing. If the relationship between children in a school is experienced as not good, it can be a source of, for example, bullying, which in turn affects the psycho-social wellbeing in a negative way. But it is not only relations between children that are important in a school. The children also emphasised the relation between the teacher and the children as essential in school. As a consequence of this one can state that the teacher as a person became very important for the children's experiences of school. These findings are in agreement with an earlier study concerning pupils' experiences of school (Alerby, 2003).

Within the everyday life of a school there are many examples of time being valued and used as a measure of the school's activities. The school clock plays a major and a central role within the school, and the ringing of the school bell makes thousands of children and teachers change places so that everything happens in the right place and at the right time (Westlund, 1996). This fact influences in a clear way the children's experiences of the school, and in many of the drawings made by the children in this study clocks of different types are depicted. The importance of time, and that clocks and the time influence the children's life not only in school but also at home, for example in the mornings when the alarm clock is ringing, are depicted in one of the drawings (see figure 4). The time, or the lack of time, is a source of stress, which in turn can affect the health in a negative way.

In agreement with earlier studies (Alerby, 1998, 2000), children and young people within the school expressed thoughts that focused on their lack of time, for example to accomplish school-work, and claimed that this was stressing them.

Other aspects of health within school, as these children emphasised, are for example sports activities, such as swimming or jogging, but also to be outdoors in the forest. These activities are very important as health promoting activities. Another aspect of promoting health in school is the fact the children are provided with hot free school lunches every day, but also that they have breaks when the children are eating fruit. Health promoting activities are something the children in this study emphasise both in the drawings and their oral comments.

Finally, the school's mission is to educate the children and young people in its society, so that they may reach the level of knowledge that the Government has stipulated by law. But the mission is also to improve fundamental values such as people's inviolability, the freedom and integrity of the individual, the equal value of people, and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable. These aspects of the school mission are essential for the psych-social wellbeing of a school.

The task of educating the citizens of Sweden is described in the text of the schools' management documents: educational legislation, curricula and municipal school planning documents; and these documents stress the importance of taking children's experiences as a starting point in teaching situations (SFS, 1995:63; The Ministry of Education, 1994, 1998). One question to ask is, however, what a teaching situation ought to or must be like in order to really take children's experiences into account.

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PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE MURMANSK REGION

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INTRODUCTION

The ¹ article presents the results of investigation that was held in 2004 in Murmansk secondary school №3, Lovozero secondary school and boarding-school. The results will be used by multiprofessional working groups for elaborating measures to improve school activities in the specified directions. The material was collected through surveying the pupils of the 8th, 9th, and 10th forms, their parents and teachers at Murmansk secondary school №3 (in October 2004), Lovozero boarding-school and secondary school (in September 2004) and it was processed in computer statistic program SPSS in October and November 2004 by the researchers of MSPU Chair of Social Pedagogy and Social Work.

Altogether 341 answers were given by the pupils: 51,9% (177 children) were boys, 48,1% (164 children) were girls. The following national groups were represented: 16,4% (56 children) were Sámi, 16,4% (56 children) were Komi, 67,2% (229 children) represented other national groups.

Family conditions of the pupils turned out to be rather stable. Most of them live in complete families: 218 pupils (63,9%) noted that the father lives with them. 36,1 % (123 pupils) live without the father. 93,5 % (319 pupils) noted the mother in the family. The material well-being of a family was noted as very good by 16,7% (57 pupils). Most of the pupils (55,7% - 190 children) rated the material conditions of their families as quite enough. 5,3% (18 pupils) are not satisfied with the material security of their families.

¹ The statistical differences between the schools have not been calculated. Therefore it is not possible to make conclusions about the significance of the comparisons. (note by editors)

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESOURCES

Contacts with close people

Contacts with close people were investigated through question № 38, in which the pupils were suggested to assess how easy it is to talk about important things with close people. The results of the survey show that the level of confidence in mother is rather high: 47,8% (163 pupils) noted that it was very easy to communicate with the mother, 128 pupils (37,5%) answered «easy», at the same time 10% have difficulties in communicating with the mother (9,4%).

The process of communication with the father is complex for 16,7% of the children, very complex – for 5.9%, it is very easy to communicate with the father only for 20,8 % of the children, easy – for 32,6% .

Communication with elder brothers and sisters is assessed in the following way: for 15,5% it is very easy to communicate with the elder brother, for 16,1% it is easy, 6,5% rated this relations «complex», 3,2% - as «very complex». A little more than a half do not have elder brothers or sisters: 58,4% do not have elder brothers, 56,3% do not have elder sisters.

It is easy and very easy to communicate with the best friends to the absolute majority of the children. This answer was given by 87,1% of the respondents. Thus, there is no deficiency in communication with children of the same age. Only 5% of pupils noted that they did not have friends. At the same time it is easier to communicate with friends of the same gender (81,8%), more than a half of the respondents (63,6%) noted that it was easy or very easy to communicate with the friends of the opposite sex. 12% of the children have no friends of the opposite sex.

Free time and contacts with friends

35,5% of the respondents communicate with their friends intensively and spend 7 days of the week with them. 26,1% of the respondents spend 6 days a week with their friends. Only 3,8% of

the pupils seldom communicate with their friends – 1 day in a week. At the same time there are slight differences between the represented educational establishments in Murmansk and Lovozero: 50% of the respondents from Lovozero boarding-school spend 7 days a week together, somewhat less than half of the children from the boarding school spend all the evenings together. At Lovozero secondary school most pupils also spend all day and evening with their friends (84 pupils out of 132 spend together 6 - 7 days a week, 85 pupils spend together 6-7 evenings a week). At Murmansk secondary school more than a half of the pupils (132 out of 155 pupils) spend 6-7 days a week with their friends, but less than a half (77 pupils out of 155) spend 6-7 evenings together.

Only a small number of children and adolescents do not communicate with their friends: 3 persons at Lovozero secondary school and 3 persons at the boarding-school do not communicate with friends by day, 1 person at Lovozero school and 2 persons at the boarding-school do not communicate with friends in the evening.

At Murmansk secondary school № 3 the figures are: 12 pupils do not spend even a day with their friends, 25 pupils spend their evenings without friends.

Peer-pupils

During the analysis different ways of communication were taken into consideration, including communication by telephone and by e-mail. The results were the following. More than half of the respondents 61,3% (209 pupils) communicate by the specified way every day, 17,6% (60 pupils) communicate by telephone and by e-mail almost seldom, in total 1-2 days in a week. In this question certain differences between educational institutions were observed. In particular, only 26 children out of 54 (less than a half) at the boarding-school communicate by the specified way every day, whereas these figures considerably exceed 50% at schools: 95 persons out of 132 – at Lovozero secondary school, 88 persons – at Murmansk secondary school №3.

Feeling of loneliness

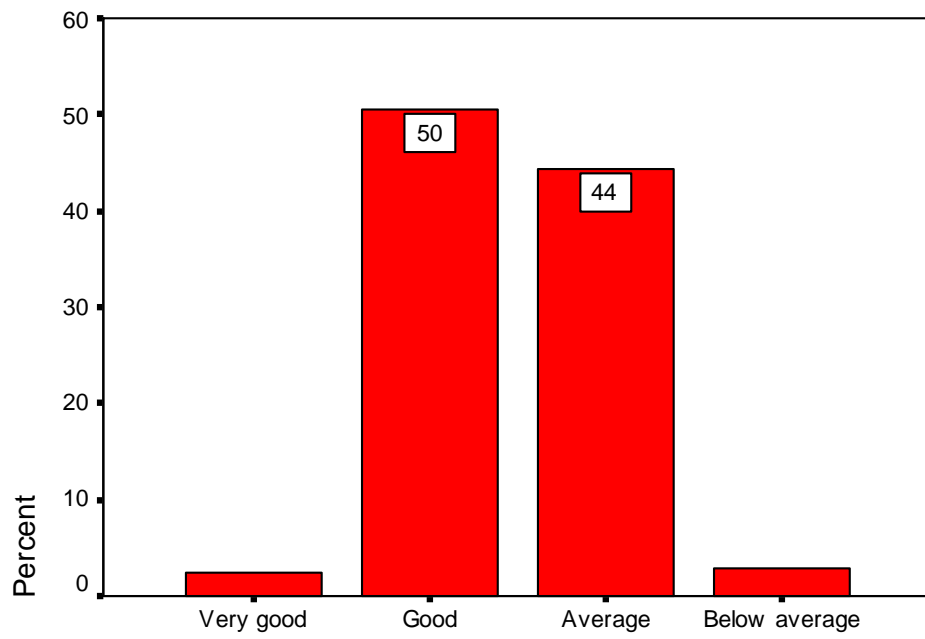
55,1% sometimes have the feeling of loneliness, 31,4% have never experienced the feeling of loneliness, while 2,9% always feel lonely, 10,3% - often feel lonely. As the comparative analysis shows, the majority of pupils who have never had the feeling of loneliness are from Murmansk secondary school №3 – 59 pupils out of 155. For comparison, only 7 pupils from the boarding school have never felt lonely. At Lovozero secondary school this number constitutes 41 persons out of 132.

Evaluation of academic achievements

Only 2.3% (8 pupils) rate their achievements at school “very good”, 50,4% (172 pupils) – “good”, 44,3% (151 pupils) – “average”, 2,9% (10 pupils) – “below average”. At the boarding-school more than a half of the respondents (32 pupils out of 54) rated their achievements “satisfactory”, only 19 pupils – “good”, 1 person – “excellent”. At schools the most number of pupils assess their progress as good: 76 pupils (out of 132) - at Lovozero secondary school and 77 (out of 155) – at Murmansk secondary school.

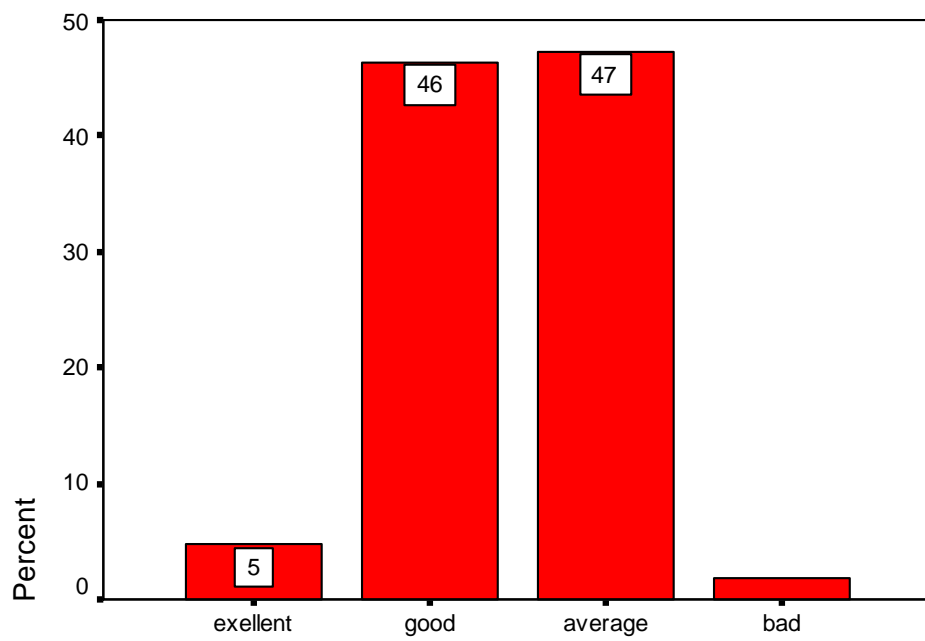
Question № 35 was aimed at evaluation of ability to studies. On the whole, the most number of pupils – 47,2% (161 pupils) - rate their ability “average”. Nearly the same number of pupils - 46,3% (158 pupils) - rate their abilities “good”. Only few pupils rate their capacities “excellent” - 4,7% (16 pupils), “bad” – 1,8% (6 pupils). The number of pupils who rated their abilities “excellent” or “bad” is equally low at all institutions. At schools nearly the same number of pupils rates their abilities “good”: 67 out of 155 in Murmansk.

Academic achievement



Academic achievement

Capasities to studies



capasities to studies

Question № 48 suggests that pupils should evaluate their abilities in the teacher's opinion: what does the teacher think about your academic achievements? Most pupils think that the teacher rates their abilities "average" – 51,3% (175 pupils). The answer "good" was given by 36,7% (125 pupils). The number of extreme answers is insignificant: "very good" – 8,2% (28 pupils), "below average" – 3,8% (13 pupils). Thus, the pupils' point of view and their representations about teacher's opinion do not coincide: 50,4% of the pupils rated their abilities "good", at the same time, only 36,7% of them rated their abilities in the teacher's opinion "good".

According to evaluation of their abilities it is "a little difficult" for most pupils to do tasks at school - 46,6% (159 pupils), «sometimes difficult" – for 33,1% (113 pupils). The answer, that means the absence of any difficulties «not at all difficult", was given by 17% of the respondents. At the same time 3,2% (11 pupils) answered that it was very difficult to do school tasks. There were no significant differences between institutions.

Attitude towards school was investigated through question № 49: what do you think about your school? The results showed that most pupils liked their school – 59,9% (204 pupils). 10,3% (35 pupils) do not like their school at all. In all the three educational establishments the majority of pupils like their school, the percent of those who like their school very much is higher at Murmansk secondary school – 8,2% (28 pupils). 4,1% of Lovozero school pupils, 1,5% of the boarding-school pupils and 4,7% of Murmansk school pupils do not like to go to school.

Children's perception of the future

The next block of questions is connected with the children's perception of the future. *The first parameter* is the chance of getting higher education – revealed significant differences between the educational establishments. The majority of pupils who consider their chance of getting higher education "high", study at Murmansk secondary school №3 – 31%; the least number of pupils – at Lovozero boarding-school – 11,1%. 3,7% of the boarding-school pupils consider their chance of getting higher education

“very low”, while at the secondary schools of Murmansk and Lovozero these numbers are 3,2% and 2,3% respectively.

The survey contained not only the question, connected with higher education, but also the question, reflecting the chance of getting secondary education. The majority of the boarding-school pupils connect their future with getting secondary education and rate their chance “average” - 42,6%. 31,5% of them rated their chance “high”. The same situation is presented at Murmansk school №3: the answer “high” was given by - 34,2%, the answer “average” - 42,6%. In comparison with schools the most pupils, that consider their chance in this category “very low” or “low”, are from the boarding-school.

The third parameter of this block is the chance of creating a happy family. The scale is the same: from “very high” till “very low”. The considerable number of school №3 pupils (89%) rates their chance of creating a happy family “very high” or “high”. No pupil from this school noted that the chance of creating a happy family was “very low”, the answer “low” was given by 6%. The analysis clearly demonstrates the importance of this parameter for the pupils. The future success is closely connected with an opportunity to create a happy family.

At Lovozero secondary school and boarding-school practically the same number of respondents (37%) rated the chances of creating a happy family “high” (at Lovozero school this number is 0,1 higher). In comparison with the boarding-school more pupils from Lovozero secondary school consider their chances of creating a happy family “very high” – 39,4% while at the boarding-school it is 25,4%. The answer “very low” was given by 1,5 % of Lovozero school pupils and 1,9% of the boarding-school pupils.

The last parameter of the block is an opportunity of keeping a good health. The majority of the pupils at Murmansk secondary school №3 rate this opportunity “high” and “very high” - 39,4% and 40,6%. At the boarding-school the percentage is considerably lower - 31,5% and 25,9%. Lovozero secondary school occupies the intermediate position – 37,9% and 34,1%. It is noteworthy that the answer “very low” was given only by pupils from school № 3 and constituted a small percentage – 1,3%.

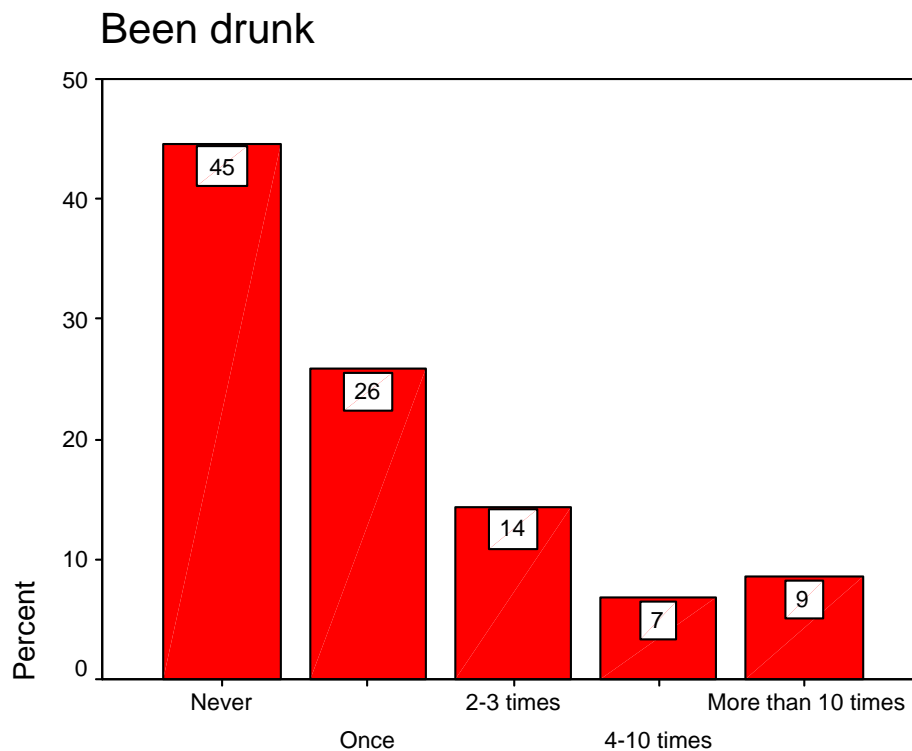
HABITS THAT INFLUENCE HEALTH

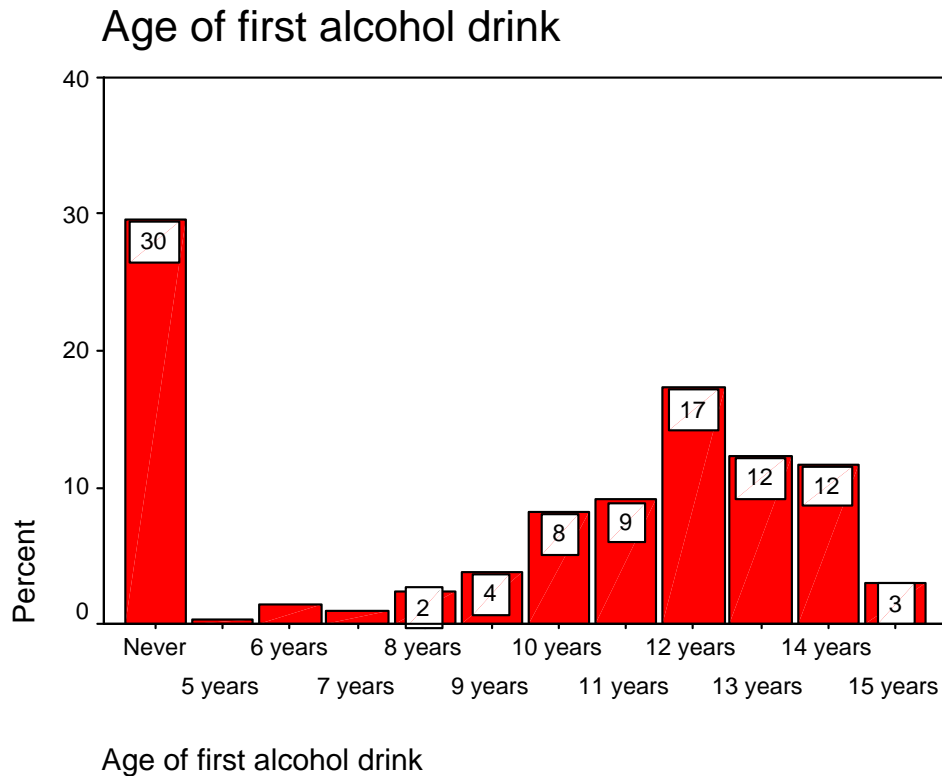
Use of addictive substances

Use of addictive substances was investigated through questions about alcohol, drugs, and smoking. 68,3% of the respondents have tried smoking and 23% of the children smoke daily. The difference between schools is great: at the boarding-school there were 39% of daily smoking pupils, while at Murmansk and Lovozero secondary schools - 20 % and 21 % respectively.

55% of the pupils have been intoxicated at least once. At the same time the number of pupils who have been intoxicated at least once changes in accordance with the location of the school and its type: in Murmansk - 49 % of the pupils, and in Lovozero – 70% at the boarding-school, 57 % - at school.

The answers about the first try of alcohol were absolutely different: from 5 to 15 years old. The highest rate falls on the adolescence period: 17,3 % of the respondents first tried alcohol at the age of 12.





The pupils take different alcoholic drinks: most often - beer (66,6%), then – gin-tonic (50,4%), more seldom - wine (42,5%) and vodka (24,3%). The frequent use of beer, which is a light alcoholic drink, is worrying: 17 % of the children drink it not less than once a week.

Use of drugs

10% of all the respondents have confessed at least single use of drugs. The highest rate of use belongs to the first tries (5%). Then the number of use goes down. This reflects the natural process of choosing further strategy of behavior by a child – to go on taking drugs or not. As we can see, 5% of the children make a positive decision, 5% - a negative one. However, 86% of the pupils consider that many young people take drugs.

Eating habits

The majority of the pupils from the represented establishments have breakfast, lunch and supper 5 days a week. 18,5% of the boarding-school pupils never have breakfast, at school this number is lower - 13,6% at Lovozero school and 15,5% at Murmansk school №3. 5,6% children at the boarding-school, 4,5% - at school №3 and 3,8% - at Lovozero school never have lunch. 5,6% children at the boarding-school, 3,2% - at school №3 and 2,3% - at Lovozero school never have supper. Thus, the eating habits turned out to be rather healthy for the majority of respondents.

SYMPTOMS OF CHILDREN'S STATE OF HEALTH

Satisfaction with one's life situation

The level of satisfaction was measured on a scale of 1-10, presented in question 10. Few pupils are absolutely satisfied with their life situation: only 3,7% of pupils at the boarding-school and equal numbers at schools – 25,8%. The extreme rate (1 on the scale), testifying to complete dissatisfaction, was not chosen by Lovozero school pupils, but constitutes 1,9% at the boarding-school and 1,3% at Murmansk school.

In question № 46 the pupils were asked to evaluate their *attitude to life* in general. Nearly the same number of pupils at schools feel happy, the difference was 0,1%. The number of “happy” children at the boarding-school is considerably lower – 24,1%. Accordingly, the most number of pupils with many problems is at the boarding-school – 9,3%. 50% of the pupils at the boarding-school feel that “not everything is well” in their life, such children are less lucky in comparison with other pupils.

Evaluation of one's own health

The children rated their health in the following way: 54,8% consider it good, 29% - fair, 13,5% - excellent, 2,6% - bad. 8% of Lovozero school rated their health "bad", while in Murmansk the number was 2,6%.

Signs of problems

Question № 43 was to measure possible symptoms of psychic depression among the pupils. The majority of the pupils seldom or never have headaches, only the small number of pupils have headaches every day: 5,6% at the boarding-school, 4,5% at Lovozero school, 3,9% at Murmansk school № 3.

The answers about dizziness and insomnia distributed practically in the same way. The majority of the pupils rarely or never have this state. 3% of pupils at Lovozero school, 3,9% at Murmansk school and 7,4% at the boarding school often have sleeplessness.

The indicators of the percentage of nervous strain and irritability differ considerably. For example, only 29,6% of the pupils at Lovozero boarding-school have rarely had irritability. 24,1% of them experience it almost every month. 16,7% of the boarding-school pupils have irritability every day. More than a half of Lovozero school pupils seldom have irritability – 59,1%. Only 15,2% of the pupils from this school have this state every month, 8,3% - almost every day.

More than a half of the school pupils rarely have nervous strain (59,1% - at Lovozero school, 56,8% - at Murmansk school №3). This indicator constitutes 46,3% at the boarding-school of Lovozero. Nearly every day nervous strain is experienced by 11,1% of the boarding school pupils, 8,4% of Murmansk school pupils № 3, 5,3% of Lovozero school pupils.

PARENTS

Living conditions

The aim of this part of the survey was to find out the factors, influencing the general conditions of the parents: housing, social infrastructure, conditions of labour, the level of health service, material well-being of the family, the peculiarities of ecological and political situation in the area of residence and others.

Most of the parents (48,6%) are satisfied with their living conditions. 40% of the questioned parents at Murmansk school №3 rated their living conditions “good”. While evaluating living conditions by the parents of pupils from Lovozero boarding-school there were no extreme negative answers – “very bad” and “bad”. At Murmansk secondary school № 3 5,4% of the respondents are extremely dissatisfied with their living conditions (2,7% - “very bad”, 2,7% - “bad”).

67,7% of the respondents from Murmansk school № 3 are satisfied with the level of infrastructure in the area of residence, while only 16% of Lovozero dwellers rated the level of infrastructure “good” and “very good”.

The evaluation of ecological situation in the region is on the whole satisfactory. Lovozero dwellers did not use the ratio “very bad” or “bad”. 44% of them are satisfied with the environment and for Murmansk residents this number is 59,5%.

The conditions of labor are, to a great extent, satisfactory for Lovozero dwellers: 52% rated them “good”, 8% - “very good”. At the same time 35,1% of Murmansk dwellers rated conditions of labor “good”.

To a great extent, parents from Murmansk are pleased with the level of salary: 48,6% of them rated their income “satisfactory”, 35,1% - “good”. In Lovozero these indicators were 40% and 28% respectively. It is noteworthy that the answer “very good” was not given. The extreme evaluation – “very bad” was given by 4% of respondents from Lovozero and 2,7% of respondents from Murmansk. Dwellers of Murmansk - a bigger city in comparison with Lovozero - also have more opportunities to use the money.

There are considerable differences in evaluation of the level of health services in the region. 64,9% of Murmansk dwellers rated this level “satisfactory”, while in Lovozero this number is 20%. Respectively, the extreme negative evaluation was among Lovozero dwellers: “bad level” – 44%, “very bad” – 24%. Only 2,7% of parents from Murmansk school №3 consider the level of health services very bad.

Leisure, sport and recreation facilities are considerably more available for Murmansk dwellers. Half of the respondents from Murmansk (51,4%) rated the recreation facilities “good”, in Lovozero this indicator was 24%. At the same time 24% of Lovozero dwellers rated these facilities “bad”, in Murmansk - 5,4% of parents. Murmansk dwellers also have more opportunities for arts: 54,1% of parents from Murmansk consider these opportunities “good”, in Lovozero this number is 20%.

The political situation in the region satisfies 48,6% of parents from Murmansk and 40% of parents from Lovozero. Nearly the same number of respondents consider the political situation in the region good: 44% in Lovozero and 43,2% in Murmansk. The answer “very good” was not given at all, while the answer “very bad” was not given only in Lovozero.

Most parents at Murmansk school №3 feel socially and legally protected – 73%. In Lovozero 68% of parents feel socially and legally protected. While 32% of Lovozero dwellers are not socially and legally protected, in Murmansk this number is 27%.

In the background of the specified indicators the category of freedom seems interesting. 48% of the respondents from Lovozero and 48,6% of the respondents from Murmansk consider the guarantee of freedom of their political views and religious beliefs «good».

Constituents of personal welfare

In question № 4 the following indicators were rated on a scale of 1-5: work, relations in family, children (their health and well-being), food, rest, material well-being, communication with friends, social status, life perspective, love, sexual life, favorite occupation, health.

The considerable number of the respondents are satisfied with their work: 72% in Lovozero and 51,3% in Murmansk. 4% of Lovozero dwellers are absolutely displeased with their work, in Murmansk there was no such an answer.

The comparative analysis of data shows that a more favorable family situation is in Lovozero: 88% are satisfied with the relations in the family, in Murmansk this number is 86,4%. Among respondents there was no one who was absolutely dissatisfied with the family relations.

In full correspondence with the above-mentioned parameter 72% of Lovozero dwellers are satisfied with their children's health and general well-being, in Murmansk this number was 83,8%. 4% of respondents from Lovozero and 2,7% of respondents from Murmansk are dissatisfied with the level of their children's health and well-being.

The level of material well-being fully satisfies 12% of Lovozero dwellers (no respondent from Murmansk gave such an answer). 44% of Lovozero dwellers and 37,8% of Murmansk dwellers are satisfied with their material security "to a certain extent". 8% in Lovozero and 5,4% in Murmansk are absolutely dissatisfied with the level of their material well-being.

Communication with their friends, as the data of the survey show, is more intensive in Murmansk, where 86,4% of respondents are satisfied with their communication with friends. This parameter constitutes 72% among Lovozero respondents. In Murmansk no one gave the answer "dissatisfied" or "absolutely dissatisfied". In Lovozero the answer "absolutely dissatisfied" was not given either.

The social status satisfies most of the respondents. Only 12% of Lovozero residents and 5,4% of Murmansk residents are not satisfied with the social status.

At the same time 51,4% of parents from Murmansk are pleased with their life perspectives, in Lovozero this parameter is 40%. The life perspectives do not satisfy 28% of Lovozero dwellers and 10,8% of Murmansk dwellers. No respondent from Lovozero gave the answer "absolutely dissatisfied", while in Murmansk this number was 2,7%.

Nearly the same correlation is observed in evaluation of one's own health. 48% of Lovozero dwellers and 45,9% of Murmansk

dwellers are satisfied with their state of health. 12% and 10,8% of respondents from Lovozero and Murmansk respectively are dissatisfied with their state of health.

Signs of problems

This part of the survey was meant to study the respondents' opinion about the feeling of anxiety, nervousness, exhaustion and tension – of their own and the members of their family.

37,8% of Murmansk dwellers and 16% of Lovozero residents consider themselves nervous. 84% of Lovozero respondents and 62,1% of Murmansk respondents deny this statement (“I am a nervous person”).

52% of Lovozero dwellers and 48,6% of Murmansk dwellers are anxious about their work. The process of communication is strained for 8% of respondents from Lovozero and 10,8% of respondents from Murmansk. For most respondents (92% in Lovozero and 72,9% in Murmansk) this process does not arouse any tension.

The majority of the respondents deny the presence of strenuous relations in family. Only 12% of Lovozero dwellers and 16,2% of Murmansk dwellers state that their family relations are strained.

As a result, 24% of Lovozero respondents and 27% of Murmansk respondents feel physically and mentally exhausted at the end of the day. Most respondents did not feel exhausted at the end of the working day.

THE TEACHERS

General condition

The teachers answered the questions of the same survey as the parents. During processing the data the following results were received. The majority of Lovozero teachers are satisfied with how the previous year passed. At the boarding-school 72,4% of teachers expressed their satisfaction, at Lovozero secondary school – 100% of teachers. At the same time 59,2% of teachers at Murmansk secondary school are satisfied with their previous year.

In accordance with the above-mentioned data the teachers of Lovozero secondary school note that their mood and state of mind did not worsen (100%). At the boarding-school this indicator was 62,1%, at Murmansk secondary school № 3 – 51,8%. 77,6% of all the respondents rated their life *successful*. The statement *I am a happy person* was ticked by all respondents from Lovozero secondary school (100%), 74,2% of teachers of the boarding-school and 74,1% of the teachers of Murmansk school № 3. 94,8% of the respondents find sources of pleasure and support in their life.

Half of the respondents at Lovozero secondary school consider that their life has improved. The same point of view was reflected in the answers of 37,4% of boarding-school teachers and 59,2% Murmansk secondary school teachers. At the same time the presence of certain problems is considered a natural state of events. 50% of Lovozero school teachers, 27,6% boarding-school teachers and 37% Murmansk school teachers agreed with the statement *much fails*.

Living conditions

By answering question № 3 the teachers evaluated their living conditions. They were suggested to evaluate 13 parameters on a scale of 1-5. The teachers of Lovozero secondary school turned out to be the most satisfied with their housing conditions: 50% rated them “satisfactory” and 50% - “very good”. The answers “very bad” or “bad” were not chosen by Lovozero school teach-

ers. At the same time 1,7% of all the respondents rated their housing “very bad”, and 3,4% - “bad”.

The level of infrastructure in the area satisfies 37,9% of the teacher questioned, 36,2% consider them “good”, 12,1% - “very good”. At the same time Lovozero teachers are more satisfied with the development of infrastructure than Murmansk teachers.

Ecological conditions satisfy more than half of the respondents: 53,4% consider the state of environment “satisfactory”, 24,1% - “good”, 6,9% - “very good”.

All the teachers (100%) of Lovozero school are pleased with their conditions of labor. The absolute majority of all the respondents share this point of view. Only 3,4% of all the teachers consider their conditions of labor “bad”. There was no answer “very bad”.

In the social and economical situation of present-day Russia the teachers' income is extremely low. The materials of the survey testify to the statistics – only 1,7% of the respondents rated their income “very good”. At the same time the answer “very good” was chosen by 3,7% of Murmansk teachers, the teachers from other educational establishments did not mention this answer at all. 50% of Lovozero school, 13,8% boarding-school teachers and 33,3% of Murmansk school teachers rated their income “bad”.

The level of health services in the area does not satisfy the dwellers of Lovozero – they gave no answers “good” or “very good”. 50% of school teachers consider it “bad”, 50% - very bad. Boarding-school teachers agree with this statement - 20,7% rated the level of health services “very bad”, 55,2% - “bad”. At Murmansk secondary school № 3 55,6% of teachers consider the level of health services “satisfactory”.

In evaluation of the political situation in the area the extreme answers (“very bad” and “very good”) were not used. 60,3% of the respondents are satisfied with the political situation. Only 5,2% of the teachers are dissatisfied with the political situation, that again testifies to the fact of the Russian teachers' political indifference.

At the same time all Lovozero school teachers, 31% of boarding-school teachers and 33,3% of Murmansk school teachers feel socially and legally unprotected. Opportunities for political activity, freedom of religious beliefs are rated “satisfactory”

by all Lovozero school teachers (100%), 20,7% of boarding-school teachers and 22,2% of Murmansk school teachers. The answer “very bad” was not used.

Constituents of personal welfare

In question № 4 they listed the spheres that the general condition may depend on. It is recommended to use a scale of 1-5.

The most favorable situation is at Lovozero secondary school. 100% of the teachers are satisfied with their work and family relations. 50% of them are satisfied with their children's health and level of well-being. At the same time 8,6% of the respondents are fully satisfied with their work, 37% of them are fully satisfied with the relations in their family.

The state of health and general well-being of their children arouse the anxiety of 12,1% of the respondents. On the whole 41,3% of the respondents are satisfied with the children's state of health and well-being.

The problems, connected with material insecurity and general anxiety, are compensated, to a certain extent, by communication with friends and close people. 55,2% of the respondents are satisfied with communication, 22,4% - fully satisfied. 20,7% of the respondents are satisfied with communication with close people to a certain extent.

The social status satisfies the majority of the teachers questioned. Only 1,7% of the respondents are “absolutely dissatisfied” with their social status, 13,8% - “dissatisfied”.

Against this background 25,9% of the respondents are dissatisfied with their life perspectives, 7% are fully dissatisfied. Only 6,9% of the teachers are fully satisfied with their life perspectives.

Signs of problems

The troubles were investigated through question № 5, in which it was necessary to express one's attitude towards the listed statements. All the teachers from Lovozero school consider themselves nervous, but in other institutions this indicator is lower. 15,5% of the respondents do not consider themselves nervous.

Accordingly, all the teachers from Lovozero school and the majority of other teachers experience nervous strain. Nearly all the teachers are anxious about their work to some extent. The work does not arouse anxiety only among 1,7% of the respondents. For comparison - 85,2% of Murmansk school № 3 teachers worry about their work.

The teachers of Lovozero secondary school do not feel anxious about the relations in their family. 27,6% of the boarding-school teachers and 37% of school № 3 teachers worry about their family relations.

50% of the respondents feel physically and mentally exhausted at the end of the day. Only the teachers of Lovozero secondary school fully deny this fact.

As a way to get rid of tension the following activities are actual: communication (26,6%), walk (16,7%), musical impressions (15,7%). Less popular are: autogene training (0,7%), meals (5,3%), alcoholic drinks (5,8%). Sports, smoking, taking medicines cover the intermediate position.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of research, represented in the article, are the ground for organization of multiprofessional groups, oriented towards development of school communities. Researchers of the project suggest a general description of problems, which can be corrected by the teachers of the above-mentioned schools.

Elaboration of transnational model as a final result of the project will let define new directions in the work of specialists, involved in the project.

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LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS, LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND WELL-BEING: A STUDY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN FINNMARK 2005

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INTRODUCTION

Finnmark University College is participating in the ArctiChildren Project, a research and development project carried out in the Northern areas of Finland, Russia, Norway and Sweden (The Barents Region). The purpose is to study the life situation of children at primary school age, assessing similarities and differences among the participants. In stage one of the projects articles on different subjects from the research will be published. This article will present and discuss results only from Finnmark, and the main theme is learning achievement and well-being.

METHODS

Case Sample

In Finnmark data was collected in 2005 among 282 students 13 to 15 years old randomly selected on school level. The data collection was based on the survey method, and the research was to run a new test on the World Health Organization (WHO) survey; “Health Behaviour among School-aged Children” (HBSC), (King *et al.*, 1996, Torsheim, *et al* 2004). It is a well-reputed questionnaire used every fourth year the last 20 years in together 41 countries. The questionnaire consists of about 200 questions/variables including background data as age, district of living etc. The questionnaire is changed and adapted every time it has been in use, and it is divided in two parts. The one consists of questions asked only in the participating countries and the other is common questions asked in every participation country in the ArctiChildren Project.

Analyzing methods and reliability

While this study has not performed an independent evaluation of the data in terms of validity and reliability, we have chosen to rely on the fact that earlier evaluations of the questionnaire have found it satisfactory in these respects (Samdal, 1998, p. 36).

The coding and of the data is based on the international codebook: HBSC Protocol for 2001/02 Survey, Appendix 7. This makes it possible to do analyze in a common way.

The questionnaire addresses the following topics:

- Contextual factors such as demographic data, familial and social background
- Individual and social conditions, e.g. school environment, living conditions, familial circumstances and the relation to the pupil’s own body
- Health related issues such as physical activity, nutritional habits, the use of intoxicants, weight loss, etc.

- Sanitary conditions: the quality of life, symptoms of physical ailments and the pupil's evaluation of his/her own health

Central focus in this article will be the learning achievement: Which factors in the students environment are the best predictors on academic achievement?

The question answered by the pupils was "*How do you think your main teacher regards your results at school when compared to those of your classmates?*". The response alternatives were "Very good", "Good", "Average" or "Below average". Such answers thus only present the pupil's subjective notions and have not been measured against test results, the teacher's evaluation of the pupil or other relevant sources. In this way, the pupil's self-evaluation of education achievement functions as the dependent variable which is related to four conditions: school factors, environmental factors, the pupil's web of friends and parental factors.

The school factor contains information about the teacher's support, encouragement and friendliness, the experienced of justice/injustice of the pupil's treatment on behalf of the teacher, and the teacher's apparent degree of concern for the pupil's well-being.

The environmental factor addresses the pupil's feeling of well-being in general and at school, bullying, and the school environment in general.

The friend factor contains issues related to friends at or outside school, help from friends, and the time the pupil spends in the company of friends.

The parental factor contains information about the parents' occupation, whether they help the pupil with homework, and the extent to which they support their children in their educational efforts.

The analysis was carried out by means of different interrelated analytical methods such as cross tabulation and regression analysis, most of which will allow for useful comparisons between girls and boys. The standard analytical tool has been the statistical program SPSS version 13.0.

RESULTS

The school factor

The first issue to be addressed was the teacher's role in the pupil's educational achievement. This variable included five statements to be responded to: a) "I receive encouragement from the teacher", b) "I receive just treatment", c) "I get extra help", d) "The teacher is concerned for my well-being" and e) "the teacher is friendly". Only two variables, a) and d), displayed statistically significant results in terms of academic achievement. But this was only the case for the male respondents: none of the variables were significant in relation to the girls.

The next set of statements were "the pupils get to have influence on rules at school", "pupils are treated in a strict manner", "the school rules are just" and "I feel safe at school". The analysis shows that none of these variables bore any significant relation to the boys' achievements. The last three, however, were significant for the female respondents, who felt that safety and justice of treatment were important factors for achievement. In addition, they were able to perform well at school even when they experienced that they were being treated strictly.

Next, respondents answered the following statements: "I'm able to work at my own pace", "I get to decide on who is in my group", "the pupils decide how to use class time on their own initiative", "the students are told which assignments they are to do" and "the teacher decides who shall work together". None of these variables showed any significant correspondence with the academic achievement of either gender.

The next questions were: "too much work at school", "school work is difficult" and "school work is wearisome". Unsurprisingly, the high achievers found school work not difficult, a correspondence which displayed statistical significance in terms of both genders. The girls, moreover, responded that they found school work wearisome even when they achieved a great deal, while this correspondence was not significant for the male respondents.

The environmental factor

The fundamental statements to be responded to in this part were: “I enjoy going to school”, “I like being at school”, “there’s a great deal about school I don’t like”, “I wish I didn’t have to go to school” and “I like what we’re doing at school”. By itself, none of these questions carried a significant relationship to academic achievement, neither for boys nor girls. However, when the question about well-being was correlated with two other questions, “How do you like being at school at present?” and “indicate your general level of well-being on a scale from 0 to 10”, there were interesting results. In the case of the male respondents, both questions bore a significant relation to their educational achievement, but not for the girls.

The phenomenon of bullying was analyzed with reference to the questions “How often have you been bullied at school in the last months?” and “How many times have you been involved in bullying another student/other students at school in the last years?” In terms of the boys, performance at school was unrelated to bullying. In other words; the boys could do well at school even if bullied, but for the girls the opposite situation obtained. When it came to the relationship between school performance and being a bully the result was that boys could do well at school at the same time as they had a propensity for bullying other students. Girls who did well at school, however, rarely or never bullied other students.

The friend factor

The first statements to be addressed here were “the pupils in my class like being together”, “the pupils in my class are helpful” and “other students accept me as I am”. The analysis showed no statistically significant relationship between these statements and academic achievement. It nevertheless displayed interesting results when it came to friends in general. The question was: “How many close boy- or girlfriends do you have at present?” The analysis was divided so that a boy’s number of male and female friends could be considered separately, and vice versa. Here, the results indicate that girls with plenty of girl-friends performed

significantly better than boys with many friends of either gender, while the number of male friends that a girl might have did not significantly affect her school performance. However, there were no significant correlations between school performance and the frequency with which pupils met with friends, neither for boys nor girls.

The parental factor

Here, the pupils responded to statements such as “my parents are prepared to help if I have problems at school”, “my parents are willing to go to school to talk to the teachers”, “my parents encourage me to do well”, “my parents take an interest in what happens to me at school” and “my parents are willing to help me with my school work”. The first statement, on the parents’ readiness to help the pupil who experiences problems at school was the only result that carried statistical significance in relation to the academic achievement of both genders. The statement on the interest taken by parents in the pupil’s well-being at school displayed statistical significance only for the female respondents. There were no other instances of significant correlation in terms of any of the other statements.

Next, the pupils’ achievements at school were tested against the simple question of whether the parents were employed or not. Here, there was a significant correspondence, for both genders, between good study performance and the fact that the pupil’s mother had a job, while there was no such correspondence in the case of the father being employed. The employment rate was high for both parental genders: 85% of fathers and 83% of mothers were employed.

Further on, school performance was tested on the background of the social group of the parents, with “upper class”, “upper middle class”, “middle class”, “lower middle class”, “working class” and “unclassified” as the options. Here, there was a statistical coincidence between high level school performance and the parents background in the higher social layers.

School performance was also analyzed in terms of the family's financial situation, but there was no significant coincidence to be found, regardless of whether the economic situation was good or bad.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Conclusions that apply to both genders

At the outset, we were interested in the factors that could influence school performance to such an extent that they should be considered essential. The first issue we would like to emphasize is the competency of the parents and their social belonging. In our material, two variables were closely related to these factors. They bring out, on the one hand, the capacity of parents to help their children and, on the other, the socio-economic position of the parents. In the cases when the capacity to help was in place, and the socio-economic position high, the pupil's performance was affected positively, for boys as well as girls. Certainly, these results correspond very well with the common notion that pupils in the higher social strata display better academic achievements than others. Probably, the explanation is that parents with a solid academic background have a better capacity to help pupils do their homework. That social background may also be one of the better predictors of school performance, was confirmed in the PISA-investigation of 2000 (Lie *et al.*, 2001).

A theoretical framework for our observations can be found in the work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Along with many social scientists, he regards social inheritance as more decisive than biological heritage in determining a pupil's development, socialization and capacity to cope at school, and argues that young people with highly educated parents are very likely to follow in their footsteps (Bourdieu, 1995). Reading books, listening to classical music, going to the theatre etc. are symbols of "cultural capital". In our context, Bourdieu's concept can help us understand how model learning or learning by imitation may help the pupil access the school's ideology, working methods and demands, explaining

how the tacit “rules” lead to reproducing the conditions which decide who has access to education, social assets and perpetuate the power structures that make up society. While children raised in poorer social conditions will also possess a form of “cultural capital”, it is more likely to be one that does not fit in with the demands and ideology of the school. Thus, when children with a “ill-fitting” cultural capital start school they need to be re-socialized in order to values and skills which their parents have failed to instil in them. Clearly, the risk of failure is much greater for these pupils, who are often incapable of reaping the benefits of education and other social goods. Consequently, they may experience difficulties in finding employment, qualifying for further education etc.

The other relation documented here is that achievements at school correspond to the fact of pupil’s mother being employed outside the domestic sphere. The pupils responded either “yes” or “no” to the parents’ participation in working life, and in the cases where they confirmed the participation of the mother, the academic performance was considerably better for both genders, with no such correspondence with the father’s employment. While we are unlikely to find a simple explanation for this phenomenon, a few hypotheses are possible. In Norwegian history, women entered working life comparatively late, and women have more often than men low-salary employments. As a consequence, they may have become more conscious of the importance of higher education to get better jobs, with the result that many women pursue courses in higher education as adults. They are thus likely to demonstrate a positive attitude towards education and, in turn, to influence their children, inspiring them to work harder at school.

Those children who do well at school generally display an unproblematic relationship with school. For both genders there was a significant coincidence between good academic achievement and the notion that school work was not particularly difficult. While this may be an expected conclusion, we may well question whether high achievers are presented with enough challenges to deal with in the Norwegian school system, where bright students are probably capable of getting through primary education with a minimal effort. This may make them develop working habits and attitudes which risk becoming problematic at a later

stage in their education, or when they enter working life, when demands on effort and performance are raised considerably.

Conclusions that apply especially to boys

Boys who acquire good academic results appear to be more teacher-dependent than girls. They attain significantly better results both when they are encouraged by the teacher and when the teacher shows concern for their well-being, which was not the case with the female respondents. Furthermore, the performance of the boys seems to depend on their degree of well-being at school and life in general, while these correspondences were not significant for the girls. The international study by Oddrun Samdal and others in 2001-2 (Samdal *et al.*, 2004) emphasizes the positive correlation between academic achievement and the school's human environment. The average correlation was $r = 0,26$ for 11-year-olds, $r = 0,28$ for 13-year-olds and $r = 0,29$ for 15-year-olds (*ibid.*). In our study the correlation for 13-year-olds was $r = 0,20$, that for 14-year-olds $r = 0,13$ and that of 15-year-olds was $r = 0,22$.

Even if only two out of three age groups are immediately comparable to each other, the connection between well-being and academic achievement appears more complicated in our study. Looking at the genders separately, there is a tendency for boys to perform better if they feel good about being at school. This may indicate that the activities at school are less in line with the boys' interests than those of the girls, which, if true, may clearly cause some boys to dislike being at school, and consequently achieve less, whereas boys who are at ease at school achieve better results.

In addition, our study shows that boys in particular were able to perform well even when they were victims of bullying, and that boys who bullied others were also able to achieve good results. The opposite applied to the female respondent group, who were rarely able to achieve good results when they belonged to those who bullied other pupils.

Conclusions that apply especially to girls

The feeling of being safe while at school was an important factor for the achievement of the girl respondents: as a rule, girls who felt safe displayed better results than girls who did not. In terms of their relationship to school rules and regulations it was important for them that the rules were experienced as just, a factor which strongly influenced academic achievement. Then again, it was not very important whether such rules were understood as strict or not. The girls were able to perform well even if rules appeared as strict, while the boys' performance declined when they thought that school rules were overly harsh.

The study also shows that the girls experienced school work as wearisome and that this bore a significant relationship to achievement. A plausible interpretation of this fact is that the girls have a more conscientious attitude towards compulsory assignments and spend more time on school work, which also explains why they generally do better than boys.

A comparison with earlier studies

As mentioned, the WHO questionnaire used here has been put to use several times before. In Norway, Samdal performed an inquiry in 1993-4 with a selection of respondents from across the country (Samdal *et al.*, 1998). One of Samdal's main conclusions is that "[t]he findings indicate a significant strong correlation between students' satisfaction with school and their perceived academic achievement" (*ibid.*). In our study we have not encountered such a "strong correlation". Notwithstanding the slight difference in analytical approach between our two studies, it is the tendencies, I would argue, that really matter. In this study, this correspondence is significant only for the male respondents. Also, we have encountered differences in the view of how bullying affects academic achievement. Samdal argues that "[f]urthermore, perception of poor relations with fellow students, including an unsafe social school environment and bullying and social exclusion during breaks seems to be negatively related to students' perceived academic achievement" (*ibid.*).

In this study, we have found that academic achievement indeed appears quite unaffected by bullying. Pupils, especially boys, were able to perform well at school even when victims or perpetrators of bullying. Their feeling of safety was significant only for the girls' performance at school. Assuming that Samdal's investigation and this study can, and ought to, be compared, there is good reason to consider these issues. Since 10 years have passed since Samdal collected her data, we may have discovered significant traits in the development of primary education in this period.

In the last decade, two revisions of the primary school core curriculum have been implemented. The last one, in 2000, on the initiative of the former Minister of Education, Kristin Clemet, gave a great deal more importance to continuous examination and testing than before. Furthermore, exam results for different schools were made public. While this accentuated the well-known phenomenon that different schools are likely to get different results, it did little explain why this happens. Not least because the public debate on these issues gave very little room for a discussion of different factors and possible explanations for this state of things, schools began competing with each other. The result, that some schools came to think that the most important thing was that their students did better on tests than others, made many schools introverted, egotistical and self-centred. This attitude may have worn off on pupils, who appear to rank other values above cooperation, safety and friendship, considering other students to be competitors rather than co-operators.

Work on innovation and change

The framing issue for our use of the WHO data in this article was the question "what factors best predict educational achievement?" While this study is not able to give a full answer to this, a comparison with other investigations may yield some interesting correspondences. Several other studies corroborate our conclusion that achievement at school is connected to the educational level, cultural background and socioeconomic situation of the pupil's parents. In addition, we have observed that the school environ-

ment, the teacher and fellow students affect the pupil's level of achievement in different ways. The ArctiChildren project is both a research and development venture, and since the different articles to come out of it will address different challenges faced by schools, they may come to constitute a viable point of departure for development work at individual schools. Many of the discussions have the potential to challenge schools to question their way of doing things, and stimulate internal evaluations where their different functions are reviewed critically. Thus, the reports may initiate school-based work on development. Development, according to the evaluation of the Norwegian school reform called Reform 97, is one of few measures capable of actually improving praxis (Haug, 2003). All the same, we believe that successful school-based evaluation requires long-term systematic work on innovation, which Kjell Skogen et al. have usefully defined as "a planned change with the intention of improving praxis" (Skogen and Sørli, 1992).

Work on innovation will keep the focus on the future, oblige participants to agree on goals and make consolidating decisions underway and, not least, actually make plans. Work on change needs, in order to be successful, to be a process towards which everyone involved and affected at school should experience a sense of ownership. We believe that seminars, conferences, different kinds of reports from the project and school visits could be the starting point of a process by which schools can initiate, or continue, their work on development. It also appears natural that schools should be interested in cooperating with each other to create projects, formulate goals, build networks, and benefit from other synergetic effects that spring from development work. While the individual reports sprung from the project will not by themselves be able to set off such processes, they may, placed in a wider context, contribute to a more comprehensive picture. Thus, in conjunction with other research efforts they may be an important contribution to new useful knowledge.

Challenges for schools: two perspectives

The Norwegian school reform, Reform 97, was informed by a vision to improve the general level of education. In a preliminary draft, one of its most important hypotheses was formulated: “The challenge for Norwegian educational policy is that our country does not engender enough competence in view of the population’s real capacity” (NOU 1991:4). There is, no doubt, a great potential for education latent in the Norwegian people, and when such visions and plans are to be implemented, it becomes a concern for the whole school system. This statement also underlines what I would like to define as one of the two main perspectives in our discussion: that the primary concerns of schools are teaching and learning.

The other perspective concerns the relation between the individual and his/her environment, and schools as arenas for rearing and socialization. Today’s children spend more time away from home: at school, with their sports team, in clubs or organizations, travelling, with friends, and not least, engaged in the growing world of multi-media. The agents of socialization, who shape the individual’s identity, are increasingly numerous. The more decisive the pupil’s upbringing, environment and cultural capital become, schools will need to play an increasingly important role in providing role models, norms and giving rectification, in the absence of other obvious sources of influence.

Both perspectives can be understood from the point of view of health and well-being.

Good academic achievements are highly valued and students who do well at school also feel well about being there. But all pupils are not able to reach the same level of achievement, and some studies have concluded that pupils who feel that demands on them are too high often confess to subjective health problems (Torsheim 2004). Can schools therefore be an indirect cause of the pupils’ health problems? Samdal (2004) points out that pupils spend 6 to 8 hours at school every day, which is very similar to the working day of an adult. She also notes that research has demonstrated that the well-being of adults is closely connected to their working life. Samdal thus suggests that the pupil’s school environment is entirely analogous to the adult’s working envi-

ronment, and that there is good reason to see school as a crucial factor in the pupil's general well-being, even if less research has been done to prove this (*ibid.*).

The pupil's school experience is unlikely to be unambiguous, but may embrace both some of one's best memories and one's bitterest moments, and not only in terms of academic issues. These circumstances can also help explain the reports of bad health from many pupils (Torsheim, 2004). The question is thus how to create well-being among students who do not feel well at school, whether because of their weak academic achievement or bad relations with teachers or fellow students.

All nations who have signed the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) are bound to work for an inclusive educational system. At primary school level, the main challenge will be to establish a teaching and methodology that will ensure that individuals can reap a maximum of benefits from their education. The keyword will be adapted education, defined as a school- and educational offering adapted to the capacities and needs of individual pupils, ensuring that they make full use of their education. The first evaluation of Reform 97 says that "[a]dapted learning will be a keyword. An inclusive school will therefore be concerned with finding the possible obstacles for learning and participation in a community of learners that all pupils may encounter" (Strømstad et al. 2000).

Studies of the Finnish educational system (Germeten et al. 2006) have indicated that Finnish students receive teaching support at an early age, and that approximately twice as many students are given "temporary special teaching" in the first grade than in the ninth grade (*ibid.*). This help may well be crucial for pupils with unfavourable conditions for learning, since it is likely to help them get a good start at school. In this system, which is essentially non-bureaucratic and is implemented in cooperation with parents, Finland has perhaps found a viable way of improving the general level of education, and thus benefit from its people's learning potentiality.

In Norway, the recent bid for "homework help", to be implemented in the autumn of 2006, may be seen to roughly correspond to the Finnish method. Its fundamental idea – that help with home work is to be offered at school, and should primarily help those

who need it most – implicitly acknowledges that not all parents have the means and capacities to help their children with their homework, a notion which has been corroborated in this study.

This article has focused on academic achievement, learning environment and well-being. The pupil's experience of a lack in knowledge and competence, as well as the feeling that school work is futile, may cause despair and unease. The Salamanca Statement obliges all its signatories to work for an all-inclusive school, and thus to improve the work on health issues at school, in their very broadest sense. The question as to what are the chief indicators of an inclusive school is a truly large issue which goes beyond the framework of this article, but one which will be natural to investigate as this project is followed up.

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COMPARING THE PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING OF SCHOOLCHILDREN IN THE BARENTS REGION

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INTRODUCTION

It has been widely known and reported that the state of schoolchildren's psychosocial health and well-being has deteriorated over the last few years (Luopa, Räsänen, Jokela, & Rimpelä, 2005). In Finland this has been a major topic of discussion since the beginning of this century. According to Rimpelä (Bardy et al., 2001), historically the new generation of children has always had better welfare than the one before. In the mid 1990s there was a change; the psychosocial well-being and general welfare did not increase anymore and it started to decrease.

The ArctiChildren Project has the aim to recognize the developmental needs of the participating school communities. Research was needed in order to determine these needs. The WHO (World Health Organization) survey and questionnaire for school-aged children was chosen to be the main research tool to discern and evaluate the state of psychosocial well-being in the Barents Region. The survey was carried out in the project schools in northern parts Finland (Lapland), Sweden (Norrbotten) and Norway (Finnmark) and in North-West Russia (Murmansk region). The study of Bardy, Salmi, & Heino (2001) showed that more problems have developed in schools in the psychosocial field of health, while at the same time physical health has improved. This study will identify certain indicators of psychosocial well-being as well as point out some differences between countries.

Why study psychosocial well-being at schools?

The appearance of children's problems in schools has changed, according to the professionals who work with children every day. There are more and more pupils who do not receive enough care.

There is a lack of basic needs: care, nutrition and hygiene. The pupils who suffer from a lack of basic needs do not have the strength for school work. There are pupils in grades seven to nine who cannot even write a sequence of sentences. According to Järventie's study (Järventie, 1999) 29% of 7-12-year-old children in the Helsinki region lack basic needs. Karvonen et al.'s (2005) follow-up study of Finnish adolescents showed that schools play an important role in young people's well-being and that the range of measures that can be taken to improve pupil's health is wider than those related to health directly. The survey was conducted on a large number (N=60 347) of 8th and 9th grade pupils (14 and 15-year-olds) from Finnish comprehensive schools. According to Sakari Karvonen, Anders Vikat and Matti Rimpelä:

...based on our results, improving the educational climate of the school by providing more adult support to pupils may result in better health of pupils. It is obvious, however, that the school cannot be taken as the only sphere of life that accounts for the worsening health. It remains a challenging task both to identify further the factors behind the quickly increasing trend as well as to develop public health measures to meet these factors. (Karvonen et al. 2005, 14.)

It is possible to find indicators for the psychosocial well-being of schoolchildren in school, but at the same time it is important to note that school cannot be the only place that takes responsibility for the weakening of psychosocial well-being. On one hand, school can be the only place where, for example, mental health problems occur, and school can be the only place where it is possible to take the first step of intervention. On the other hand, school also has its own role in the development process of self-respect and self confidence of schoolchildren.

The concept of well-being can also be defined related to time. According to Engels et al. (2004, 128-129) it is possible to divide the well-being of schoolchildren into *a current well-being*, meaning the perception of the pupils at certain moment, and into *a sustainable well-being*, meaning the pupil's self respect and the knowledge of one's own skills in the long term. There is, of course, a continual exchange between current and sustainable

well-being, therefore both concepts cannot be looked at separately. According to Engels et al. (2004) the following description of well-being can be made: *“Well-being at school expresses a positive emotional life which is the result of harmony between the sums of specific environmental factors on the one hand and the personal needs and expectations of pupils vis-à-vis the school on the other.”*

RESEARCH METHODS

The Health Behavior of School-Aged Children, a WHO Cross-National Study (HBSC), is a unique inquiry into the health behaviors and health of adolescents across a large number of countries. It is a European and North American study conducted in collaboration with the European Region of the World Health Organization (WHO) (Currie et al. 2001).

The HBSC questionnaire was chosen for the ArctiChildren Project to give reliable and comparable information about the psychosocial health and well-being of school-aged children in the Barents Region. This questionnaire also gave a lot of relevant information about self-reported health and living conditions from the examined communities. It was also possible to pay attention to the effect of school and peer relations on personal psychosocial well-being.

According to the authors of the HBSC Research Protocol (Currie et al. 2001), the HBSC study has its disciplinary origins in the behavioral and social sciences. At its inception the study was firmly rooted in a lifestyle approach and as such aimed to analyze the relationship between person and environment from a socio-psychological and ecological perspective, taking into account the macro social context.

Case sample

The participants of the study were 13-15-year-old schoolchildren from comprehensive schools in northern parts of Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway. The data was collected by the researchers of each country, in Norway it was collected by a postal survey and in Finland, Sweden and Russia during the researchers' visits to schools. There was a total of 1 424 responses of which 52.6% were done by boys. The average age of the respondents was 14.0 years. In Russia there were 341 respondents (51.9% boys, average age 14.22 years, SD=1.32) from three schools. In Finland there were 408 respondents (54.7% boys, average age 13.92 years, SD=0.92) from four schools. In Sweden there were 400 respondents (52.9% boys, average age 13.85, SD=0.84) from nine schools. In Norway there were 275 respondents (49.8% boys, average age 13.92, SD=0.89) from eleven schools. In each country there were schools that represented both urban and rural districts.

Analyzing methods and reliability

The pupils answered the questionnaire in schools during their school time. They could answer anonymously. The data was collected between May 2004 and April 2005. The data was coded into an SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program. In this report the common data of all four countries is analyzed. The national version of the HBSC questionnaire was used in the study of each country. Only the mandatory variables of the questionnaire were common for each questionnaire. Altogether there were 89 common variables in this analysis, of which 60 were on the Likert scale. The comparison was possible to make based on these variables. The statistical significance of the mean differences was tested by the variance analysis of One Way ANOVA. The reliability of the common data was tested by the SPSS reliability analysis. The Cronbach's Alpha for the common data was 0.58, which was not very high but gives the possibility to make the analysis. The significance values are displayed by the p-value or by the *-symbol. The representation of the symbols is following: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$ or non significant n.s.

RESULTS

Social relations

When asked about how many female or male friends the pupils have, it appeared that there were significant differences between countries. In Finland the pupils had the least friends of all countries, on average 2.97 ($SD^1=0.82$) friends/pupil. In Sweden they had 3.27 ($SD=0.75$), in Russia 3.30 ($SD=0.78$) and in Norway 3.56 ($SD=0.67$). The difference was significant ($p<0.001$) between Finland and all other countries, also there was significant difference ($p<0.001$) between Norway and all other countries. When asked about how many evenings on average the pupils spent their free time with their friends, it appeared that in Russia the pupils spent most, on average 5.08 ($SD=2.37$), of the evenings with their friends. The differences were significant ($p<0.001$) between all other countries except between Russia and Norway. In Norway the pupils spent on average 4.24 ($SD=2.17$) and in Finland 4.15 ($SD=2.28$) evenings with their friends, in Sweden the pupils spent the least, 3.02 ($SD=2.14$), evenings with their friends. The pupils were also asked about their e-communication² with friends. The Norwegian pupils were the most active using e-communication, they were in contact with their friends by e-communication on average 4.10 ($SD=1.17$) days a week. In Russia the pupils were in contact with their friends on average 4.0 ($SD=1.44$) days a week, in Finland 3.6 ($SD=1.34$) and in Sweden 3.5 ($SD=1.33$) days a week (see Figure 1). There was also a group of pupils in each country who had no contact with friends or had no close friends at all. This group was biggest in Sweden, where about 12% of the pupils had no social contacts. In Norway this group was the smallest, where about 6% of the pupils had no social contacts. In general the girls had less social contact than the boys.

¹ The standard deviation (SD) indicates the average deviation from the mean value.

² E-communication includes contacts by telephone, e-mail messages by computer or text messages by cellular phone.

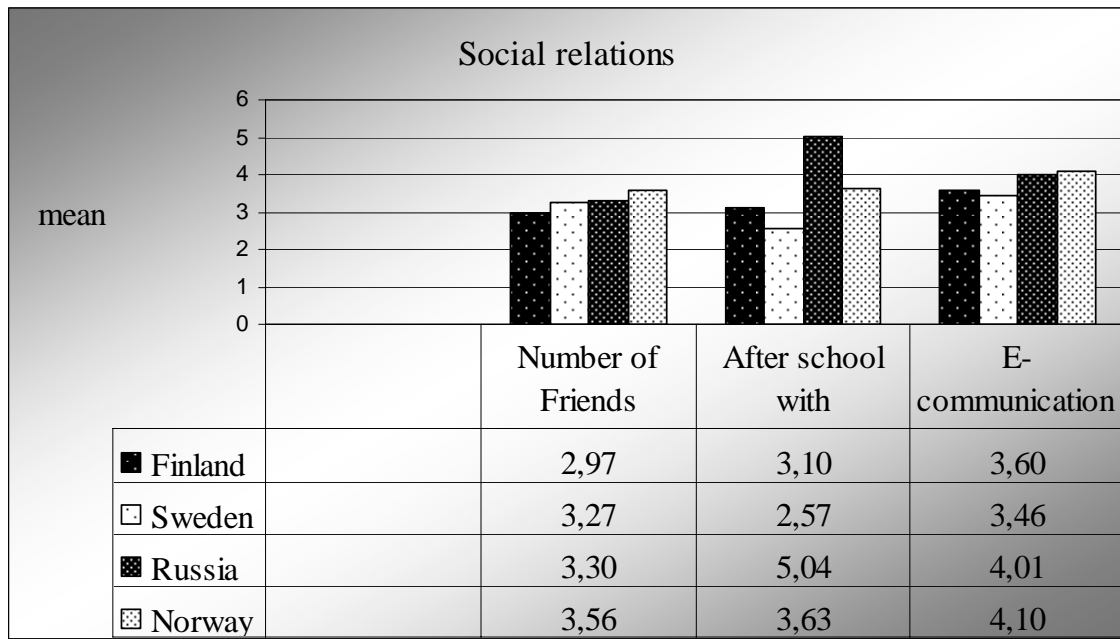


Figure 1 Social relations

Peer bullying

The questions on bullying used in the survey were those developed by Dan Olweus. A definition of bullying preceded the questions:

We say a student is being bullied when another student, or a group of students, says or does nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a student is teased repeatedly in a way he or she doesn't like, or when [he or she is] deliberately left out of things. But it is not bullying when two students of about the same strength quarrel or fight. It is also not bullying when the teasing is done in a friendly and playful way. (M.Craig & Harel 2004, 133.)

This comprehensive definition includes the concept of intentional exclusion as a form of bullying and helps to reduce as far as possible the challenge of translation, particularly into languages with no specific word to describe bullying.

Two questions followed the definition, one on being bullied and one on bullying others: *1. How often have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months? 2. How often have you taken part in bullying another student(s) at school in the past couple of months?*

The response options for both were almost the same: *1) I haven't been bullied (or bullied another student(s)) at school in the past couple of months, 2) It has only happened once or twice, 3) two or three times a month, 4) About once a week, 5) Several times a week.*

Being bullied at school two or three times or more during the previous couple of months is a measure of repeated victimization, indicative of young people at higher risk (M.Craig & Harel, 2004, 137). In bullying, the Swedish pupils had the most favourable results. The Russian pupils bullied each other the most. Only 2.8% of the Swedish pupils had been bullied and 2.1% of them had bullied others in the last couple of months two to three times a month or more often. In contrast, 18.5% of Russian pupils and 11.9% of Finnish pupils had been bullied and 22.1% of Russian pupils and 12.1% of Finnish pupils had bullied others two to three times a month or more. In Norway 8.5% of the pupils had been bullied and 3.9% had bullied others two to three times or more often. When comparing the means of the recurrence of being bullied, it can be seen that there were significant differences ($p < 0.001$) between Russia and Sweden and all other countries. Between Norway and Finland there was no significant difference. In general, bullying was more common ($p = 0.02$) among boys than girls. Only in Norway were the girls bullied more than the boys, but the mean difference was not significant ($p = 0.297$).

Attitude towards school

How much the pupils liked school was asked in the questionnaire in one variable: *How much do you like going to school?* The scale was 1= *I like a lot*, 2= *I like a bit*, 3= *I do not like* and 4= *I do not like at all*. There was a significant difference ($p<0.001$) in liking school between Norway and other countries, among the other countries there were no significant differences. There was also a significant difference ($p<0.01$) between genders in liking school in Finland and Sweden, and Russia ($p<0.05$). In Norway there was no significant difference in liking school between genders. In every country besides Norway the girls liked school more than the boys. As may be seen from Table 1, liking school was weakest in Finland (mean 2.47) which means that almost half of the Finnish pupils did not like school. In Russia the mean was 2.37, in Sweden 2.32 and Norway had the highest level with 1.94.

In the last HBSC study (2002) the highest level of liking school in the Nordic countries was in Norway where 32% of the 15-year-old pupils liked school a lot. The lowest level of liking school was in Finland, where only 4% of the pupils liked school a lot (Samdal, Dur & Freeman 2004, 43). Finland was in last place in the comparison of 35 countries and Norway was in fourth place. In Sweden and in Russia 13% of 15-year-old pupils liked school a lot; they were in 24th and 25th position respectively. The ArctiChildren study shows that in Norway 26%, in Sweden 6%, in Russia 14% and in Finland 6% of the 15-year-old pupils liked going to school a lot. Liking school seemed to be at lower levels in Norway and Sweden and at higher levels in Finland and Russia compared to the national studies.

country	Gen- der	Mean	N	Std. De- viation
Finland	boy	2.58	215	0.79
	girl	2.34	178	0.71
	Total	2.47	393	0.76
Sweden	boy	2.42	205	0.81
	girl	2.20	187	0.74
	Total	2.32	392	0.79
Russia	boy	2.48	177	0.84
	girl	2.24	164	0.87
	Total	2.37	341	0.86
Norway	boy	1.85	131	0.79
	girl	2.03	132	0.84
	Total	1.94	263	0.82
Total	boy	2.38	728	0.84
	girl	2.21	661	0.79
	Total	2.30	1389	0.82

Table 1 Liking school by gender and country (1= like – 4 = do not like)

When looking at the correlations between ‘liking school’ and other variables in the questionnaire it became apparent that seven different variables had significant correlations ($p < 0.001$) between liking school. The variable ‘academic achievement’ correlated significantly in every country, as can be seen from Table 2. The highest correlation between liking school and academic achievement was in Finland (0.34), also in Finland the ‘pressure of schoolwork’ had the strongest correlations (0.40) of these four countries. In Norway ‘life satisfaction’ ($r = -0.47$) and ‘psychosomatic symptoms’ ($r = -0.41$) had the strongest correlations. In Sweden, ‘life satisfaction’ ($r = -0.25$) and ‘other pupils kind and helpful’ ($r = 0.25$) had the strongest correlations. In Russia only three variables correlated significantly and ‘other pupils kind and helpful’ ($r = 0.25$) had the strongest correlation. The psychosomatic symptoms correlated negatively in Sweden, Norway and Finland, the correlation was strongest in Norway. This means that pupils who had the most psychosomatic symptoms liked school the least.

	<i>Liking school/ Russia</i>	<i>Liking school/ Finland</i>	<i>Liking school/ Sweden</i>	<i>Liking school/ Norway</i>
Academic achievement	0.18	0.34	0.24	0.19
Life satisfaction		-0.34	-0.25	-0.47
Been drunk		0.28	0.18	0.27
Pressured by schoolwork	0.19	0.40		0.35
Other pupils kind and helpful	0.25		0.25	0.34
Bullied				0.25
Psychosomatic symptoms		-0.23	-0.21	-0.41

Table 2. Significant correlations ($p < 0.001$ two-tailed) between liking school and following variables in each country

Substance abuse

In substance abuse it was noticeable that in Russia smoking and drunk experiences were the most common, as can be seen in Figures 2 and 3. Among Russian pupils 29% smoked at least once a week, while in Norway 11%, in Finland 8% and in Sweden only 3% of the pupils smoked at least once a week. Alcohol usage was also most common in Russia where 55% of the Russian pupils had been drunk at least once. In Norway and Finland 23% of the pupils and in Sweden 9% of the pupils had been drunk at least once. There were significant differences ($p < 0.01$) in smoking and drunk experiences between all other countries except between Finland and Norway. Between genders there were no big differences. Only in Finland there was a significant difference ($p = 0.021$) between boys' and girls' smoking. In Finland and Norway the girls had smoked more than the boys on average, otherwise the boys had had more experience in substance abuse. When comparing the results of the ArctiChildren (AC) data to the last international HBSC study from 2002 (Godeau, Rahav, & Hublet 2004; Schmid & Gabhainn 2004) it can be seen that there are differences in the results of 15-year-old pupils. The compari-

son is presented in Table 3. Pupils in the North seemed to smoke and drink less than pupils in general in all the countries except Russia. The differences were not analyzed statistically.

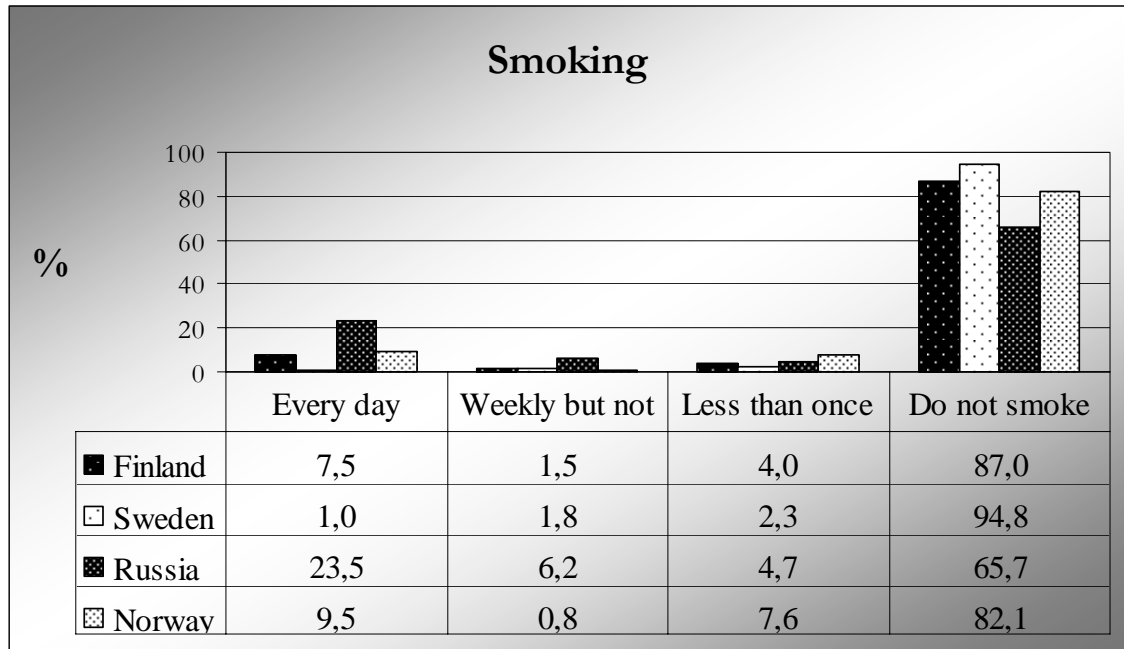


Figure 2 Smoking

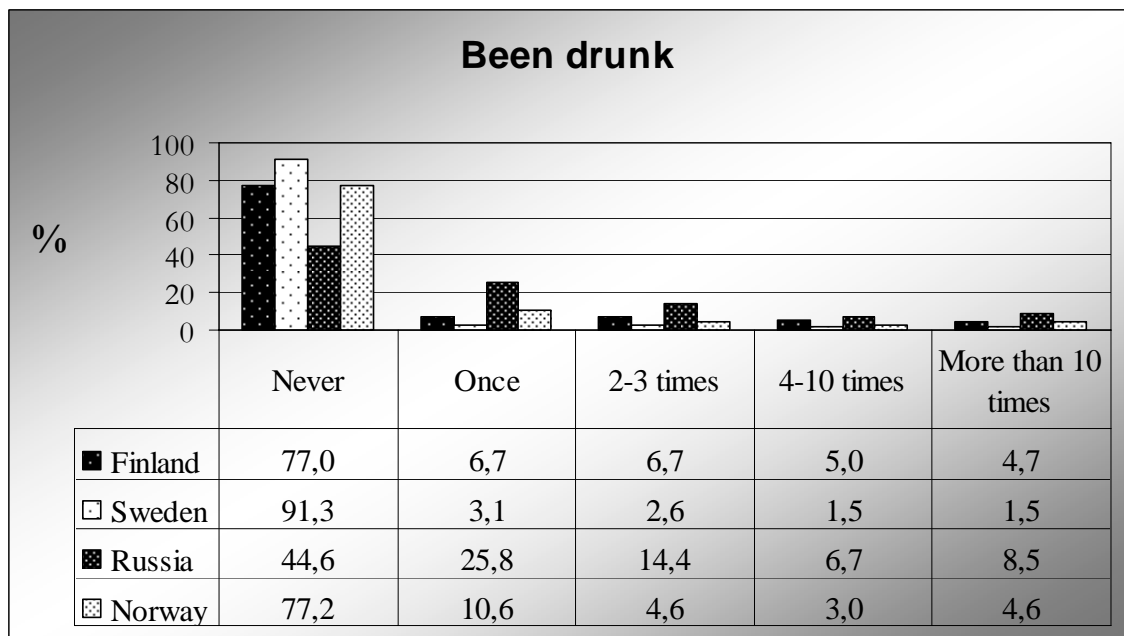


Figure 3 Been drunk

Country/study	Smoking > once a week		Smoking > once a week		Been drunk two or more times		Been drunk two or more times	
	AC 2004		HBSC 2002		2004		AC HBSC 2002	
	boys %	girls	boys %	girls	boys %	girls	boys %	girls
Russia	41.1	38.8	27.4	18.5	35.0	38.8	39.1	29.4
Finland	16.2	27.9	28.3	32.2	23.1	36.0	53.3	55.7
Sweden	7.5	8.3	11.1	19.0	7.5	14.5	39.8	38.1
Norway	20.0	31.0	20.1	26.6	18.0	31.0	38.5	40.7

Table 3. Comparing the substance abuse of 15-year-olds

Health and well-being

In addressing psychosomatic symptoms, inquiries were made about eight different subjective health complaints: *headache, stomach ache, back ache, feeling low, irritability or bad temper, feeling nervous, difficulties in sleeping, feeling dizzy*. Response options were: 1) *About every day*, 2) *More than once a week*, 3) *About every month*, 4) *Rarely or never*. When comparing the summed variable of all these symptoms it seemed that the Russian pupils suffered the least from psychosomatic health complaints (mean 34.04). There was significant difference ($p < 0.01$) between Russia and all other countries. Between the other countries there were no significant differences. The means were: Finland 31.32, Sweden 31.68 and Norway 32.50. At the level of the whole data there was a significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between genders. The girls (mean 33.71) reported more psychosocial health complaints than the boys (mean 30.84). The difference was similar and significant in each country. When comparing the recurrence of multiple psychosomatic health complaints of the 15-year-old pupils to the HBSC 2002 study (Figure 4), it appeared that in the AC study the Norwegian girls had more of these complaints than in the HBSC study and Russian girls less than in the HBSC study. In other ways the results followed the same trends.

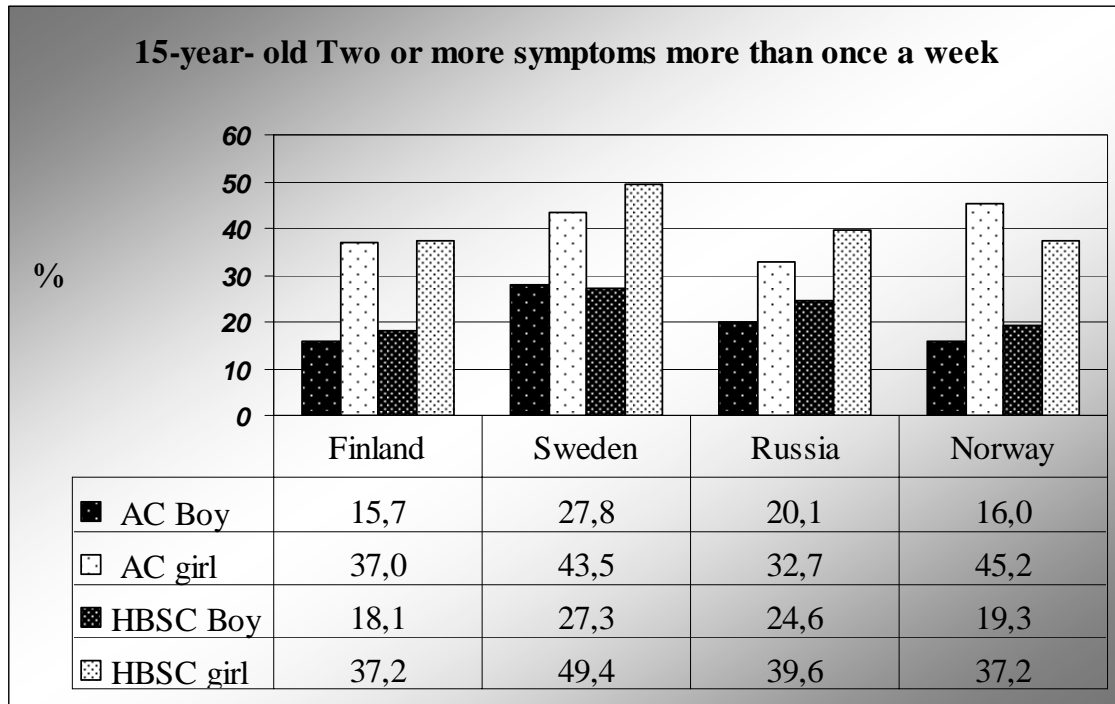


Figure 4. 15-year-old pupils' symptoms more than once a week.

Life satisfaction was derived from the measurement technique known as the Cantril Ladder (Välimaa & Danielson 2004, 56). It has ten steps: the top of the ladder indicates the best possible life, and the bottom, the worst possible life. Young people were asked to indicate the step of the ladder at which they would place their lives at present:

“Here is a picture of a ladder. The top of the ladder, 10, is the best possible life for you and the bottom, 0, is the worst possible life for you. In general, where on the ladder do you feel you stand at the moment? Tick the box next to the number that best describes where you stand.”

When comparing the means of life satisfaction of all four countries it occurred that in all countries life satisfaction was at a reasonably high level. In Finland it was at the highest level (mean 8.06), next in Sweden (mean 7.79), then Russia (mean 7.49) and Norway (mean 7.30). There was a significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between Finland, Russia and Norway and a difference ($p = 0.005$) between Sweden and Norway. In general the boys had

higher life satisfaction (mean 7.82) ($p=0.008$) than the girls (mean 7.56). Only in Sweden did the girls have a higher level mean for life satisfaction than the boys, but the difference was not significant. The difference between genders was the biggest in Norway, where the mean for girls was 6.88 and 7.73 for boys.

When comparing the results of life satisfaction from the HBSC 2002 study of 35 countries, it can be noticed that also in that study Finland (2nd) was almost at the top while Sweden (21st) and Norway (24th) were about average and Russia (31st) was a lot below average.

In measuring self-rated health the Russian pupils rated their health the most poor. The question on self-rated health was: *Would you say your health is 1) Excellent, 2) Good, 3) Fair or 4) Poor?* The mean in Russia was 2.2 (SD=0.70), in Norway 1.92 (SD=0.77) in Finland 1.84 (SD=0.63) and in Sweden 1.71 (SD=0.72). The difference was significant ($p<0.001$) between Russia and all other countries. And there was significant difference ($p=0.002$) between Norway and Sweden. There was also a significant difference ($p<0.001$) between genders in the general data. The girls rated their health lower (mean 2.00, SD=0.73) than the boys (mean 1.83, SD=0.71). Likewise, in every national data the girls gave lower ratings for their subjective health.

DISCUSSION

This study pointed out some differences and basic elements of the state of psychosocial well-being of schoolchildren in the Barents Region. According to a former study by Karvonen, Vikat and Rimpelä (2005) conducted among Finnish adolescents between 1996 and 2000, many school-level factors related to pupils' health complaints.

Attitudes towards school were most negative in Finland, even though Finns succeeded well in the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) tests. (Kupari et al. 2004.) At the same time no significant difference between countries on the pressure of schoolwork was found. The Norwegian pupils liked school the most, and it is notable that the Norwegian boys liked school more than the girls. When looking at the results of the latest PISA study for these four countries, it is noticeable that liking school and results in academic skills have an almost negative correlation between each other (Kupari et al. 2004; OECD & Programme for International Student Assessment 2004). In the PISA study Finland was at the very top, Sweden was just above the OECD average, Norway a bit below average and Russia at the lowest level. It seems like in Finland the pupils achieve very good results even though they do not like going to school. In Norway the pupils like going to school, but it seems they do not learn very well there. When knowing the connection between good academic results and liking school, this is a bit of a confusing result (Linnakylä & Malin 1997, 125). It is also known that the situation in schools in Finland is deteriorating rapidly, especially in the bigger cities of Finland, which have reported increasing differences between pupils and also between schools (Välijärvi, 2002 (Välijärvi, 2002). According to (Launonen & Pulkkinen, 2004, 45) in addition to the teaching of academic subjects in schools attention should be paid to the achievement of socio-emotional goals and the holistic well-being of pupils. That means a conscious learning of social skills and general life skills.

The social relations of the pupils were compared by looking at the number of friends and the time the pupils spent with their friends. Loneliness in this study was related to peer relations, but there can be several other interpretations of loneliness (Wood-

ward & Queen 1988). There was also a group of pupils in each country who had no contact with friends, or had no close friends at all. Usually children understand the emotion of loneliness to be unpleasant (Qualter 2003, 15). The girls had less social contacts than the boys. Most of the pupils who took part in this study live in urban areas; it can be suggested that those who are never in contact with their friends also suffer from other serious difficulties.

This study revealed that quite a large percentage of pupils in the 8th grade (15-year-olds) had already used a lot of alcohol and tobacco. The Russian pupils used a lot more alcohol and tobacco than the others. Substance abuse has increased among Finnish adolescents, and 20% of the health complaints of the Finnish adolescents were explained by increased smoking and alcohol use among the pupils (Karvonen et al. 2005, 12). Among daily smokers there were more girls than boys in every country but Russia. Also drinking was more common among girls than among boys. This is a common trend among the substance use of 15-year-old adolescents (Godeau et al., 2004, 70). It is good to remember that several studies reveal that an early start to alcohol consumption increases the risk of problem causing alcohol usage in adulthood (Pulkkinen 2002, 179).

Peer bullying was a much more common problem in Russia than elsewhere. In Sweden pupils bullied the least. This is a good result for Swedish schools, even though the teachers in Sweden see bullying as one of the most serious problems in their school (Forsman 2005). Bullying was also more common among boys than girls. Bullying is a serious problem; consequences for the victims of bullying can be a severe increase in depression, ideas of suicide, loneliness, and lower self esteem and grades. This is where something can and should be done, as there are effective programs and successful interventions against bullying. One example of an effective intervention is the Olweus Bullying Preventing Program (Olweus 1993).

Subjective health and well-being was measured by three subjective indicators. The WHO defines health as a resource for living a productive life (Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion 1986). Poor health may significantly impair functional ability and prevent the achievement of life goals. In modern society, some of the

most challenging health problems – such as musculoskeletal pain, chronic fatigue and depression – are related to functional impairment rather than to defined diseases. Multiple recurrent health complaints may represent a significantly heavier burden on daily functional ability and well-being than single symptoms (Välimaa & Danielson 2004, 55 -56). In general, girls had more subjective health complaints than boys. This is also a common result in most of the former studies (Luopa et al. 2005; Välimaa 2004).

To conclude, it is important to be aware that differences in living conditions and schooling systems exist within each country as well as between the countries. According to AHDR (Arctic Human Development Report) about Human Health and Well-being (Hild & Stordahl, 2004, 167) it is known that health challenges are unique to each Arctic community and there is a need for flexibility in community based services. As well there is a need for flexibility and common understanding to point out the reasons behind the state of psychosocial well-being, the state of school systems and different cultural foundations.

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PART III PARENTS AND TEACHERS

FINNISH PARENTS' EXPERIENCES AND WISHES REGARDING HOME-SCHOOL COLLABORATION

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INTRODUCTION

Home-school collaboration is still a topical challenge nationally in the Finnish schools, because the objectives for developing such collaboration were not written into the Finnish comprehensive school curriculum until 2004, when the core curriculum for basic education was revised (National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004). The curriculum emphasises dialogue between school and parents, the rationale being that dialogue and collaboration between those bringing up and educating children are needed to achieve comprehensive, healthy development and good learning results. Parents have the primary responsibility for raising children and adolescents, while the school supports the home in this function and sees to educating and teaching pupils as members of the school community. The goal of this joint and several responsibility is to promote children's and adolescents' opportunities to learn, as well as their security and well-being at school (Finnish National Board of Education, 2004. National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004).

A holistic view of health and well-being dictates that our efforts to promote child health in the community must focus on children living in harmony with their physical, social and cultural environment. The first place to address child health issues is within the family, where individual health and well-being are constituted. Although the context in which children's and adolescents' needs are met has changed with every generation, the needs themselves have not changed over the years. Children and adolescents still need physical care, love, nurturing, protection and a sense of belonging. The family is the single most important influence in society. Genetics, personal health and the accessibility of health and support services play a part in health

and illness, but it is the basic patterning of behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, and values within the family that primarily determines whether and to what extent people make choices for healthy lifestyles. In this respect, the family is where health literacy, or health competence, is developed and nurtured. (McMurray 2003.)

Parenting has changed in many ways over the years, reflecting changes in family and society and in conceptions of childhood. Today, the population of our cities and towns is largely a mixture of people with a variety of cultural backgrounds who have been brought together by large-scale migration. Parenting under these conditions is more challenging than in the past. Today's urban lifestyles often leave parents feeling alone and lacking in meaningful relationships with others as they emerge daily from the workplace exhausted and in need of reassurance. Therefore, families also need support in the task of raising children. (McMurray 2003.)

Home-school collaboration is a multi-faceted, dynamic and creative process influenced by the environment and culture in which the school operates as well as by the children, parents, teachers and other actors in the school community. Epstein (1994) has proposed six main categories of home-school collaboration, which can take the form of cooperation between institutions (schools, families and communities) or between individuals (the teacher, parents and the pupil). The six groups are 1) *the basic responsibilities of the parents*, an especially important aspect of which is a positive home environment that supports the child's learning and behaviour; 2) *the basic responsibilities of the school*, which include fostering interaction between the home and the school; 3) *parents' involvement in school activities*, e.g., as volunteers or as members of the public; 4) *parents' involvement in children's learning at home*; 5) *parents' involvement in decision-making at the school*; and 6) *cooperation of the school and parents with other organisations in society*. All of the forms of participation have particular practices, challenges and outcomes associated with them, and schools may vary their practices in accordance with their specific objectives. (Epstein 1994.)

A child belongs to both the school and the home, and hence problems in one are reflected in the other: problems in parenting

will be seen in classrooms, and a child's bad experiences in school will be felt in the home and the relationships there. Therefore, collaboration between these two environments is needed for children to enjoy better growth and learning results. (Solantaus 2004.) Home-school collaboration is essential to a child's success in school. Co-operation providing for effective communication on different levels and dialogue on educational aims is one of the hallmarks of the successful school today. (Williams & Chavkin 1989.)

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The survey for the present research was carried out as one of the studies conducted in Finnish schools participating in the ArctiChildren project in 2004 and 2005. The questionnaire was based on Mr. Markus Torkkeli's PhD thesis, published at the University of Helsinki in 2001. The questionnaires (N=305 in 2004, N=282 in 2005) were given to parents of children in years 6, 7 and 8. The children brought the questionnaires home to their parents, who filled them in anonymously and returned them in closed envelopes to the teachers. The rector at every school collected the envelopes and returned them to the ArctiChildren project. The statistical significance of the mean differences was tested by the variance analysis of One Way ANOVA. The significance values are displayed by the p-value or by the *-symbol. The quantitative results have been presented on the descriptive level, and the responses of the open questions have been analyzed by the contentual analyze.

FINDINGS

In the case of pupils in the lower years (6) of comprehensive school, mothers accounted for 85% of the respondents to the survey; in the upper years (7-8), the corresponding figure was 84%. At both levels, 15% of the respondents were fathers. There was no significant difference between school levels.

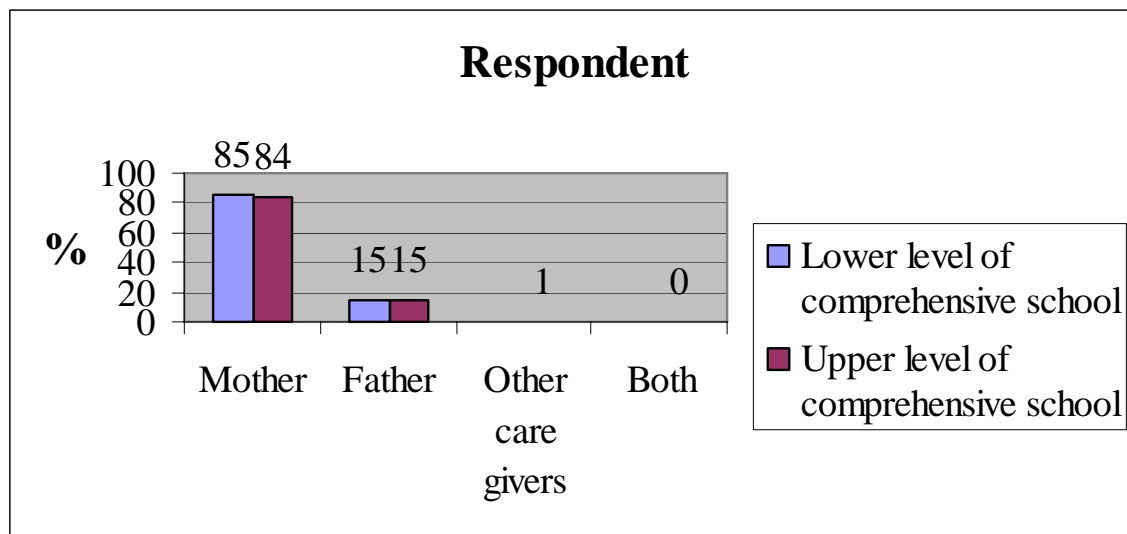


Figure 1. Respondents to the survey

Of the parents with children were in the year 6, 93% had participated in parents' meetings or other joint meetings (figure 2). The figure for parents with children in years 7 to 8 was 61%. The proportion of parents with children in the lower years, who had not participated in meetings was 7%, whereas in the upper years it was 39%. The mean difference between the school levels was significant ($p < .001$).

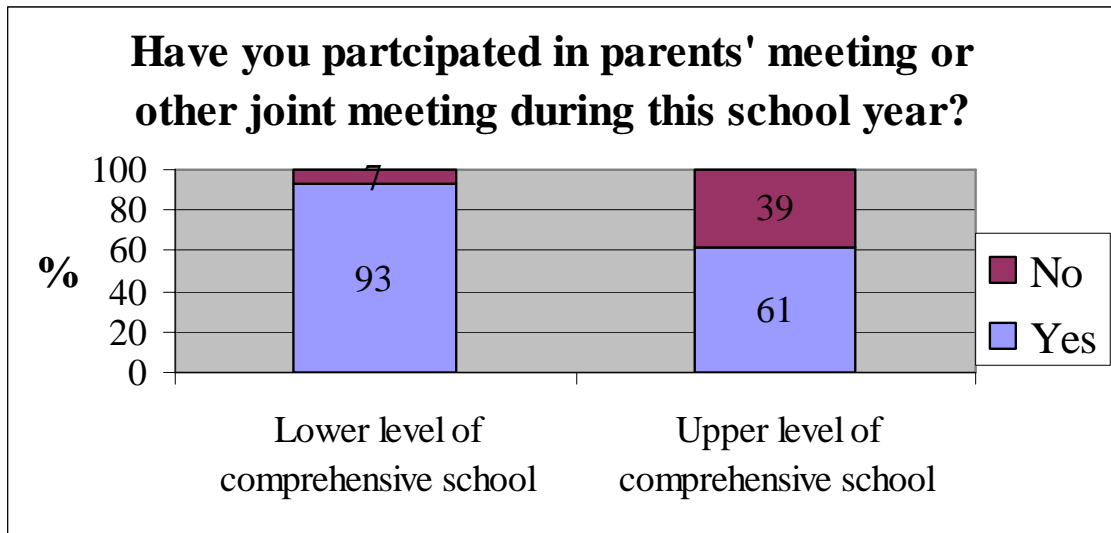


Figure 2. Parents' participation in parents' meetings or other joint meetings at their child's school

The results of the survey indicate that it was mothers for the most part (around 70%) who had been in contact with the children's teachers, homeroom teacher or the school in general in both the lower and upper years. Some 20% of the parents answered that both mothers and fathers were in contact with the school (figure 3). There was no significant difference between the school levels.

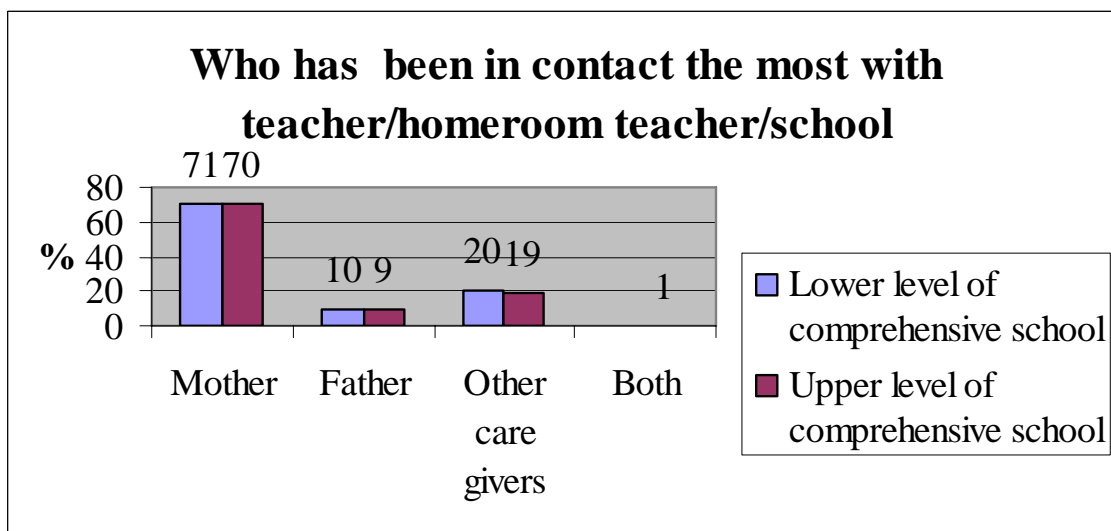


Figure 3. Person in contact with teacher / homeroom teacher / school

The survey further revealed that 72% of the parents with children in the lower years, and 64% of those with children in the upper years had had a discussion with their child's teacher or homeroom teacher. The parents felt (93% in the lower years, 95% in the upper) that the teacher / homeroom teacher was interested in listening to their opinions (figure 4). There was no significant difference between the school levels.

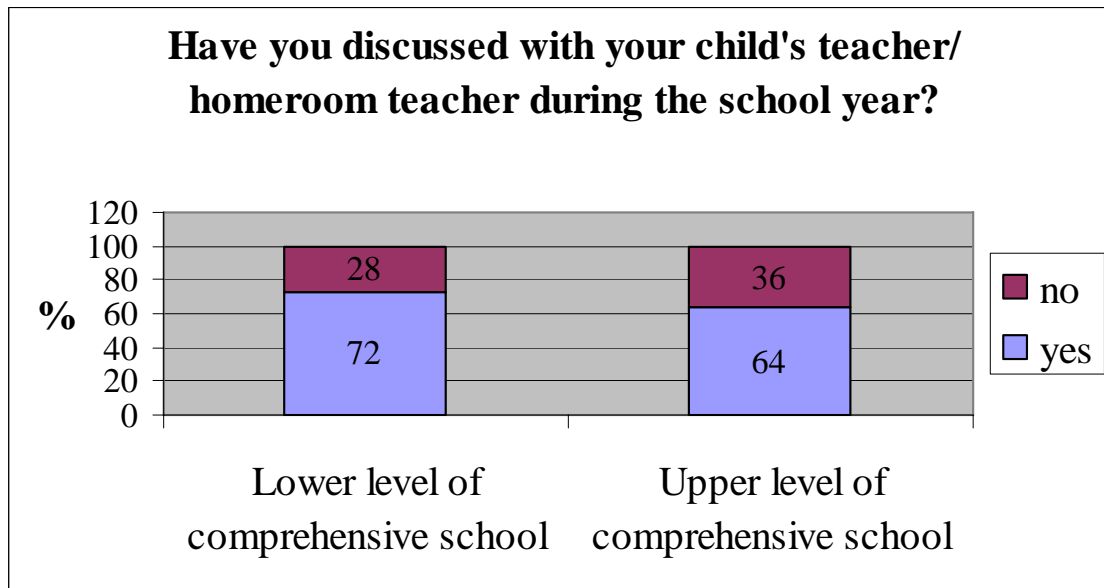


Table 4. Parents' discussion with child's teacher / homeroom teacher during the school year

Parents with children in the lower years felt they had received the least information about 1) their child's difficulties and problems at school, 2) how to support their child to achieve more academically, 3) their child's happy experiences at school, and 4) the teacher's educational views. Parents with children in the upper years felt that they had received the least information about 1) the teacher's educational views, 2) how to support their child to achieve more academically, 3) their child's difficulties and problems at school, and 4) what their child had to learn during the school year.

Both parents with children in the lower years and children in the upper years felt that they had received the most information about school activities in general and the values on which the teaching was based. Parents with children in years 7 to 8 also felt they had received the most information about their child's behaviour (figure 5).

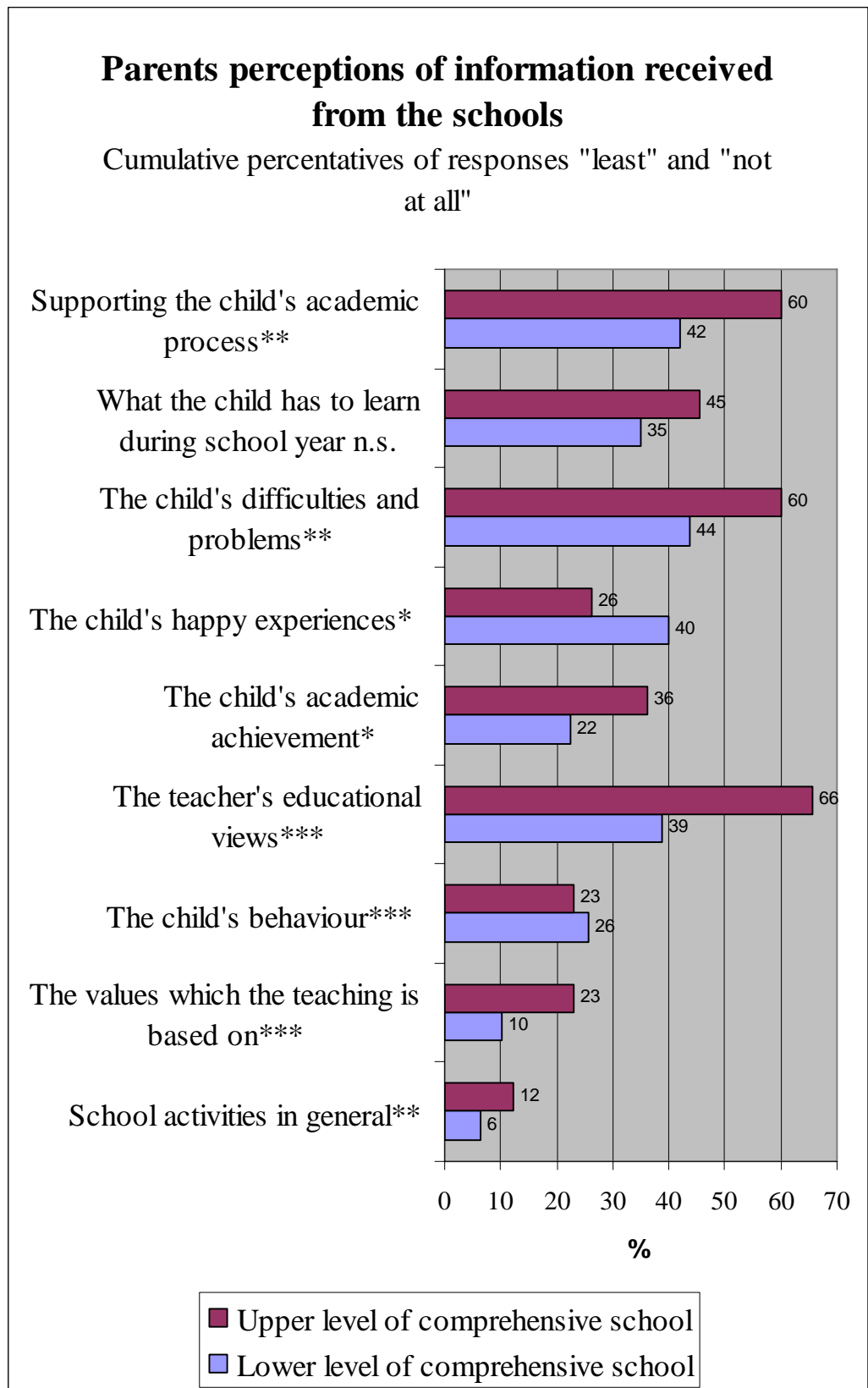


Figure 5 Parents' assessment of the information they had received regarding their children's schooling

¹ The difference between school levels was significant $p < .001^{***}$, $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .05^{*}$ or n.s. non significant

Parents were also presented with open questions asking what kinds of wishes they had if they were not satisfied with the parents' meetings. In 2004, 27%, and in 2005, 31% of the parents presented wishes in this regard. Parents with children in the lower years felt that the parents' meetings were arranged for too large an audience. They would have preferred more meetings for their child's own class, meetings between parents, the child and the teacher, as well as parents' active participation in the discussions at meetings.

"If parents' meetings had been arranged for smaller groups, for example, for the parents whose children are in the year 6, there would have been more discussion."

"Too much general information, and therefore the discussion in the classroom is too short – having just parents' meetings for the child's own class would be good."

"Parents' meetings should be arranged only when there is something topical to inform us about! It would be more important to arrange periodic meetings between parents, (the child) and the teacher, also in the upper years."

Parents felt too that not only general information, but also sessions dealing with children's schooling and healthy growth would be important themes for the parents' meetings.

"Parents' meetings with some theme, i.e., smoking, drinking, social life, and other themes which are important for a child's growth."

"Parents' meetings should include sessions by experts dealing with children's life and schooling at that age."

In the upper years, parents had the same kinds of preferences regarding parents' meetings as in the lower: meetings for the child's own class and with his or her homeroom teacher and other teachers. Parents wanted to have more interaction where some special subjects were concerned and felt that they had many kinds of expertise that could be taken into account when planning parents' meetings.

“More discussion in the child’s own classroom – information about one’s own child as a member of the whole class. We would also get to know the homeroom teacher better.”

“Huge ‘mega meetings’ don’t interest me; direct meetings with the homeroom teacher are good.”

“Parents’ meetings are too general, I don’t get exact information on how these things are influencing my child’s schooling.”

“Parents’ meetings are mass meetings; small-scale parents’ meetings with some theme would be interesting.”

“Not just meetings where one person is speaking and others are listening. More interactive meetings about some actual subject.”

“Parents have much expertise which should be utilised in a suitable way.”

On the both school levels parents wanted to have more interactive discussions and collaboration in smaller groups during the parents meetings.

DISCUSSION

How might one describe the culture of parents' evenings in the Finnish schools? "With perhaps slight exaggeration, one could say that the traditional parents' evening begins with the rector welcoming all the parents. This is followed by a long presentation, which is usually a very one-sided dissemination of information. At some point, the parents break up and go into different classes, where another sermon by another teacher awaits them. When some of the parents are starting to head home to put their children to bed, the teacher has the presence of mind to ask if anyone has any questions. Sitting at a little desk brings back one's own days at school: it's easier for everyone to keep quiet than for anyone to speak up. It is getting late and there is plenty to be done at home. There is a sense of relief when the parents' evening ends: they have fulfilled their duty and it will be a long time before the next one". (Launonen; Pohjola & Holma 2004.)

This fictitious account of a typical parents' evening still feels very much like the real thing. However, it must be noted that home-school collaboration has become more personal and interactive. For example, after studying how the forms of home-school collaboration developed between 1984 and 1999, Siniharju (2003) notes that the use of different forms increased. The greatest rise was seen in personal discussions, with 10% of the teachers using them in 1984 but as many as 88% in 1999. (Siniharju 2003; Kauppinen & Koivu 2000.) In the ArctiChildren research, over half of the parents with children in the lower or upper years had had a discussion with their child's homeroom teacher or teacher during the school year and almost all of these parents felt that the teacher was interested in listening to them. Anyway the parents wanted more of such opportunities to talk with the teacher, which can be seen as a sign that parents would like more personal and interactive home-school collaboration although positive progress has been made in that direction. Metso (2004) is of the view that home-school collaboration school still does not involve much mutual communication. It can sooner be described as maintaining contact, for it all too frequently consists of no more than notices being sent home and parents' evenings.

One thing that stood out in the schools participating in the ArctiChildren project in 2004 and 2005 was the active role of mothers in sustaining home-school collaboration: mothers responded to questionnaires more often. In both the lower and upper years, the mothers had, as a rule, also been the ones to maintain contact with the children's teacher/school. Particularly parents with children in the lower years frequently took part in parents' meetings during the school year. Previous studies (Kauppinen & Koivu 2000; Metso 2004) have also noted how much more active children's mothers are in school meetings, a finding suggesting that mothers still have the principal responsibility in the family for children's schooling.

A prominent finding in the ArctiChildren research was that nearly 40% of the parents with children in the upper years did not take part in the meetings arranged for them. Syrjälä, Annala & Willman (1997) note also how parents' satisfaction with and willingness to participate in collaboration seem to peak when children are in years 1 to 6 but that many mothers and fathers fail to take part in collaboration when their children move on to years 7 to 9 - although this is precisely a developmental phase when home-school collaboration would be sorely needed. According to Griffith (1998), one possible reason why parents reduce their participation when their children enter the upper years is that they wish to give the children more independence. Parents may also feel that they are no longer needed as they were earlier or that the children's assignments are so difficult that parents cannot help them even with homework. (Griffith 1998.) Psychologically, it would be important for parents to be present in their children's lives – including school – in late childhood and early adolescence (Launonen, Pohjola & Holma 2004). Parents' involvement in school and school assignments and the encouragement and support they can provide have been found to contribute to children's success at school (Collins, Harris & Susman 1995, Kauppinen & Koivu 2000). Lindroos (2004) also asserts that emphasis should be placed on home-school collaboration in the upper years, because the issues which adolescents deal with in that phase of their development require more attention.

Parents are interested in the different aspects of their children's schooling. For example, parents with children in the

year 6 would have liked to hear more about the happy experiences their children had in school in addition to the problems and difficulties the children had encountered. Alasuutari (2003) claims that the school is still hampered by its traditional status and position of power, which raises the threshold for participating in home-school collaboration. Too often a meeting between a child's teacher and parents means bad news about the child's progress. Indeed, one challenge is how to give home-school collaboration an essentially positive tenor and to set up practices that motivate parents to take part in it throughout their children's basic education. (Alasuutari 2003.)

Parents with children in years 7 and 8 wanted more information on, among other things, the teachers' educational views and also how to help their children succeed in school (cf. Griffith 1998, Launonen, Pohjola & Holma 2004). A noteworthy finding in the ArctiChildren research was that parents with children in the upper years felt far more often than others that they had not received enough information from the school. One reason for this is that the upper and lower levels of comprehensive school work very differently and this is reflected in home-school collaboration: in the subject-teacher system used in the upper years the role of the homeroom teacher in organising home-school collaboration becomes all the more prominent; moreover, adolescents, who are becoming independent, are able to take care of their own affairs, which diminishes the role of the parents and the need for information to be sent home from the school.

Although home-school collaboration has increased in quantitative terms since the 1980s, there is a great deal of work that can be done to improve the quality of the cooperation: home-school collaboration in Finland needs new practices (Metso 2004, Launonen, Pohjola & Holma 2004). Lindroos (2004) sees the greatest need for more effective collaboration in the upper years and in secondary school - phases when the issues that come up require more discussion and more answers. Teachers, parents and other experts need to find an equal and dialogic form of communication. It would be possible to organise seminars locally and regionally that would give meetings many different dimensions. In addition, pupils could be more involved than at

present in contributing the elements needed for growth. (Lindroos 2004.)

Dividing the responsibility for child-rearing and education and the relationships between those involved in these processes may be problematic or require careful definition. Parents in particular may have a difficult time determining their place in the collaboration. It is telling that parents see educational institutions as supportive of parenthood but at the same time feel that these institutions do not treat the children as individuals (Alasuutari 2003). The changing networks of cooperation in the school compel us to consider how the culture of the school could be changed to promote cooperation with different parents and to help the school actively create a sense of community in its local environment that would bring people together (Launonen & Pulkkinen 2004).

Home-school collaboration is an attitude, not simply an activity. It occurs when parents and educators share common goals, are seen as equals, and both contribute to the process. It is sustained with a "want-to" motivation rather than an "ought-to" or "obliged-to" orientation from all individuals. (Christenson, Rounds, & Gorney 1992.)

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SCHOOL AS A WORK COMMUNITY - EXPERIENCES AND FINDINGS ON THE FINNISH QPS-DATA

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INTRODUCTION

In the Arctic Children project, development work on mental welfare in schools has been conducted through research on the subject. The four participating countries, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia, have gathered research material annually on pupils (grades 5, 7, and 8), their parents, and teachers. The results have been presented to the parents and teachers, and based on the results, different types of interventions have been organized for the pupils and teachers.

This article deals with research on teachers conducted in Finland. Four schools have been involved, three in Rovaniemi and one in Inari. The schools in Rovaniemi are Vaaralampi Comprehensive School and both comprehensive schools of Korkkovaara. In Inari, Sevettijärvi Comprehensive School was involved in the study. The schools in Rovaniemi represent the town surroundings and Sevettijärvi represents the village school. In addition, Sevettijärvi also represents the indigenous surroundings (Skolt Sámi). The main population vs. indigenous population setting is also present in the research made by the other participating countries.

The teacher material has been accrued in the years 2003 (N = 58), 2004 (N = 68), and 2005 (N = 45). The data was gathered using the shorter version, the so-called 34+ version, of the QPS-Nordic questionnaire. The questionnaire is a general inquiry on work-related mental and social factors in the Nordic countries, and it has been standardized for Nordic work organizations.

The article seeks an answer to the following questions:

1. Schools as work communities: How has the general situation changed during the project?
2. What types of differences are there between schools and school surroundings?

The School as a Work Community - Theoretical Background

Schools and education have played a special role in the Finnish society. Education has been connected with faith in its good influence on both career life and national success. People have been willing to invest public and private funds in it. Investments in human capital have been equated with material capital. As an indication of respect, teachers have been called “candles of the nation”, and during the recent years the educational policy has been based on the “Finland of Knowledge” philosophy. (e.g. Rinne & Kivirauma 2003) This positive vision has been reinforced by Finland’s success in the so-called PISA research (OECD 2001).

In the 1990s the focus of the educational policy has shifted towards closer cooperation between schools and working life (e.g. Poropudas & Mäkinen 2001). The recession that occurred at the beginning of the decade functioned as grounds for resource cuts, which were aimed at, e.g., cutting costs, lowering the statutory school age, and making graduation times shorter. In addition, resources were cut on special education, club activities, and pupil welfare services. The school network was radically reduced, groups were made larger, and those who required special teaching were placed in normal classes although the teachers were not qualified for special education. All this meant at least a great challenge to schools and teachers, but some even considered it a “survival course”.

This is a question of applying market economy to schools and education, which are placed on the same line with other public services. Simultaneously, the special status of schools in society is diminishing, and actually disappearing. The entire social system is affected by a powerful structural change. The Nordic wel-

fare model, focused on abolishing deprivation and achieving materialistic welfare, is at the end of its life span (see Hirvonen & Mangelaja 2005, 11). This has resulted in a school culture that emphasizes results more than previously. Its significant features have included ambitious goal setting and attempts to increase the productivity of work. This process has been accelerated by competition that gains momentum both in the workplace and in society. Consequently, economic uncertainty has increased and communal trust diminished. One might think this can somehow be felt in the atmosphere of schools and in teachers' wellbeing.

Work atmosphere affects the functioning of an organization and each person in the workplace (Juuti, 1989, 246). The atmosphere can be examined from two points of view; from the objective viewpoint of the work community and through the subjective characteristics of the employee working in the community.

Examining the objective features of a work community means examining the structures of the organization, for example the allocation of personnel into different areas of expertise, the amount of rules and regulations that guide the activities, and the hierarchical structure (Nurmela, 1993, 31). The subjective characteristics of employees include, e.g., the way in which the employees' work-related needs are met and how the employees experience they can keep up with their work.

According to Juuti (1989) a positive atmosphere can only be achieved when the members of an organization are motivated to achieve something and when they can satisfy their work-related needs. He has identified the following four features that guide observations on atmosphere: the technology in use, the organizational structure, the management policy and operating principles, and the external environment. For example, the extent to which workers can utilize their creative resources in their tasks depends on the level of technology. The more bureaucratic an organization is, the more rigid, enclosed, and threatening people think it is. A more benign atmosphere can be achieved by increasing autonomy and by decentralizing decision-making. On the other hand, it depends on the management policy how much superiors give feedback on performance and responsibilities to their employees and how willing they are to develop the work of their employees.

Uncertainties in economy and in the labor market impair the atmosphere of organizations. (Juuti 1989, 249)

The concept of welfare has been and can be approached from many directions. Two of them are highlighted here: research on the welfare state concept within the field of sociology and research on happiness in the field of economics.

In the classical Nordic *research on welfare* (Allardt 1976) there are three separate areas related to satisfying one's needs:

- Standard of living (Having)
- Communal relations (Loving)
- Forms of self-fulfillment (Being)

Standard of living is thought to consist of two things: material issues and a person's health condition. Based on this, Allardt (ibid.) classifies welfare into four sub-areas: 1) material and 2) health-related living conditions, 3) social relations, and 4) possibilities for self-fulfillment.

The surroundings with its resources and conditions, i.e. different regional and local factors and the traditions and history of the community, are issues that contribute to the relativity of welfare. The old story of a happy man who was so poor that he did not even own a shirt is a fascinating one; it challenges the main discourse on welfare to look for such welfare-related issues that cannot be reached through political or administrative measures. These include natural conditions, climate, ethnical and personal factors, or a person's age and gender.

The main discourse on welfare is also challenged by many international factors, for example globalization and market economy. They are connected with welfare, but it is difficult if not next to impossible to affect them. It can also be expected that in the process of economic globalization the environmental impacts of human activities in industry, energy production, and traffic will have more serious consequences and concern wider areas than before.

What are the environmental factors that lead or actually force us to generate welfare? Are they external or mental factors or does welfare involve a certain type of relationship between people and their external world? This is an important and topical question when attempting to explicate the welfare of the nations and people of northern regions. It is nevertheless not easy to imagine

how coldness, ice, snow, darkness, and modest infrastructure could have attracted permanent settlement e.g. to northern regions. Further, how have people managed to create a way of living that provides a framework for good living conditions, the existence of a community, and continuity?

The core findings and results of the *happiness research tradition*¹, i.e. those related to health, family, and religion, are present also in Finnish research on happiness. But as for gender, education, and the size of domicile, the results in Finland seem to be insignificant. Age appears to have a negative effect on happiness, because happiness decreases along with age. The significance of income seems to be based on relativity, that is, a person should earn more in relation to another one or others. (Hirvonen & Mangeloja 2005, 10) Economic growth, which has raised the general income level, is a poor indicator of Finnish people's happiness – it may not be an indicator of it at all.

Family relations are one of the most important factors that increase happiness. For example, divorce decreases happiness by as many as five units; the end of a relationship eight units; widowhood four units; being single four and a half units; and cohabitation two units. Deterioration of health by one unit on a scale of 1 to 5 decreases happiness by as many as six units. Unemployment reduces happiness by six units; when occupational uncertainties and general unemployment go up ten percentage points, the corresponding decrease in happiness is three units in both cases. Trust affects happiness less than income (half unit). On the other hand, personal, political, and economic freedom (five units) and personal values (e.g. belief in God three and a half units) are much more significant than income. (Hirvonen & Mangeloja 2005, 9)

Universally, happiness seems to include at least health, income, and family (*Easterlin* 2001; *Lee at al.* 1999). (Hirvonen & Mangeloja 2005, 6)

¹ There does not appear to be much variance in the meaning of the word 'happiness' between different cultures and languages, at least not to an extent that would essentially affect the comparability of the concept.

THE MENTAL AND SOCIAL STATE OF SCHOOL WORK IN THE SCHOOLS OF THE PROJECT

The data concerning the teachers was gathered using the QPS questionnaire. The form was developed to function as a tool for measuring the mental, social, and organizational factors of work in the Nordic countries. The form contains multiple choice questions dealing with the following mental and social areas of work:

- a. work requirements
 - b. possibilities to influence
 - c. predictability and management of work
 - d. social support
 - e. management
 - f. working environment
 - g. relation between family and work
 - h. significance of work
 - i. commitment and work motives of the organization
- (Elo et al. 2001,7).

The sections of the meter have been built into arrays, according to which sum scales have been created. There are 17 of them in the questionnaire used in this study. The sum scales are a) quantitative requirements of work, b) decision-making requirements, c) learning requirements, d) clarity of the work role, e) role contradictions in work, f) challenges in work, g) chances to influence decision-making, h) chances to influence the work pace, i) predictability one month ahead, j) experiencing of control, k) support from the superior, l) support from colleagues, m) support from friends and relatives, n) empowering management, o) social atmosphere, p) innovative atmosphere, q) lack of equality, and s) consideration for the personnel.

A couple of important issues should be noted when comparing the project schools as work communities to other work communities. The schools under examination may differ from average Finnish comprehensive schools in many respects. It is also not known what the average Finnish comprehensive school is like. Second, the fast development of work communities may have altered the situation in such a way that the sum scale's standard reference value, which is based on history, no longer represents the

present situation. Thus, the following examination should be regarded with certain reservations.

Changes in the project schools' teaching work

A quick glance at the measurements shows that the schools differ in many respects from other Nordic work communities. 17 areas were observed and in 11 of them the project schools' mean value differs statistically from the norm value during all measurement periods or during a given year. Another general impression is that things have developed in a better direction, although the situation is not clear; there have been changes in both directions during the period of observation with respect to some issues. The project schools are more positive work communities than others with respect to the following issues:

	year 2003	2004	2005	norm value
1. quantitative requirements of work	3.14	3.18	3.01	3.26
2. learning requirements	2.40	2.40	2.33	2.63
3. role contradictions in work	2.00	1.91	1.82	2.24
4. chances to influence decision-making	3.14	3.04	3.07	2.76
5. predictability of work	4.31	3.96	4.04	3.57
6. support from the superior	3.44	3.77	3.66	3.49
7. support from friends and relatives	3.95	4.18	4.15	2.62
8. empowering management	3.16	3.20	3.19	2.73
9. innovative atmosphere	3.40	3.58	3.54	3.35

Table 1

In the list above (table 1), support from friends and relatives is a particularly noteworthy issue. The difference between the

schools and other work communities is statistically very significant. According to one interpretation, it could indicate a special feature in the work communities and environments. The communities are rather small. Everyone knows each other and there is daily interaction among the staff. Furthermore, connections with friends and relatives are close. Work-related requirements, possibilities to influence decision-making, and the predictability of work have been better handled than in other work communities. As for decreased role contradictions, support from the superior, and innovative atmosphere, it is interesting to observe how they have developed.

With respect to the following issues the project schools are more problematic work communities than others:

	year 2003	2004	2005	norm
1. challenges in work	4.41	4.43	4.38	3.94
2. clarity of the work role	4.30	4.22	3.03	4.21
3. chances to influence the work pace	2.71	2.44	2.41	2.81
4. consideration for the personnel	2.38	2.68	2.33	2.84

Table 2

The work is more challenging, the work role more fluctuating, and the chances to influence one's work pace smaller than in other Nordic work communities (table 2). The teachers also consider the personnel policy to be worse. This may be an indication of the changes schools have had to face since the beginning of the 1990s. In addition, particularly the schools in Rovaniemi have faced reorganization threats and activities during those years, and there were also mold problems in two of the project schools; all this may be in the background as well. Consequently, the pupils of Vaarampi have been evacuees for over a year and Korkalovaara Elementary School was closed down. The result may also have been affected by the merger of the town and municipality of Rovaniemi that took place at the beginning of 2006. Due to the merger, significant changes have been made to the service struc-

ture, which has created uncertainty and may appear in the results of 2005, which indicate that the work community is not feeling well.

When examining trends, i.e., whether the mean values of the measurements rise or decline, it can be noted that out of the 17 sum scales only three have properties that are clearly consistent. These are role contradictions in work ($X_{03} = 2.00$, $X_{04} = 1.91$, $X_{05} = 1.82$), chances to influence the work pace ($X_{03} = 2.71$, $X_{04} = 2.44$, $X_{05} = 2.41$), and support from colleagues ($X_{03} = 3.57$, $X_{04} = 3.80$, $X_{05} = 3.96$). Work-related contradictions have diminished, the chances to influence the work pace have improved, and colleague support has increased. However, there are more work-related contradictions and fewer opportunities to influence the work pace in the project schools than in other work communities in general. On the other hand, the teachers feel they get support from their colleagues as in other work communities. It must be noted, though, that the support increased strongly during the project.

The differences between the schools

The following examination of differences between the schools concerns only the measurements of 2005. This limitation is made because the schools have been under a lot of pressure during the recent years. This concerns especially the schools in Rovaniemi, as already mentioned. It is difficult to point out statistical differences between the schools of Sevettijärvi and Rovaniemi because of the small number of teachers in Sevettijärvi ($N = 5$). However, there are some differences, as the following examination shows. I will now compare the schools in pairs, which is the most illustrative way to point out the differences. I will only focus on differences that are statistically significant ($p < .05$). Let us start with the schools in Rovaniemi. I will first examine the differences between Vaaranlampi Elementary School and Korkalovaara Secondary School. The following differences were found (table 3):

	Vaaranlampi ES	Korkalovaara	p
1. support from colleagues	4.07	3.10	.01
2. social atmosphere	4.21	3.50	.001
3. lack of equality	1.83	2.70	.05

Table 3

The differences between the schools may originate from many sources. Korkalovaara Secondary School's personnel are subject teachers and they work with pubescent pupils. Second, the differences may be caused by the mold problems in the Vaaranlampi school building and the second evacuation within a short period of time. Korkalovaara Secondary School's high value in equality issues is worth noting because in statistical terms it is significantly above the average in the work community (norm value 1.90).

When comparing the elementary schools of Vaaranlampi and Korkalovaara, only one statistically significant difference was found, that is, challenges in work. The mean values of the sum scale were 4.67 in Vaaranlampi and 4.07 in Korkalovaara ($p < .000$). The following two differences were found between Vaaranlampi and Sevettijärvi (table 4):

	Vaaranlampi	Sevettijärvi	p
1. challenges in work	4.60	5.00	.05
2. lack of equality	1.80	1.10	.05

Table 4

With respect to the issues measured, each school represents a situation which is better than the norm value, but Sevettijärvi is statistically a better school than Vaaranlampi.

Next, we will compare the elementary and secondary schools of Korkalovaara. The following differences were found (table 5):

	Korkalovaara ES	Korkalovaara SS	p
chances to influence decision-making	3,43	2.65 .	.01
chances to influence the work pace	2.87	1.85	.001
empowering management	3.47	2.55	.01
social atmosphere	3.97	3.50	.05
lack of equality	1.47	2.70	.01

Table 5

Again, the elementary school vs. secondary school setting can be discerned in the background. In addition, the schools are of different size. The secondary school has hundreds of students while the elementary school is rather small. The lack of equality experienced by the elementary school teachers was remarkably low. It is not representative of the school as a whole.

As for Sevettijärvi it is difficult to find statistical differences due to the small number of teachers ($N = 5$). Challenges in work and support from colleagues were experienced differently in Korkalovaara Secondary School and Sevettijärvi. Korkalovaara Secondary School's value on challenges in work was 4.35 and Sevettijärvi's 5.00. The difference is statistically significant ($p < .01$). The mean value of support from colleagues was 3.10 in Korkalovaara secondary and 4.6 in Sevettijärvi.

The difference is statistically indicative ($p < .05$). A comparison between Sevettijärvi and Korkalovaara elementary revealed a statistically significant difference in the following two sum scales (table 6):

	Sevettijärvi	Korkalovaara es	p
1. Predictability one month ahead	4.60	3.47	.05
2. challenges in work	5.00	4.07	.000

Table 6

The predictability of work remains a trifle below the standard value in Korkalovaara Elementary School, which is indicative of the school's mold problems and the arrangements caused by them. Self-fulfilment and challenges in work are receive a good value in each school, and very good in Sevettijärvi.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The examination shows that the atmosphere of the project schools is good in light of the circumstances. The results do not indicate the educational reductions and structural changes. Furthermore, they do not show the accidents and ensuing actions that the project schools have faced in Rovaniemi. At least not to an extent that is statistically significant. It should be kept in mind, though, that the groups compared are so small that to make a difference the mean values must differ very much. In Sevettijärvi the teachers of the school are remarkably uniform. The deviations are small and measurements positive. The project itself may have an effect on the positive result. This conclusion is also supported by the fact that in many measurement scales the change was positive. A more detailed examination would undoubtedly bring out greater differences. This could also be accomplished using the qualitative research method. For development purposes and to enable international comparison, the present study will suffice.

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SOCIAL PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITIES WITH INCOMPLETE FAMILY AT SCHOOL

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INTRODUCTION

This article represents the characteristic of the incomplete family as a social institute, defines its typology, brings about causes of spreading the mentioned social phenomenon and impact of families of this type on psychological and personal development of child's personality. The article presents the materials of studying socio-demographic status of pupils' families in Murmansk.

NOTION OF INCOMPLETE FAMILY, ITS TYPOLOGY

Traditionally, the main tool of up bringing is a family. All that a child gets in his childhood in the family, he will keep during his whole life. At the present moment the number of so-called “incomplete families” is growing. Nowadays every third child in Russia is brought up in a single parent family, because the number of divorces and the number children, born out of wedlock, is increasing (Antonov & Medvedkov, 1996).

There are different opinions about families, where only one parent is engaged in bringing up a child. Some people consider that it is always bad, some say that for a child it is absolutely all the same, who brings him up, others prove that an incomplete family has certain advantages, because a single parent has a personal responsibility for all, that is happening in the family and does not try to shuffle off the blame on other members. An incomplete family is a group of close relatives, consisting of one parent with one or several under age children (Kon, 1988). As a rule, it is a family, where a woman is the head. Among incomplete families there are the so-called other families, they are also called incomplete expanded families (for example, a sister and a brother without parents; grandparents and grandchildren). In the city of Murmansk there are also families of the so-called “madaddies” where fathers bring up children alone without women. Totally in Murmansk in secondary schools there are about 380 families with only fathers. There is also an additional category – the so-called functionally incomplete families. In this group there are two parents, but professional or other reasons leave them little time for the family. Communication with children in such families is possible only at the week-end, but only for a few hours. More over, some parents absolutely forget about their educational functions.

The main types of incomplete families are unlawful, bereaved, divorced, disintegrated (Buyanov, M. (1988). Depending upon the fact who brings up a child, maternal and paternal incomplete families are distinguished. As a variant of an incomplete family there are families, in which the parents are not own, but adoptive parents or guardians.

Causes of appearance of incomplete families

Respectively there are the following reasons for incomplete families and their peculiarities.

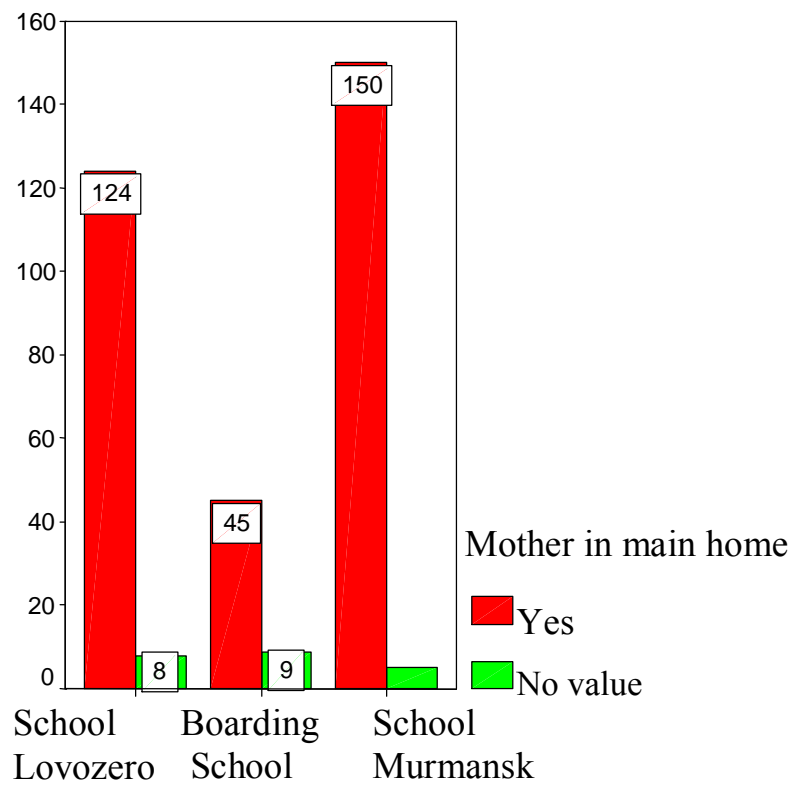
1. Parents' divorce. As I have already said, at the present moment every third child is brought up in a family without a mother or a father. The number of divorces is increasing. During the life more than 40% of spouses divorce. As a result, about 0,5 million children are left without one parent annually.

2. Births out of wedlock. At the background of decreasing birth rate in Russia, there is an increase in the number of children, born out of wedlock. About 40% of children, born out of wedlock, are recognized by their fathers and registered on the joint claim of the father and the mother. This can be a real marriage with family connections, but unstable relations.

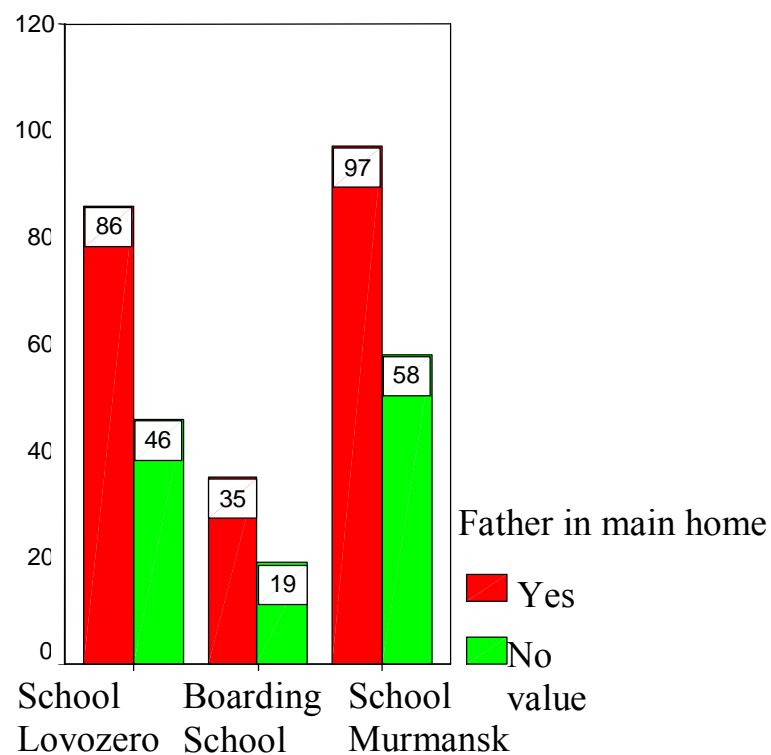
3. Bereaved incomplete family appears as a result of one parent's death. Although the loss of a close person is a hard for a family, the other member can stick together and support each other. Family relations in such families are not destroyed: relations with other relatives are kept.

4. Expanded incomplete families. As a result of loss of parents (death, deprivation of paternal rights, alcoholism, prison) grandparents, who are often pensioners, start to bring up the grandchildren. Such families have a low income, problems with health, inability to adapt for the modern world.

We considered it necessary to study the social demographic component of families of the pupils at schools, participating in our project.



Pic.1



Pic.2

It is possible to make the conclusion that the tendency for the increase in the number of incomplete families is clearly seen.

Most incomplete families appear because of a father's leaving the family.

INCOMPLETE FAMILY AS A FACTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL ILL-BEING OF A CHILD

Deviations in a child's mental development

It is known that emotional disturbance, deviations in behaviour and other psychological problems appear because of negative events in the childhood. That is why it is important that every child has both father and mother. What are the consequences of an incomplete family's educational influence on a child's personality?

Let us consider the perspectives of up bringing in a family, for example, without a father, because in most cases an incomplete family consists of a mother with a child. The absence of a father is an important pre-condition of deviations in a child's mental development. According to psychologists' opinion (Buyanov, 1988), lack of a man's influence in incomplete families is followed by:

- the harmonious development of intellectual sphere is disturbed, mathematical, space, analytical abilities of a child suffer while verbal abilities develop;
- the process of sex identification of boys and girls becomes less clear;
- communication with the opposite skills becomes more complicated;
- abundant attachment for a mother develops, because there is not a family member, who could "distract" the child from the mother.

According to specialists' opinion, the distinctive peculiarities in the intellectual development of a child from an incomplete family start to appear in the school age, when intellectual activities are most intensive (Rapoport, 1963). How a man's participation in up bringing is connected with the formation of these qualities?

Men, as a rule, have better mathematical abilities, well-developed space orientation, they are often skilful, their mind is more directed at things, but not people.

Women are better than men at verbal skills, they have a bigger word-stock, they can operate with notions, are capable to understand quickly the whole situation. They are more sensible for nuances of personal interaction.

For the full intellect's development of a child it is important, that there are both types of thinking (male and female) in his surrounding. The absence of a father in a family (what ever it can be connected with: divorce, death, separation, frequent and long business trips) negatively influences the development of mathematical abilities of both boys and girls. According to the results of many investigations, the abilities for Math's, especially Geometry, is a quality, which suffers most in case of male influence lack. Underdevelopment of these abilities is not connected with economical difficulties of an incomplete family or with the conflicts. It is based on the specific of intellectual environment, created by a man.

We speak about the most frequently met tendencies (Hamalajnen, 1993) . There are many examples when children, who have grown up without a father, were distinguished by great intellectual abilities.

Deviations in sex identification

Another important psychological problem, connected with up bringing of a child in a incomplete family, is deviations in the sex identification, bad skills of sex-role behavior. Medics and psychologists notice that, loss or underdevelopment of the sense of sex raise deep changes in the personality. A great role belongs to the father in the development of specific sex psychological qualities of men and women. It was noticed that during the first months of a child's life a father (in comparison with a mother) plays with a boy or a girl in a different way, thus starting to form their sex identity.

According to many psychologists (Buyanov, 1988; Kon, 1988), the first five years of life play a determining role in the development of manhood among boys and heterosexual among girls.

The longer a child lives without a father during this period (because of his death or divorce), the more serious difficulties of sex identification can be, if another man does not substitute the father. The boys, brought up only by a mother, may acquire female traits of character, such as verbal aggression, preference of games and activities, characteristic of girls, or, on the other hand, the development of “compensatory manhood” with a typical combination of male behavior and dependent character. A father plays an important role in a girl’s growth. He is the man #1 for her, his features, peculiarities of behavior; nuances of relations become an example for the future communication with men. Children master psychosocial roles in the pre-school age: boys at 5-8 years, for girls this period is wider (3-8 years).

One of the problems, which children from incomplete families come across, is their inability to resist life difficulties, uncertainty and, consequently, a low level of their social activity.

Deformation of a child’s personality

The result of a maternal up bringing in incomplete families can be deformation of a child’s personality in the early age. In a complete family the emotional background is created by a mother. She keeps the positive family atmosphere of understanding and confidence. A father carries on functions control and regulation of behaviour. In an incomplete family a mother tries to realize all these functions, and not always successfully. In the first place boys suffer from maternal up bringing.

One of the most popular peculiarities of maternal up bringing in incomplete families is a mother’s abundant care of her son.

So in national and international literature the problems of an incomplete family are well described, but there is not enough information about how to help such families, how to solve their psychological, social and pedagogical problems, what forms of work should be done with parents and children in order to improve their emotional well-being in a family, and to increase the risk of different mental deviations, deformation of personality and sex identification among the children.

In addition to the obligatory sociological study on the project “Psychosocial well-being of schoolchildren” (questionnaire) we carried out an additional study in the junior classes at Murmansk school #3. The number of families (from 1st to 4th forms) is 72, 48 are complete families, 24 are incomplete. Besides, we studied the biography of children, the social teacher’s documentation, visited some families and found out families’ status in junior classes of Murmansk school #3. Families’ well-being was determined by the following parameters:

- demographic – a family’s structure (big, including other relatives, or nuclear, including only parents and children; complete and incomplete; a family without children, one child-family, little and large families);
- social and cultural – the educational level of parents, their participation in society;
- social and economic - financial characteristics and occupation of the parents;
- technical and hygienic – housing conditions, peculiarities of way of life.

In order to study the level of the notion “family”, we considered the presentations of children from incomplete and complete families about the distribution of parents functions, used the methodic “My family” and “Everyday life of my family” (“Practical encyclopedia of family upbringing” by E. Ryleeva).

We worked especially carefully with children that are brought up in incomplete families, have adoptive parents or have lost a close person recently.

Interpretation of the method “My family”

According to the result of this study we can make the following conclusion: children from incomplete families do not consider an again created community as a family.

We can say that children at this age have weaker developed notions of a family and marriage.

The method "Everyday life of my family"

According to the method developed by (Homentauskas, G. (1989), children from incomplete families showed the following results:

Five children (out of 11) stated that the only parent or other relatives carry out the main duties about the house.

Two children ascribe the performance of household duties to unreal members of the family.

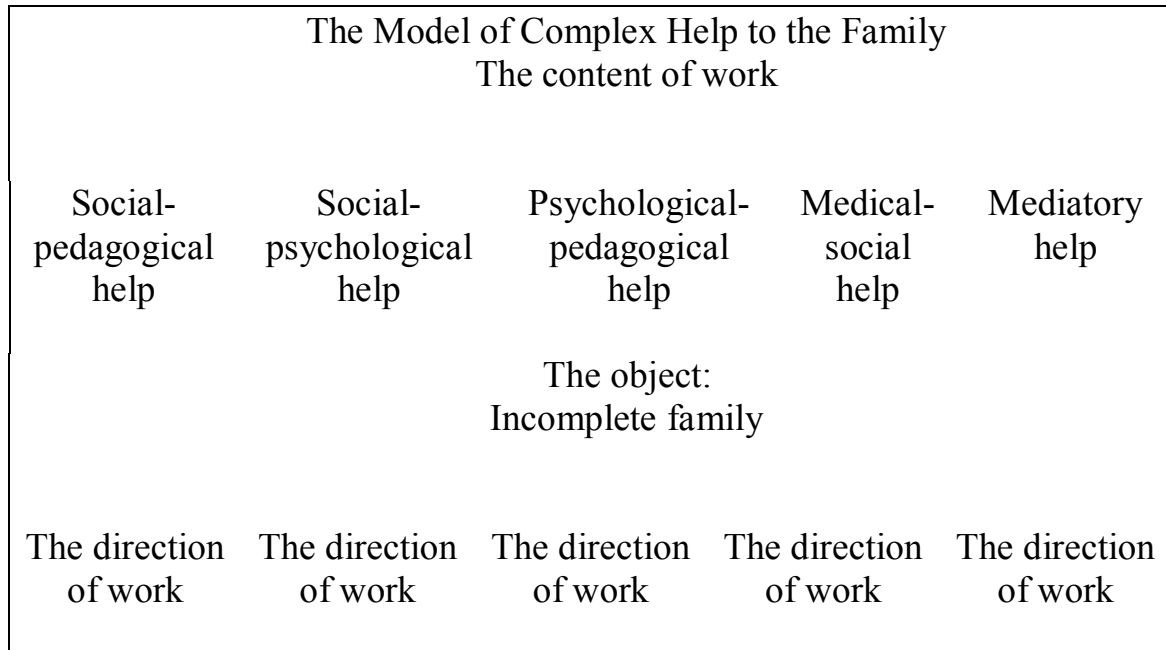
Three children say that both parents carry out the duties.

One child excluded both parents from the scheme (although he has a mother, the grandparents perform all paternal duties).

Children from complete families

All the children state that both parents perform the paternal duties. Basing on this study, we may come to the conclusion that in incomplete families all the social and household functions, including financial and educational, are blame on one parent, and it can become a norm for a child in the future.

Social-pedagogical recommendations on formation of family presentations among the pupils.
 Social-pedagogical recommendations for single mothers.
 Recommendations for single mothers after divorce.



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SPECIFIC FEATURES OF SOCIALIZATION IN SETTLEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Socialization is human development in the process of his interaction with the environment. Socialization is a permanent process which does not stop until the death of a human being; each man is at the same time the object (as one who is influenced) and the subject (as one who influences) of socialization.

Society wants a person to adopt social roles successfully, build a strong family, adequately participate in social and economic life, be a law-abiding citizen. That is why in the process of socialization a person consciously and instinctively solves various challenges: from natural ones related to the achievement of a certain level of physical and sexual development to socio-cultural and socio-psychological connected with the development of moral, ethic, axiological orientations, self-realization and self-esteem in life.

At each age stage socialization challenges are specific and objective, i.e. they do not depend on subjective preferences and wishes. If not all challenges are solved then socialization is not complete and efficient.

Efficiency of socialization also depends on the environment a person lives in. If individual's functioning and living takes place in the unfavorable environment which doesn't let solve basic challenges of socialization then an individual can become a victim of this process. With this connection the question of conditions of society cultural experience adoption becomes topical.

TYPE OF SETTLEMENT AS THE FACTOR OF SOCIALIZATION

An important condition of socialization –meso-factor – is a type of settlement where an individual lives. Rural settlements, villages have their own specific features which are important when understanding and creating conditions for successful development, education and training of children.

In a settlement an individual falls into traditional rural and urban mode of life. As a rule, he adopts this kind of composition of traditional and urban norms which exists in the settlement and differs from original rural and urban norms. This composition can be viewed as a specific mode of life.

According to researches, among the basic features of a settlement mode of life are (A.V.Mudrik, 1999):

1. dependence of labour on rhythms and cycles of the year;
2. harder than in city labour conditions;
3. few opportunities for labour mobility of inhabitants;
4. more unanimity of labour and life, more inalterability and labour intensity in housekeeping and farming;
5. restricted choice of activities in free time;
6. saving elements of traditional neighborly commune, which is characterized by rather stable composition of residents, poor socio-professional and cultural differentiation, typical close relational and neighbours contacts;
7. time flow perception as «slow, unhurried», measured life; it leads to decrease in nervous-psychic and emotional disorders, stress;
8. «openness» of communication (absence of big social and cultural differences between inhabitants, fewness of real and potential contacts make communication of inhabitants rather close and encompassing all life sides);
9. strong social control over human behavior (close relations of inhabitants lead to the situation when «everyone knows everyone and about everyone», anonymous life of an individual becomes impossible, each life situation becomes an object for assessment of the neighbourhood).

Life in a settlement causes inconsistency in teenagers and

youth behavior: on the one hand, there is an objective age need to stand out, reveal own «I», on the other hand, strict norms of communication and control do not let a teenager «fall out» from the existing norm standards, restricting freedom of self-revealing. As a result, there is weak reflexivity, low emotionality as a means to solve this contradiction. The youth tries to find suitable group and «assimilate» in it. Not high cultural level results in the corresponding level of communication which content is practical, little informative and usually event-trigger character.

10. Alcoholism has become for a contemporary settlement and a village a real «social scourge» and a topical social problem. Drinking alcohol is at present a norm, which is criticized by word only, not practically. Alcoholism is mostly perceived as it is («Everyone drinks alcohol, my husband (father, son) does»), a universal explanation system is forming which offers excuses of addictive behavior as caused by external factors (society, state etc., not by inner reasons).

Given features changes depending on where exactly the settlement is located. Such circumstances are important as presence or absence of educational services, leisure time, sport, health and cultural institutions, location near the city, good communication means, transport routes etc., i.e. level of development of the settlement.

Concept of social sphere

Social sphere is an original system where 3 units can be singled out; each is an independent sub-system (P.D.Pavlenok, 2001):

1. social structure of the society as a division of people into public and social groups and relations between them.

Social division of people into social groups is determined by three basic factors (P.A.Sorokin, 1992): income, power, education, sometimes prestige of activity of an individual is singled out.

2. social infrastructure which is a complex of branches that provide service to people and promote life activities of people,

3. labour conditions of an individual, his life, leisure time, health, opportunity to choose occupation, place of dwelling, access to values, rights and individual freedoms.

Let's consider, how quality and a level of development of each of these blocks is estimated by inhabitants of settlement.

Research method

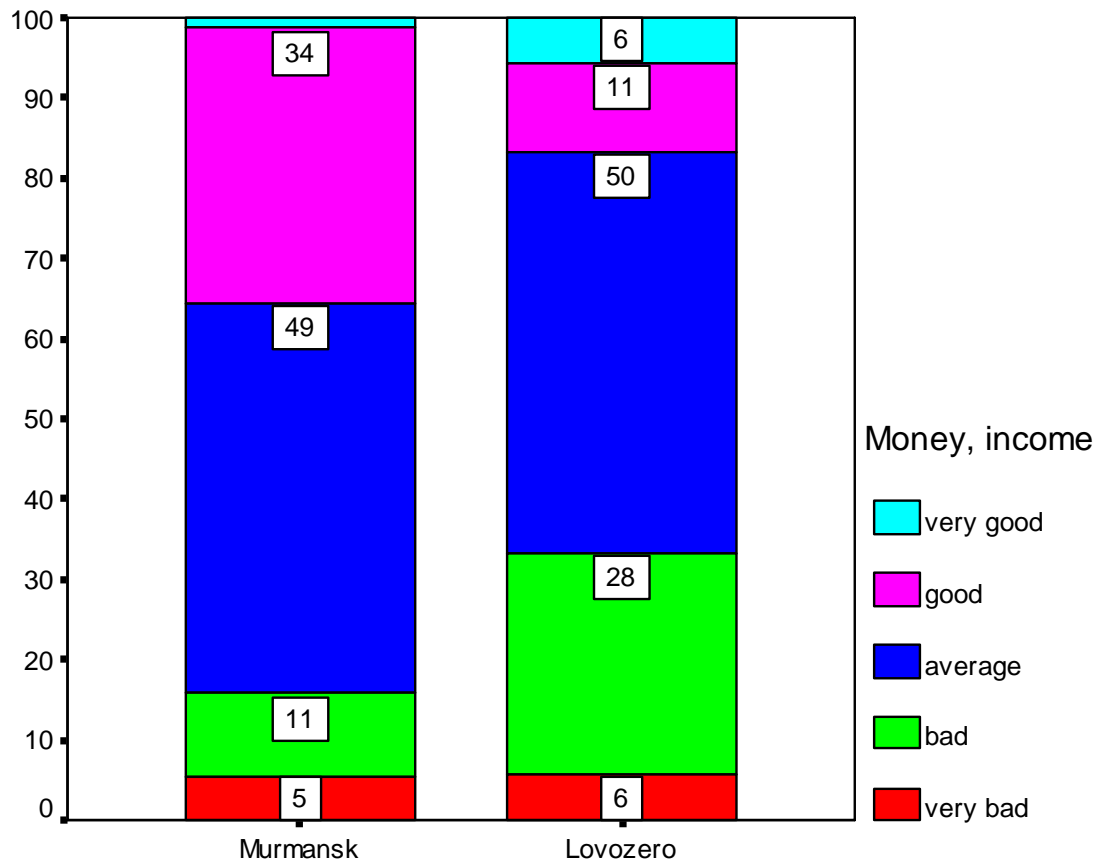
Within the project «Psychosocial well-being of children and teenagers of the Arctic region» we carried on a survey which let us find out how present-day inhabitants of settlements and towns assess social differentiation; it also let us compare¹ the data. Doctor of Psychology, Professor of Department of Psychology of Development, MHI A.I.Podolsky made a questionnaire for the survey. The survey included 96 parents of children of which 76 (81 %) were from Murmansk school №3 and 18 (19 %) from two schools in Lovozero.

¹The statistical differences between the schools have not been calculated. Therefore it is not possible to make conclusions about the significance of the comparisons. (note by editors)

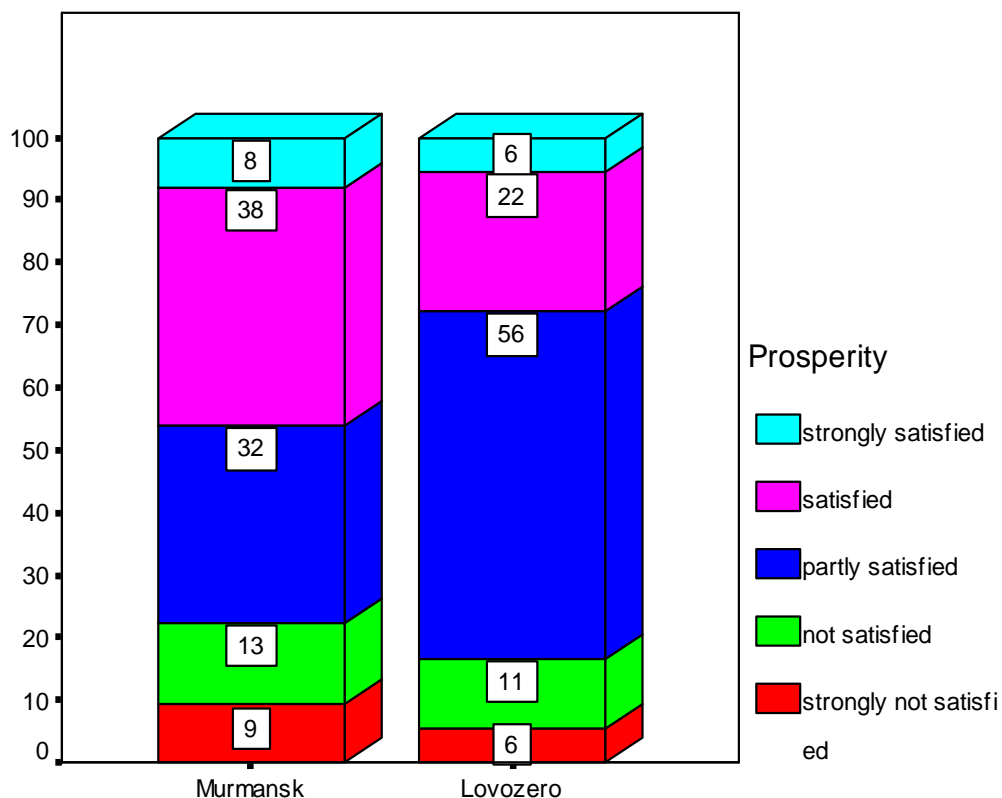
SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Social structure of the population

Income level of population (pic.1) shows not only prosperity but social differentiation as well. Much difference between extreme indicators shows economic and social instability, low level of social security. In this case we do not meet such cases: the majority of respondents point out an average or good income (84% Murmansk inhabitants and 67% Lovozero ones). However, poverty level is higher in Lovozero by 18%, i.e. 2 times higher.

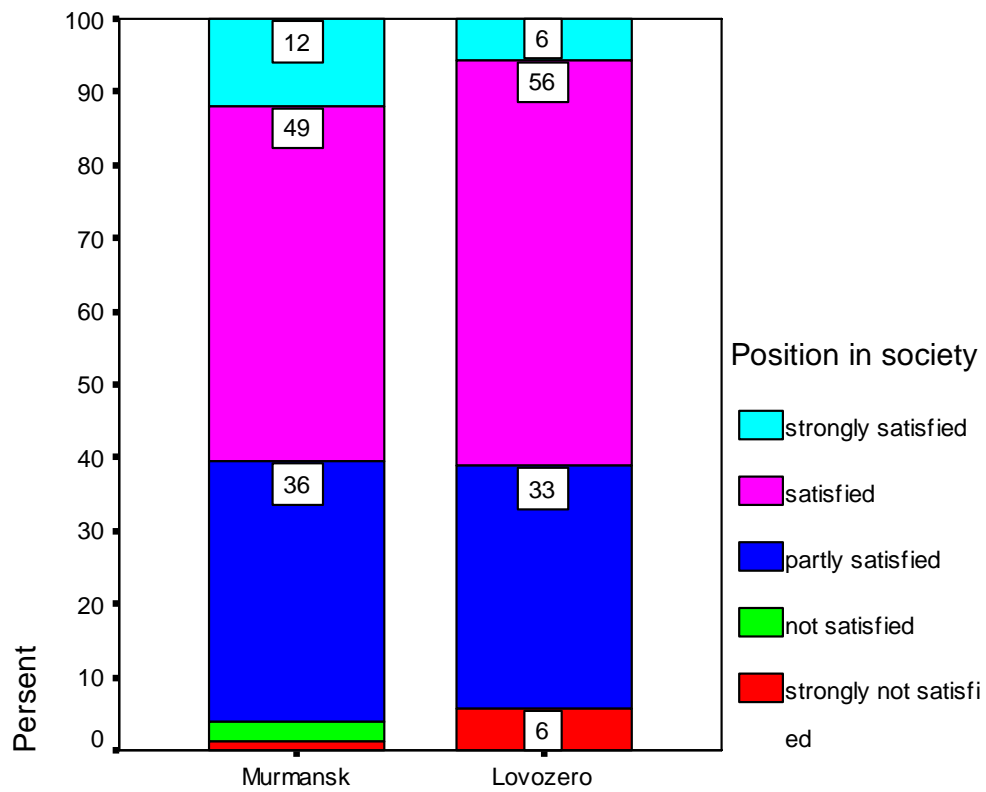


Pic. 1.

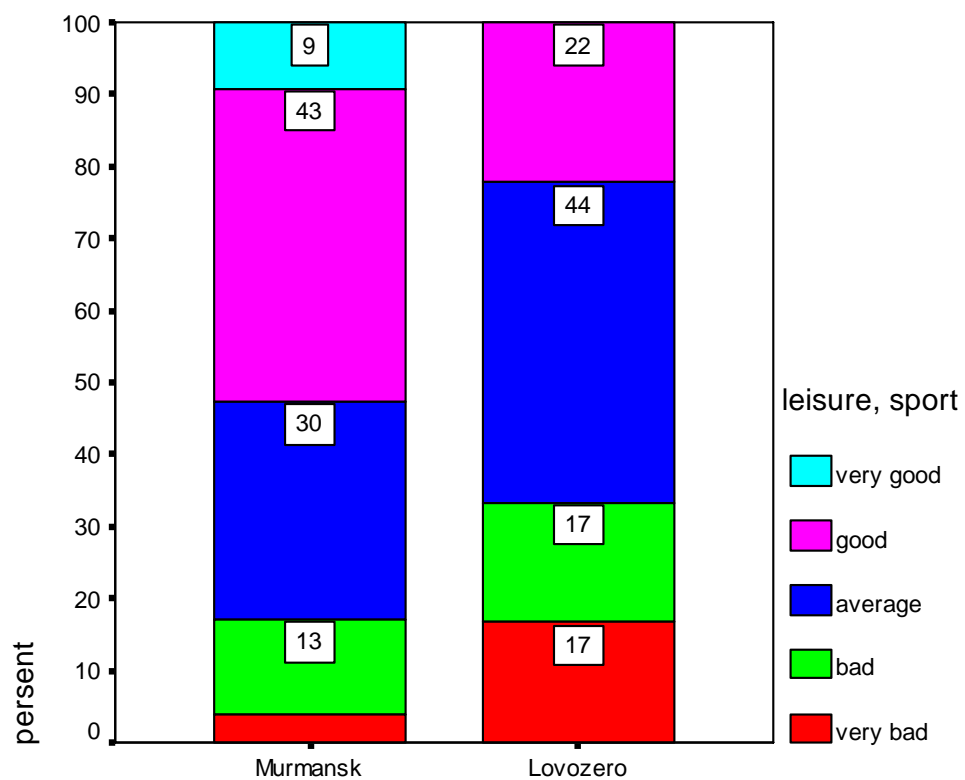


Pic. 2

If to compare the data with esteems of material well-being (pic.2) then we can draw a conclusion: 1) there is no great difference between income level and material wealth; it indirectly proves the trustworthiness of the research; 2) for Lovozero it is more typical to be satisfied with own material wealth, to be more tolerant to own income. In our opinion, it can be connected with a lower level of claims, orientation toward average norms, certain life mode, which is characteristic of this settlement with fewer opportunities to spend money (fewer shops, less range of goods), with poor level of knowledge about possible everyday life services. But the level of satisfaction with own position in the society is practically the same among Lovozero inhabitants (average 62%) and Murmansk ones (61%) (Pic.3).



Pic. 3



Pic. 4

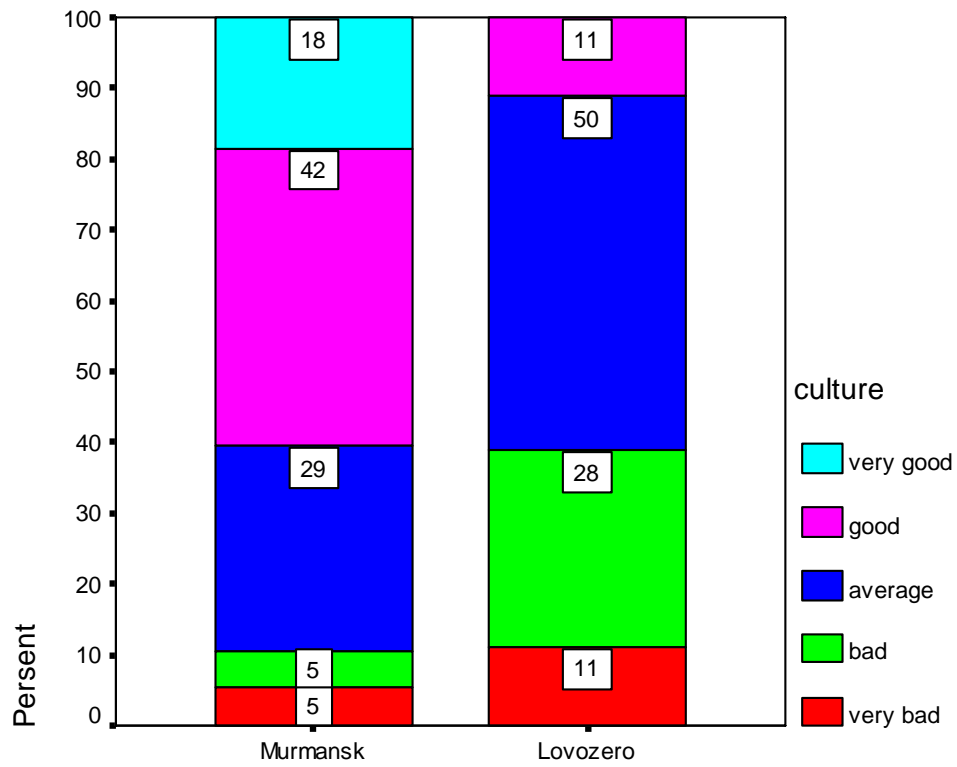
Social infrastructure of the settlement and the city by the eyes of the inhabitants

The next unit to analyze is social infrastructure (complex of branches that provide service to people and promote life activities of people).

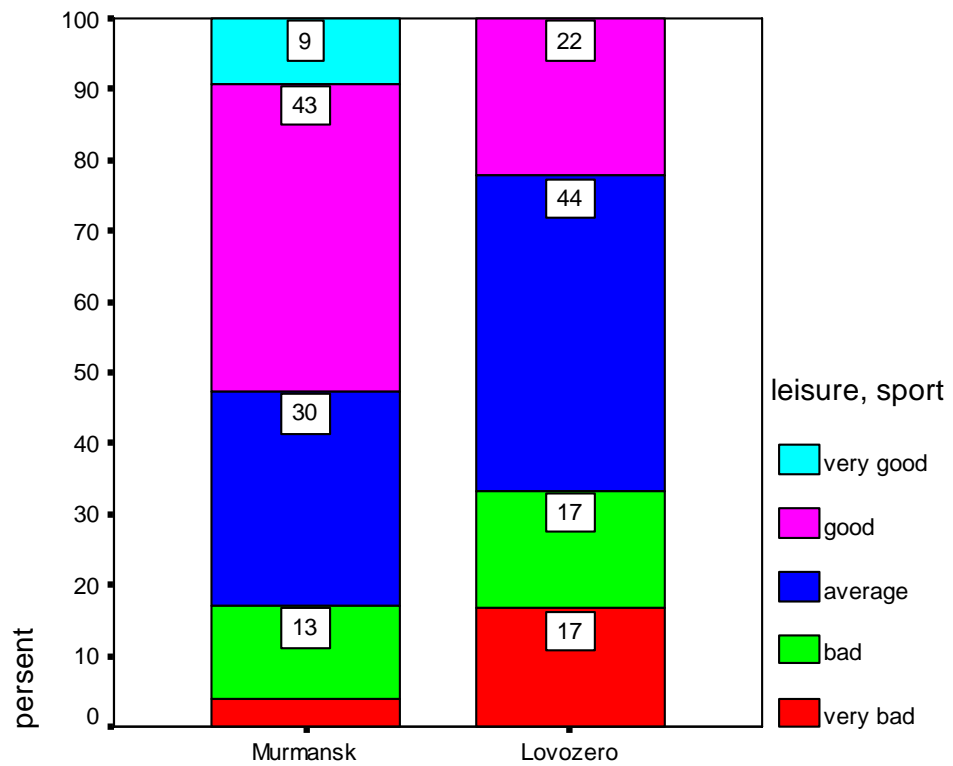
Conditions of life. In this case we start not with social standards (which lack unambiguity) but with common life ideas about quality of conditions of life. Assessment criteria are rather subjective; they correspond to the individual ideas about necessary quality of social infrastructure.

Conditions of life were assessed on the basis of availability of necessary shops, transport, socio-cultural, leisure time institutions. It can be noted that Lovozero inhabitants are much less satisfied with the conditions of life than people in Murmansk. Availability of sport and leisure institutions are assessed by people in a different way (pic. 4): 34% Lovozero and 17% Murmansk inhabitants assessed them as unsatisfactory; 22% and 51% correspondingly – as good.

Availability of cultural and art institutions was assessed in the following way (pic. 5): as bad - 39% (Lovozero) and 10% (Murmansk); good – 11% (Lovozero) and 60% (Murmansk). As we can see answers are different. According to the inhabitants' opinion, in Lovozero there are 4-6 times less possibilities to spend free time in cultural and art institutions in comparison with Murmansk; it influences cultural and educational level of population, its inclusion in general information stream and exchange, world communication. We can see the same situation when assessing possibilities to attend sport and leisure institutions (pic. 6): only 22% Lovozero inhabitants can satisfy their needs in sport and can organize their leisure time as they want. The majority of settlement inhabitants think that their opportunities to go in for sport are average (44%) and bad (34%).



Pic. 5.



Pic. 6.

LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE RURAL AND CITY INHABITANTS

In the last unit we assessed such living conditions as opportunities to use money, housing conditions, medical services, level of social security, political situation, labour conditions, availability of information, and freedom of religion.

We will only touch upon the factors which show much difference between the settlement and the city:

- opportunities to use money in Lovozero were assessed as bad 4,5 times oftener than in Murmansk. As we have already said, it's connected with the lack of institutions of everyday life and social services, shops, entertainment and cultural centers;

- housing conditions were 2 times oftener considered as "bad" in Murmansk and 2,5 2 times oftener considered as "good" in Lovozero. It is explained by the fact that in the city there is no house building and at the same time there is lack of accommodation. In the settlement most young people tend to leave it as there are no working places, high death rate of population, market prices for flats are low, blocks of flats stand empty;

- medical services was assessed as "bad" in Lovozero 3 times oftener than in Murmansk and didn't get any positive assessment; real facts prove it (there is no hospital in the town, but only medical assistant. There are surgery-hours of a specialist only once a week);

- the majority of Murmansk citizens feel protected in social and legal respects (more than 75%). But in Lovozero 45 % respondents were dissatisfied with the social security of them and their children.

- among the parents in Murmansk there were no unemployed while in Lovozero 17% respondents are unemployed. At the same time equal number of parents (56%) both in Murmansk and Lovozero assess labour conditions as «good»;

- availability of information was assessed in Lovozero as «bad» 5 times oftener and as "good" 3 times more seldom. There is one local newspaper of the local authorities in the settlement, access to the internet appeared in 2006, the only source of entertainment is television, which does not sufficiently highlight local and regional problems.

Benefits and drawbacks of settlement as a sphere of socialization

The settlement has its benefits and drawbacks as a sphere of socialization compared to the city.

It is more typical for a city: high level of mobility (territorial, social), more choices (of social and anti-social behavior, socio-cultural values), big information streams, various contacts, higher level of social differentiation.

But there are positive socio-psychological and socio-cultural factors in a settlement, which should be considered when activating social work in a settlement (P.D.Pavlenok, 2001):

1. Close contacts with the environment
2. Personal farmstead
3. Adherence to the traditions
4. Family role
5. Intrafamily cooperation
6. Role of informal support
7. Public opinion role

The results of our survey let us add high level of unity, communication and satisfaction with life, tolerance, national-cultural values.

Role of the social work in the decision of the social problems of a settlement

The new paradigm of development of social work and social policy is necessary for the decision of social problems of settlement. The new paradigm should be aimed at raising personal dignity and value of an individual as a subject of life changes. Researcher M.P.Gurjanova (2000) on the basis of Russian experience describes the essence of the new paradigm in the following way:

- Building social services in communes;
- Development of effective model of social work in each commune that meets needs, traditions of inhabitants;
- Integral interdepartmental approach to structuring social work in each commune, which lets arrange complex service

- for all commune inhabitants — children and adults;
- development and preparation of qualified staff — commune social teachers for social patronage of families and social workers who specialize in support of problem groups;
- priority of preventive and developing forms of social work; involvement of population in providing help those in need, in making decisions in social policy of the municipality;
- recognizing roles of volunteer, charity, religious organizations and their involvement in official system of social provision.

CONCLUSION

Services of social and socio-pedagogical help can be developed on the basis of a local school as of the most stable element of the social sphere turning it into community center for social work with children and grown-ups, families, elderly people and invalids. School has many functions among which the most important are molding child's personality, his world view, responsible and socially active civil position. To our mind, for this purposes it is necessary to create at school multi-professional groups of specialists oriented at the development of school communities, at providing social, cultural, psycho-pedagogical help to pupils, their parents and close neighbourhood.

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LEVEL OF PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING OF INHABITANTS OF URBAN AND RURAL AREAS (on the example of the city of Murmansk and settlement Lovozero)

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INTRODUCTION

The article presents the results of the third stage of the research, carried out by the teachers of Department of Social Pedagogic and Social Work of Murmansk State Pedagogical University within the project ArctiChildren «Psycho-social well-being of children and teenagers of the Arctic region».

The ¹ article presents analysis of the results received in the research questionnaire, which was made for pupils' parents by A.I. Podolsky, Doctor of Psychology, Professor from Department of Psychology of Development, MHI. The total number of respondents in 2005 are: 76 from Murmansk secondary school №3 and 18 from Lovozero secondary school.

¹ The statistical differences between the schools have not been calculated. Therefore it is not possible to make conclusions about the significance of the comparisons. (note by editors)

ASSESSMENT OF HEALTH

The majority of respondents assess their health as «satisfactory»: 64,5% parents from Murmansk secondary school and 55,6% from settlement school. Approximately equal number of parents assessed their health as «good»: 30,3% in Murmansk school and 33,3% in Lovozero. The extreme positive assessment «very good» was marked only in Lovozero and represented by small percentage – 5,6% of all respondents. Assessment “bad” got 5,3% answers in Murmansk school and 5,6% in Lovozero school.

Indicators of well-being

For the majority of respondents last year was successful: 44,4% parents in secondary school of the settlement replied “I suppose, yes”; 33,3% - “yes”. The percentage of similar answers in Murmansk is a little lower: 40,8% answers are “I suppose, yes”, 32,9% - “yes”. 27,7% parents from Murmansk secondary school and 27,8% from Lovozero agreed with the statement “my inner state, mood has become worse”. The difference is only 0,1%.

Analyzing the phrase “on the whole my life develops successful” the negative answer (“no”) was marked in 6,6% parents’ answers in Murmansk secondary school, “I suppose, no” – 13,2% parents in the same school. “No” was not chosen in Lovozero at all, “I suppose, no” was chosen by 11,1% parents. The majority of parents in Lovozero secondary school agree with the statement: 22,2% “yes”, 66,7% “I suppose, yes”. In Murmansk secondary school the percentage of “yes” answers is higher - 35,5%, “I suppose, yes” – 44,7%.

26, 4% respondents from school №3 and 33,3% from Lovozero school agree that their “well-being has become worse”. The majority of teachers from both schools tend to deny the truth of the phrase. “No” got 55,6% answers of Lovozero inhabitants and 47,4% of Murmansk citizens. “I suppose, no” was chosen by 11,1% Lovozero and 26,3% Murmansk respondents. And the majority of people consider themselves “happy people”: 72,2% in Lovozero and 87,6% in Murmansk school №3.

The majority of respondents in Murmansk school surely deny (“no”) the statement “there are changes for the worse in my life” – 61,8% and less than half of all respondents in Lovozero – 44,4%. «I suppose, no» was chosen by 22,2% Lovozero and 14,5% Murmansk people.

The majority of respondents manage to find in life “sources of joy and support”, it is proved by the answers. 76,3% parents of pupils from Murmansk school and 61,1% parents from Lovozero said «yes». Percentage of «I suppose, yes» in Lovozero is higher: 33,3% against 17,1%. Sure “no” was not marked in Lovozero questionnaire answers. 3,3% respondents chose «no» in Murmansk.

10,5% respondents from school №3 deny that their “life has improved”, this number is higher in Lovozero – 22,2%. Approximately equal number of respondents said “yes” when analyzing this statement: 26,3% parents in Murmansk and 27,8% in Lovozero. (The difference is 1,5%).

The same situation is with the answers to the statement «much is not possible to me». “Yes” was chosen by 14,5% respondents from Murmansk secondary school and 16,7% from Lovozero (the difference is 2,2%). “I suppose, yes” in Lovozero is a little higher – 33,3% against 23,7%.

Conditions influencing well-being

The goal of the next questionnaire part is to find out what conditions influence health of respondents: living conditions in the area of dwelling, labour conditions, medical services, material well-being of family, political and ecological situation in the region.

Analysis of answers on income level lets make a conclusion. The majority of respondents point that their income is “average” or “good”: 66,7% Lovozero inhabitants and 83,2% Murmansk citizens. However, poverty level in Lovozero is by 18% higher, i.e. 2 times. If to compare the data with the esteems of material well-being the following conclusion can be drawn. There is no much difference between income level and level of material well-being, prosperity; it indirectly proves trustworthiness of research. Those “partially satisfied” with level of material well-being are

31,6% Murmansk and 55,6% Lovozero inhabitants; “I suppose, I’m satisfied” was marked in 38,2% Murmansk and 22,2% Lovozero answers; “fully satisfied” was chosen by 7,9% Murmansk and 5,6% Lovozero inhabitants. 9,2% Murmansk and 5,6% Lovozero inhabitants are “completely dissatisfied” with their level of prosperity. Lovozero respondents are more satisfied with level of prosperity as well as income level. Satisfaction with the position in the society is practically the same in Lovozero (62%) and Murmansk (61%) citizens.

The next part of the analysis are social structure features. Criteria for living conditions assessment is subjective and depends on level of personal claims. On the whole people in Lovozero are less pleased with the living conditions than in Murmansk. Availability of sport and leisure institutions got different assessments: “unsatisfactory” (“bad” and “very bad”) – 17,1% in Murmansk and 33,4% in Lovozero. “Very good” opportunities to spend free time and go in for sport were marked only in Murmansk questionnaires – 9,2% of all respondents share this opinion.

Availability of art and culture institutions got the following assessments. “Very good” was chosen only in Murmansk – 18,4%. “Very bad” got 5,3% answers in Murmansk and 11,1% in Lovozero. Thus we can say that difference is much. Half of Lovozero respondents (50%) assess their opportunities to attend art institutions as “average”. The same answer was chosen by 28,9% Murmansk people.

The last part for analysis is devoted to possibilities to use money, level of housing conditions, medical services, social protection; political situation in the region, labour conditions, availability of information, freedom of religion.

Possibilities to use money are assessed as “very good: only by 2,6% Murmansk citizens. There are no answers “very good” and “very bad” in Lovozero. Possibilities to use money in Lovozero are assessed “bad” 4,5 times oftener than in Murmansk. It proves the lack of cultural institutions, institutions of social services, shops, entertainment centers in Lovozero. A little more that a half people in Murmansk – 53,9% and 44,4% in Lovozero said that opportunities are “average”.

“Very bad” and “bad” living conditions were not represented in answers of Lovozero respondents while 10,5% Murmansk peo-

ple chose this variant. “Average” got 44,7% answers of Murmansk respondents and 27,8% Lovozero ones. The majority of Lovozero inhabitants assess their housing conditions as “good” and “very good” - 72,2% all together. Percentage of parents in Murmansk who are fully satisfied with housing conditions is much lower – 44,7%.

Medical service in the settlement is assessed as unsatisfactory. Positive assessments (“good” and “very good”) were not chosen by Lovozero people while 30% Murmansk citizens selected this assessment of medical service. “Average” medical service chose 38,9% Lovozero inhabitants and 52,6% Murmansk ones. “Bad” medical service was marked 3 times oftener in Lovozero than in Murmansk.

Assessing availability of information Lovozero inhabitants didn’t use positive esteem (“very good”). At the same time only 22,2% of them assess it as “good”. Both “good” and “very good” assessments score 61,9%. Location far from the center influences availability of information and leads to a certain isolation. (Access to the Internet was opened in Lovozero only in 2006).

The next criterion is political situation in the region. Political situation in the region was assessed as “average” by 53,9% Murmansk citizens. The same opinion is shared by 27,8% Lovozero inhabitants. “Very good” political situation got 11,1% answers in Lovozero and only 2,6% in Murmansk. Negative assessment (“very bad”) was chosen 3,9% Murmansk people and 5,6% Lovozero ones. Analysis of this criterion presupposes assessment of a general level of political literacy and activity which are not revealed in our research.

Against this background the majority of Murmansk people feel social and legal security. However, “average” is marked in 51,3% questionnaires in Murmansk, “good” – 21,1%, “very good” – 2,6%. In Lovozero the results are the following: “average” – 22,2%, “good” - 27,8%, «very good» - 5,6%. Thus, we can say that Murmansk citizens feel more socially and legally protected than Lovozero inhabitants. “Very bad” scored 9,2% Murmansk people and 16,7% Lovozero. Freedom of religion and political activity are assessed as “average” by 39,5% Murmansk citizens and only 16,7% Lovozero ones. The highest percent got

“very good” – 38,9%. In Murmansk “very good” is met in 14,5% answers.

Personal well-being

The following moments were assessed in question № 4 with the help of 5-grade scale: work, family relations, children (their health and well-being), nutrition, rest, material well-being (see above), communication with friends, position in the society, perspectives in life, sexual feelings, hobby and health.

Work «fully satisfy» approximately equal number of respondents in Murmansk and Lovozero - 19,7% и 22,2%. There is much difference only in assessment «completely dissatisfied»: in Murmansk it is 2,6% respondents, in Lovozero – 11,1%. At the same time «dissatisfied» got: 9,2% Murmansk answers and 5,6% Lovozero ones.

Against this background questionnaire shows that the majority of Lovozero as well as Murmansk inhabitants are satisfied with family relations. «Satisfied» is represented in 66,7% answers in the settlement and 44,7% in Murmansk, «very well satisfied» - 27,8% answers in Lovozero and 39,5% in Murmansk. There are no negative assessments in Lovozero as well as “partially satisfied”. “Dissatisfied” was chosen only by 1,3% Murmansk respondents and 5,6% in Lovozero.

The majority of respondents are satisfied with their health. “Satisfied” scored 53,9% answers in Murmansk and 66,7% in Lovozero; “well satisfied” got 18,4% answers in Murmansk and 11,1% in Lovozero. There were no negative answers in Lovozero while in Murmansk 5,3% parents in school №3 chose this answer.

Quality of nutrition also satisfies the majority of respondents. The percentage of those “satisfied” in Lovozero is 50% and “well satisfied” – 11,1%; in Murmansk “satisfied” score 55,3%, “well satisfied” – 23,7%. There were no negative variants in Lovozero. In Murmansk they are represented by small percentage: 1,3% “dissatisfied”, “completely dissatisfied” – 2,6%.

“Communication with friends, people with similar interests” is an important criterion for the most respondents. 83,3% respondents are satisfied with this criterion: 83,3% in Lovozero and

76,3% Murmansk. There were no negative answers in Lovozero. In Murmansk percent of negative answers is low – 5,2%.

“Position in society” does not show much difference between two locations. The majority of respondents are satisfied with their position in the society and possibility for realization of social roles. Differences are little. “Satisfied” is met in 48,7% Murmansk answers and 55,6% Lovozero ones. “Well satisfied” scores 11,8% in Murmansk and 5,6% in Lovozero.

“Life prospects” satisfy Murmansk citizens more than Lovozero people. “Well satisfied” is not marked in Lovozero answers. “Satisfied” was chosen by 47,4% people in Murmansk. Percentage of those satisfied in Lovozero is lower and is 33,3%.

The next criterion is “love and sexual feelings”. “Well satisfied” does not have much difference: 34,2% in Murmansk and 38,7% in Lovozero. “Satisfied” in Murmansk got more: 42,1% against 27,8% in Lovozero. Negative answers were not represented in answers in Lovozero, in Murmansk “completely dissatisfied” scored less than 10% (9,2% of all respondents).

III-being

This part of questionnaire is aimed at studying respondents’ opinion about anxiety, tension, being exhausted and nervous whether themselves or family members. More than half of respondents do not consider themselves nervous: 73,7% in Murmansk and 72,2% in Lovozero. At the same time the majority of respondents worry about their work. Analyzing answers: “I suppose, yes” scored 43,4% answers in Murmansk and 27,8% answers in Lovozero; “yes” – 13,2% in Murmansk and 27,8% in Lovozero. On the whole these numbers do not have significant differences.

Statement “my daily activity causes big tension” got equal negative answers (“no”) in both locations – 22,4%. Percent of “I suppose, no” is higher in Lovozero than in Murmansk – 55,6% against 32,9% in Murmansk.

The majority of respondents do not feel tension when dealing with friends. “No” was chosen by 56,6% Murmansk respondents and 44,4% Lovozero ones. “I suppose, no” – by 28,9% Murmansk respondents and 50% in Lovozero. There is no physical and men-

tal exhaustion at the end of day as the majority states. “I suppose, no” was answered by 50% Lovozero respondents and 38,2% Murmansk ones. Negative answers are the following: “no” – 32,9% Murmansk respondents and 22,9% Lovozero respondents.

27,8% Lovozero respondents feel physical and mental exhaustion at the end of day, in Murmansk – 28,9%. No much difference is revealed in answers to this question. 72,2% Lovozero respondents point that in their family “there are often tense relations”, the same opinion in Murmansk belongs to 85,5% respondents.

Means of relaxation

The last unit of the questionnaire is aimed at studying ways of relaxation and is centered around the question: “How do you usually relieve nervous tension?” Respondents were offered to choose variants from the suggested 9 variants or give own answer. Among the ways of relaxation prevailing position is occupied by communication with friends: 53,8% in Murmansk and 57,1% in Lovozero. 28,6% Lovozero respondents prefer going for a walk as a way to relieve tension. “Alcohol” was not marked in Lovozero answers, only 3,8% Murmansk respondents tend to use this way of relaxation. 19,2% Murmansk respondents choose aesthetic ways – listening to music or going to the cinema, variant which were not marked in Lovozero answers at all.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the biggest differences was found in the following parameters: assessment of material prosperity and opportunities to use finance; everyday services; possibilities to organize leisure time and recreation; medical services; political situation in the region; availability of information streams. According to the data analysis conditions and quality of life in Lovozero is lower than in the city, which gives its citizens a feeling of comfort, more life prospects and opportunities for self-realization. At the same time settlement as a place of dwelling has a number of positive factors which promote psychosocial well-being of inhabitants. As the first unit analysis shows the general perception of own well-being in Lovozero is positive and doesn't differ much from Murmansk assessments. The latter can be explained (against the background of subjective and objective factors' analysis) by the lower level of life claims in Lovozero as well as location far from the center and closeness of the settlement.

As a final conclusion it is necessary to note that social environment, in which a human lives and develops, is a complex of various factors: economic, social, national and age-related.

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ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AT WORK BASED ON THE QPS QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY: INDIVIDUAL, GROUP, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AT WORK IN FINNMARK ARCTICCHILDREN PROJECT SCHOOLS 2005-2006

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the survey of psychosocial working conditions for school personnel in the Finnmark project schools within the ArctiChildren project. The survey was conducted from autumn 2005 to spring 2006, following the survey of psychosocial well-being among the pupils/children. The survey instrument was the QPS Nordic questionnaire used in Finnish and Norwegian Barents Region schools taking part in the project. This report focuses on descriptive statistics from the survey. To give some references to the context of the respondents, an orientation about New Public Management (NPM) and the curriculum reform work in the Norwegian school system over the last decades is included in the report.

Changing society - changing schools

New Public Management covers different reform activities globally and nationally over the last 30 years. This reform wave is built on new ideas and theories regarding the institutional economy emanating from prestigious North American universities. Management by Objectives and Total Quality Management among many other change concepts were important tools in the fast growing management consultant firms at the time. These ideas were readily adopted by influential actors in multinational companies, fiscal bureaucrats and international organizations like the OECD, the IMF, and the World Bank (IBRD). Leading New

Public Management principles for public sector and central and local government have an increased focus on improving efficiency, results, management, marked and users, with less emphasis on rules, regulations and internal matters. Alliances between economists supporting reform ideas and powerful politicians and administrators, and reform entrepreneurs like Reagan and Thatcher, Hawke in Australia, Douglas in New Zealand and Mulroney in Canada, contributed to spreading those ideas globally. At the end of the 1970s political changes to conservative governments in many European countries brought about criticism towards the public sector, saying it needed reforming because it was oversized, too centralized and ineffective. This was accentuated by economic stagnation and crises in many countries. (Christensen and Lægreid 1998)

The national school sectors, covering both central as well as local government systems, have been influenced by the increase in NPM reforms. Market-orientation focusing on user preferences and influencing stimulated growth in private schools, has been halted by the present red/green government in Norway (Innst. O nr.92 (2002-2003)).

Regarding curriculum reforms, the Labour Party minister of education, Gudmund Hernes, was first to introduce Management by Objectives and market economic ideology. Inspired by the "A Nation at Risk" report from the US National Commission on Excellence in Education, focus changed from a traditional one based on the needs and welfare of the child as he or she develops into adulthood, to a focus based on economic parameters, labour force and productivity in which the objectives for Norwegian educational policy were the welfare and interests of the Norwegian State. Lund (2003) is critical of how centralized control and steering principles supported by the MBO promoted the realisation of a Norwegian standard at the expense of Sámi culture. The precedent curriculum in M 87 (1987) had fully acknowledged Sámi culture and language as equal to the Norwegian through an emphasis on local adjustment of the national curriculum. The new curriculum aimed at "a feeling of national belonging built on identification with and State authorized construction of Norwegian culture" (Lund 2003: 74). After several years of critical discussions and negotiations, the end result was two parallel curric-

ula, L97 and L97 *Samisk*. This shows a particular aspect of the tension regarding the ideological foundation of curriculum reforms built up in Finnmark during the last decades.

Reform work towards the new curriculum, NOU 2002, included: first class from first grade; Instilling S. nr. 12 (2002-2003) about quality reform; Stortingsmelding nr. 30 (2003-2004) about culture for learning; and Innstilling S. 268 about competence in development work. All of them reflecting a school system adjusted to the New Public Management ideology. The schools are thus seen as “knowledge enterprises” and school principals go through management training programs for a new manager identity and quality evaluation programs. The Ministry of Education has now been changed to the Ministry of Knowledge underlining the change in perspective in order to prepare the new generation for the “Knowledge Society”. In this process, the teachers, principals and school authorities are not only made responsible but also accountable for the educational programs and the children’s realization of learning potentials. A system of national evaluations and tests that focuses on the results of pupils individually and as a group and on the schools, puts pressure on the school owners and management to see to that quality objectives are met. This is a transition described as a paradigm shift in the Norwegian school system, (Fevolden and Lillejord 2005). It is a paradigm shift that also might challenge values, identity and teaching methods of our respondents. The age distribution points to a generation of teachers educated and socialized in the traditional administration model of public management and in a time when social and dialogue pedagogy, and Paulo Freire’s pedagogy of the oppressed, dominated the educational debates (Telhaug 1994).

METHODS

The QPS questionnaire, orientation

In 1994, the Nordic Council of Ministers launched a project to improve the scientific quality and comparability of data collected during interventions on the conditions of the psychological, social, and organizational work environment. A project group was given the task of developing and testing a General Nordic Questionnaire (QPS Nordic) encompassing the most fundamental psychological and social factors at work, a questionnaire which should be applicable for interventions at various workplaces, as well as for research purposes. The project group comprised researchers from four Nordic countries.

The General Nordic Questionnaire (QPS Nordic) was designed for the assessment of psychological, social, and organizational working conditions: to provide a basis for implementing organizational development and interventions, for documentation of changes in working conditions and for research into associations between work and health. Multiple choice questions relate to the following psychological and social factors at work: job demands and control, role expectations, predictability and mastery of work, social interaction with co-workers and clients, leadership, organizational climate, interaction between work and private life, work centrality, organizational commitment and work motives. (User's Guide for the QPS-Nordic, TemaNord 2000:603)

Sample, respondents

The questionnaires were sent to a total of 319 school employees in sample of project schools taking part in the ArctiChildren project. The project schools had been selected through a stratified sample representing the region. The data are anonymous, processed and presented at the county level of Finnmark as a whole. Thus the data gives an indication of the situation of personnel in the schools in this region. The response rate, however, was low,

varying between schools from almost 90 – 100% for some schools to complete refusal to take part in others. The overall response rate was 32%, correcting for the schools that refused to answer, the response rate was 40%, which is still low to be representative of Finnmark schools.

The general explanation for not taking part was lack of time and motivation. One school expressed disappointment with earlier cross-border projects over the past several years as a reason for not taking part. From contacts with the municipal school authorities and the schools there is also reason to presume that the majority of the answers came from schools with a good organizational climate. One school, however, indicated they were in trouble and expressed a wish to work on improving their organizational climate. These are conditions weakening the quantitative data. Because of this, results will be followed up through interviews in the next step where we will study a possible covariance with burnout among school personnel refusing to take part in the survey.

Gender, age and education

Among the 101 respondents, there were 66% women and 34% men, which is concurrent with the gender distribution in the school personnel nationally and in Finnmark. The mean age for both men and women was 45.3 years. The highest frequency was in age groups 30 to 59, with 74% for men and 78% for women with quite an equal distribution in ten years intervals. The lowest frequency was in the under-30-year age group, with 10% and 8% men and women respectively, indicating few young teachers. In the age group 60+ there were 16% men and 14% women. This is quite a low proportion regarding the high retirement age in Norway of 67 years and the possibility to stay at work until 70 years with an extra economic bonus for late retirement. Since 1997 early retirement with an economic reduction in pensions has been possible from the age of 62 and might be a reason for the age profile obtained.

All respondents except one, were educated at teacher's college or university, 85% had studied up to 16 years while 13% had a

higher university degree. There is a gender difference regarding those with a higher university degree: 24% of the men and 8% of the women had studied for a higher degree.

Seniority as a teacher and in their current position

The majority of respondents, 83%, had permanent employment, while 17% were temporarily employed. The mean working time as a professional was 14 years, ranging from less than one year to 43 years. For those in their current job, the mean seniority is the same. The employees seem to be stable, having worked in the same organization and current position during their whole career up to now.

RESULTS

Job demands and control

Job demands can be divided into quantitative demands, mental strain because of complexity, demands regarding development and challenges in work, responsibility with increased vulnerability and demands linked to social relations.

Regarding quantitative demands and amount of accumulated work, 28% report often or always, and 52% sometimes. Working overtime is done often or always by 23% while 43% do it sometimes. A high tempo at work is often or always the situation for 51% and for 38% it is sometimes the situation. For 37% of the respondents, having too much to do is often or always experienced while 45% experience it sometimes. About physical strain, 43% feel it seldom or never, 52% sometimes and often, and only 5% very often or always.

About demanding quick decisions, 67% agree it is often or always. With regard to work being too difficult to cope with, 75% disagree. Having a job that demands maximum alertness is agreed

to by 88%, 69% are often interrupted and 79% have to make complicated decisions sometimes and often. As many as 86% disagree to calling their job trivial and boring.

Here 80% sometimes or seldom experience the need for more education to manage their daily work, while 84% often and very often have need for specialized knowledge and 76% often and always find their job challenging in a positive way. As many as 90% often or always find their work meaningful and 73% experience demands for learning new things often or very often.

The respondents experience a low risk of being exposed to threats and violence: 59% never, 34% seldom or sometimes, and for 7% the risk is high. They also report a low risk of injuries, 82% seldom or never, and 95% report that mistakes seldom or never lead to economic loss.

Social relations and role expectations

Regarding social relations, social contact with colleagues happens often or from time to time for 76%, personal contact with pupils and parents is estimated as very frequent by 96% by the respondents. They estimate their ability to engage in good relationships with pupils and parents as high, 89%.

Role expectations can be seen from two sides. One is where role expectations are clearly pronounced, the other is where people face conflicting role expectations. Role expectations are clearly defined. To 78% goals for the job are clearly defined and to 93% their responsibilities are clearly defined; 85% know exactly what is expected from them most of the time.

Regarding role conflicts, 80% sometimes or often experience that things should have been done differently. To 88% there is from time to time or often a lack of resources to accomplish working tasks. Conflicting demands are quite seldom experienced by 44%, while 55% meet conflicting demands from time to time or often. Seldom tasks are in conflict with own personal values to 72% of the respondents, 20% experience it from time to time, while 7% experience this often.

Control of work

Questions regarding predictability and control of the work situation can be split into whether the person can decide how to work and the amount and pace of work, and being able to influence decisions made about the work. When it comes to controlling ways of working, 85% are able to do so often and most of the time; controlling the amount of work, 74% can seldom or from time to time do so; and 66% can control working pace seldom or from time to time. When to take a break is decided seldom or from time to time by 93%, while 87% can seldom or never decide how long the break can be. Flexitime is also rare, 82% can seldom or never take flexitime while 18% can do so from time to time or often. This is of course influenced by the tight schedule of the school day. Decisions made about the work can seldom or never be decided by 55%, 44% are able to decide from time to time regarding who you are going to work with. To decide what pupils you are going to work with and when, hardly ever happens to 66% while 32% can do so from time to time or often. From time to time and often, 84% can influence decisions made about important work issues.

Predictability of the work situation

Here the respondents answer about predictability in the near future or in two years time and how they feel about taking risks and confront challenges. For the near future both work tasks and with whom you are going to work are quite predictable, 71% and 92% respectively can do so very often. Who is going to be your leader is also very often predictable to 93% of the respondents. To 66% there is hardly ever any need to demonstrate skills and competence to get attractive and interesting tasks or projects, while 25% experience it from time to time. Only 10% have to do it often or always. Trusting somebody in the organization to see to your interests is reported as from time to time by 40%, it is often the case for 40% while 20% do not believe so. About rumours concerning changes in the workplace, 36% experience it from time to time,

39% seldom or never, and 23% often, which is quite an even distribution.

Predictability regarding an attractive job in the future seems possible for 45%, and 55% seem more insecure about what is demanded from them. About 82% know about new skills necessary to acquire in order to get a better job in the future, while 20% seem to show little interest. Seeming to be sure of having a good a job two years from now is expressed by 64% of the respondents, while 46% seem to be more reluctant or insecure about that.

Concerning preferences for new and challenging situations and change, as many as 62% prefer a moderate amount of new tasks and challenges, and 46% are positive about change more often. About challenges in having new colleagues, 70% show moderate enthusiasm and 30% show clear preferences. Working in new places shows the same pattern where 93% prefer moderate changes and only 7% are enthusiastic of this alternative. There is a covariance with professional working time and time in the present position, where most respondents have spent most of their career at the same working place, and some being promoted in the same system.

Mastering work

Satisfaction with quality of the work done is quite common: 96% report to be satisfied quite often or from time to time. Similarly, 95% report satisfaction with the amount of work done often or from time to time.

Satisfaction with problem solving is reported by 84% who like to solve problems coming up in daily life while 94% are satisfied with their ability to create good relations with colleagues. Feedback about quality of work done is not seen as common to 48%, 34% experience it sometimes, while it is considered common only to 19%. The alternative of judging for oneself what is good work is chosen by 67%, while from time to time 30% do the same.

Social interaction and support from colleagues, friends and family

As many as 70% experience help and support from colleagues often or always, 22% sometimes and 6% seldom or never. Help from your leader is often or always experienced by 54%, sometimes by 25% and seldom or never by 21%. Colleagues who are willing to listen in case of problems at work is experienced often and very often/always by 78%, sometimes or seldom by 22%. Talking to your leader about problems at work and his or her willingness to listen is often the case for 67%, it is a little less for colleagues with whom problems are discussed sometimes, and seldom or never for 23%.

Support from friends and family

Some of the respondents had comments about confidentiality in seeking support from friends and family about problems at work. That probably explains as much as 34% reporting that they never or seldom do so. It is possible to talk with friends and family about problems at work in a way that keeps confidentiality; 47% express they do it often or very often and 19% do so from time to time. Meanwhile, 64% can talk to their partner or another close person often/always about problems at work while 20% hardly ever do so. From time to time 16% talk with their partner or close friends about problems at work. Trust in friends and family when there is trouble at work is often or always felt by 83%, 16 % feel it sometimes, 1% seldom. As to whether your leader values the result of your work, 53% believe so, 25% think so from time to time, and 22% experience this seldom or never. People that have noticed disturbing conflicts between colleagues from time to time make up 50%, 29% have hardly ever noticed it while 21% have noticed such things.

Leadership

The questions about leadership can be categorized into supportive leadership and fair leadership. The term supportive leadership im-

plies “empowering qualities”, giving the employees opportunities to develop their own style independently; today it is referred to as “coaching”. Important aspects of leadership are measured on this scale, reflecting the leader’s ability to secure the development and future of the organization.

Supportive leadership is rarely or never experienced by 27%, sometimes by 40% and 33% often in connection with involving employees to take part in difficult decisions. Giving a different opinion about matters is rarely or never encouraged to 33%, whereas 34% are encouraged from time to time, and 33% are frequently encouraged to do so.

Does your leader help you develop your abilities? For 45% this hardly ever happens, for 39% from time to time, for 16% this is often the case. Whether your leader tries to solve problems when they appear is seldom or never experienced by 31%, 37% experience it from time to time, while 34% experience it often.

Fair leadership, meaning that tasks are distributed equally and justly without favouring anybody, seems to be the rule in 52% of the situations, from time to time in 37% and not so often in 11%. Treating the employees fairly and justly is the case for 55%, from time to time for 33% and unfair for 12%. In 77% of the cases, the leaders are seldom or never a reason for stress in their employees. Trusting the ability of the management to care for and secure the future of the organization is true for almost half, 46%, of the respondents while 55% experience it sometimes or seldom.

Organizational climate

The questions cover different aspects of organizational culture and climate, innovation culture, culture supporting equal rights and inclusion for everybody, gender, ethnic minorities etc. and a caring culture regarding employees.

The working climate is clearly non-competitive. Almost two-thirds of the respondents, 74%, find the climate to be non-competitive, another 22% find competition from time to time. Only 4% describe their working climate as competitive quite often, none find this to be the case all the time. Furthermore, 52% find the organizational climate to be supportive, 37% from time to time and it is seldom the situation for 11%. Following this, 75%

seldom experience a suspicious climate, 23% experience this from time to time, while only 2% experience suspicion regularly. Regarding a relaxed and pleasant working climate, more than half of the respondents, 55%, experience it from time to time or seldom and 45% often to quite frequent. An inflexible and rule regulated climate is quite seldom the case for 60%, whereas to 28% it can happen from time to time, and for 12% it is often the case. Being encouraged to take their own initiative is experienced by 60% of respondents, by 34% from time to time and 6% hardly ever can do so. Half of them are encouraged to improve work content and methods and 52% report good communication at the work place. Men and women are seldom or never treated differently according to 70% of the respondents, only 9% report discriminating behaviour in the organization. Age discrimination is reported to be rare by 63%, to occur from time to time by 24% and to be frequent by 13%. Incentives, economic as well as praise, from management for good work are experienced rarely by 68%, and from time to time by 24%. Employees feeling well cared for is reported by 42%, while 39% feel this from time to time and 19%, seldom. One-third of the respondents think the management engage frequently in health and psychosocial well-being for employees, 39% experience it from time to time while a little less than one-third do not think this is the case.

Interaction between work and private life

The questions are about whether working life has a negative influence on private life and vice versa, the role work plays in people's lives and their commitment and involvement in work. Does the work influence your family life or is family life interfering with your job?

For 25% of respondents job demands seldom disturb family life, 45% sometimes and for 30% often. That family life demands might disturb the working situation is seldom the case for 75% and sometimes for 21%. Only 4% experience that demands from the family often have an impact on their work.

The respondents were asked to estimate the importance of five dimensions in life by dividing 100% between the following dimensions.

- leisure time (hobbies, sport, recreation, time with friends)
- community/society activities (¹NGO activities, political, union activities)
- work
- religion
- family

The means of each dimension show that the family dimension has the highest value, which is 37% and closely followed by work with 35%, (44% report between 20-30%, and 26% a quite high percentage with 40-50% of their time devoted to work). Leisure time is rated to be quite important by 20%, (56% report 20-30%) while 7% are engaged in community activities (with 43% reporting 0% and 40% reporting between 5-10%). The religious dimension is the lowest at 2% with a cluster of 80% reporting 0%, and another cluster of 16% reporting from 5-10% of their time devoted to religion.

Work centrality and organizational commitment

Work centrality measures how important you find your job. In this regard, 64% tell their friends it is a good organization to work in, 22% do this from time to time and 14% do so seldom or never. Moreover, 35% believe that the leaders are interested in their well-being, 38% think this is the case from time to time, and 27% think they are not interested at all.

Over half of the teachers, 54%, agree that co-variance occurs between their own values and the values of the organization. There are 34% thinking co-variance sometime exists while 12% disagree. As to whether the organization inspires the respondents to do their best, 48% think so, for 34% this is the fact sometimes, while 18% disagree.

¹ Non Governmental activities, fox example local Amnesty International.
(Added by editor)

Working in groups

Of the 101 respondents, 90 persons report working in groups. They report high overall satisfaction with working in groups. Here 86% report valuing being part of a work group, 11% doubt it from time to time and a small group of 3% do not value working in groups.

As much as 71% believe the group is skilled in problem solving, 28% think the group sometimes has this ability while only 1% doubt it. Furthermore, 30% of the groups have frequent meetings, 54% quite often, 14% from time to time, a small proportion meeting seldom, only 2%.

Work motives, motivation

Work motives and motivation have two dimensions, internal motivation factors and external. In the internal dimension it is vital for the employees to feel that their work is meaningful and their achievements are important and valued. Regarding this, almost all respondents, 90%, agree and 80% think it is important to use creativity and fantasy in their work. For 68%, personal development through work is important.

Among important external factors are well organized working conditions with a low conflict rate, 61% value this highly, to 80% a secure job with steady income is important while high income and fringe benefits are reported as less important, nearly half the respondents think it is very important, while almost the other half regard this being of less importance. (Teacher's salaries are generally on the lower end of the wage statistics and have proportionally lost in comparison to other professions during the last decades). Low frequency of health risks and threats are important to 67%.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned earlier, talking to the schools gave the impression that among the 60% non-response group, reasons for not answering might be stressful work situations, heavy workload, and too many reports to answer due to control and evaluation initiated by new management routines. Such environmental factors are supposed to increase risk for burnout problems (Freudenburger 1974, Pines 1981, Maslach 1985). From this perspective it is interesting to look at factors related to lack of job satisfaction, burnout, stress and physical symptoms. According to the QPS validating survey of school personnel in a Swedish municipality (Dallner 1999), high working demands had statistically significant correlations with lack of job satisfaction, burnout, stress and physical symptoms. In decision control, empowering leadership and an organizational culture that emphasized human resources, primacy and innovativeness showed positive correlations with job satisfaction, no turnover intention, optimism, mental health and vitality. Both high quantitative as well as high qualitative job demands showed significant correlation with burnout symptoms.

Regarding the Finnmark respondents, quantitative demands of workload seems quite high, at least from time to time. About one-third of the respondents work overtime regularly and at least half of them often experience a high tempo at work. Interruptions are frequent; almost everyone agrees that their job demands maximum alertness and they often have to make complicated decisions. Teaching is contact intensive, communicating and relating to from 20 to 30 pupils during the working day as well as colleagues. The answers seem to give a good picture of the daily work in school and there is an agreement that the job is seldom trivial and boring. Social contact with pupils and their parents is frequent for almost everybody and almost everybody estimates their ability to engage in good relationships with pupils and parents as high. New and challenging situations and change might cause stress. Almost all teachers and their leaders prefer a moderate amount of new tasks and changes, only 7% report being enthusiastic about it. There is a covariance with professional working time and time in the present position, where the majority of

respondents have spent most of their career at the same working place, and some being promoted in the same system, thus indicating a high security-seeking preference.

The majority find their job meaningful. The Norwegian Working Environment Act, §1, puts great emphasis on meaningful work, making it a central issue in working life. Two-thirds of the respondents also report their job being challenging in a positive way and the need to learn new things seems to be seen as positive in this setting. The overall attitudes toward work seem positive and work motivation high.

Meaningful work, to use creativity and fantasy in their work and appreciation of high achievement are factors that almost all of the respondents find important. Many also find personal development through work important. From the results we can conclude that positive factors seem to balance workload and strain and there are no indications of burnout among the respondents.

However, there are indications of weak and disengaged leadership in the material. This represents a risk for starting the burnout processes in the staff because of lack of feedback and acknowledgement of achievements. According to the Hallsten process model (Hallsten 1985), burnout can be seen as a process. Lack of meaning in your job can be a warning signal about having started on a burnout process. Being easily overlooked in management, a high work motivation, ambition and devotion to a cause represent a burnout risk. As Freudenberg (1974) points out, people have to burn for their job in the first place. According to his article about staff burnout, talented and highly motivated employees are the first to burn out.

Development through work is reported to be of great importance by many of the respondents. Then it might sound contradictory that at the same time, as many as 80% sometimes or never experience the need for further education to succeed in their daily work. To this group, however, the education variable shows a fairly high proportion of teachers having specialized in different school/special education related subjects and many post-educational courses are offered through the regional RSK offices in eastern, western and inner Finnmark. A marked research I conducted in 2002, as contact person for the Louis leadership training

courses initiated by the Ministry of Education, showed that about 80% of the leaders had taken part.

Taking the school organization and structure into consideration, high predictability and control is obvious regarding many aspects of work. Today many schools, however, aim at a more flexible organization of the school day. Traditionally, the teachers have been in command of the time spent before and after teaching classes. Today there is pressure from the municipalities for teachers to adjust office hours; the teachers' unions are protesting against this (Arbeidstidsavtale 2004). An additional problem seems to be lack of adequate working conditions in the school buildings. Whether one can influence decisions made about important work issues is another important work quality issue, as many as 80% of the respondents think this is possible at least from time to time. Regarding safety, two-thirds have never experienced violence, the rest seldom or from time to time, for very few this is a problem, risk of injuries is low and economic consequences of mistakes is reported almost non-existent.

According to Dallner (1999) factors supporting good working conditions and psychosocial well-being are contact with colleagues and trust in leaders. In the Finnmark material, two-thirds experience daily contact with colleagues. More cooperation in teams etc. shows that old teaching patterns of one class, one teacher, one classroom have been changed. Of the 101 respondents, 90 persons report working in groups. They report a high overall satisfaction with working in groups. Almost everyone values being a part of a work group and two-thirds believe the group is skilled in solving problems. Only a small group of 3% disagree to do so. Few persons report having been bullied, four of the respondents did so. There were 17 observations of colleagues bullied in 24 cases. Of the persons bullied, 7 were men and 17 women. Four persons did not answer the questions. From this material it is difficult to say something about this gender difference because of the response rate being low and the higher proportion of women than men working in the schools as well as individual differences in observation of such matters. This is a question that will be followed up in the qualitative study. Furthermore, two-thirds of the respondents often or always experience support from

colleagues, which strengthens assumptions of a good social working climate.

When it comes to leadership, only one-third of the respondents are involved in difficult decisions, encouraged to give a different opinion about important matters and even less, or are often encouraged in developing their abilities. Regarding readiness to solve problems it is almost equally distributed between seldom or never, from time to time and readiness to do so. Regarding leadership, empowerment qualities are rare. On the one hand, this leaves the impression of a rather inactive leadership, which is an assumption supported by a high proportion of respondents. On the other hand, it seems to be benevolent, with very few experiencing their leaders being a source of stress. Half of the employees find leaders to be fair, without favouritism and to impartially distribute workloads or attractive tasks and projects. The organizational climate is clearly non-competitive and very few experience distrust from their leaders. Discriminating behaviour against women and elderly is seldom the case. When discrimination is reported the rate is fairly higher regarding the elderly.

Balance between private life and work is regarded as an important factor for job satisfaction. Factors rated on a 100% scale according to time devoted were (average measures) family 37%, work 35%, leisure time activities 20%, community/society activities 6%, and religion 2%.

The high percentage of respondents marking 0% of their preferred time for community activities and religion is interesting. Historically, teachers in rural/peripheral districts have played an important role politically. Among them such pioneers as the first Sámi member of Norwegian parliament member, Isak Saba, and other famous parliament members from Norwegian districts played important roles in national politics. Teachers and school personnel have traditionally played an active role as members and front figures in Finnmark NGO organizations. This tradition seems to have changed. Regarding the strong Læstadian tradition in Finnmark, higher scores in the religious dimension could have been expected. In any case, the school district with dominant Læstadian Christian families now has its own private school.

Dallner's 1999 material from schools in a Swedish municipality shows almost identical figures regarding preferences for

time used: Family 41% and work 37%, leisure time activities 18% community 4% and the religious dimension 2%.

In this report the presentation has been limited to present the national results according to the Finnmark QPS survey. The results discussed here have been chosen to highlight some central themes regarding work conditions and job satisfaction. The study will be carried on further regarding qualitative dimensions of psychosocial well-being among the school personnel, the functioning of the teaching environment, and the interaction with the children's families.

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