

**Aspects of administrative support in implementing
inclusive education**

A case study of three Finnish comprehensive schools

Master's Thesis

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Summary:

Inclusive education is about all learners having a right to go to their local schools and receive support in learning there, instead of placing some learners in special schools and classrooms. It is a question of equality and human rights. In Finland, equality is highly appreciated, but the municipalities have differences in the implementation of inclusive education. Administration plays a role in supporting the implementation of inclusive education; however, inclusion requires changes to the whole educational organisation.

The purpose of this study is to find out how inclusive education is implemented and how the administration supports it. This is a qualitative case study of three comprehensive schools in one Finnish municipality. The data have been collected from principals, teachers, administrators and decision makers. Official documents serve as additional sources. The research data have been analysed by using theory-guided content analysis.

The research shows that inclusive education is implemented in schools in diverse ways. The teachers and principals seem to be open to try courageously new methods and solutions. The role of the administration is to create a working culture and resources so that this is possible. In addition, there needs to be firm guidance in the legislation and curricula since they provide the framework for school work. It also seems that knowledge and understanding, in addition to the right attitude is needed at every level of the educational organisation. Overall, a flexible organisational structure, openness to learning and development and a few pioneers to lead the change are needed.

Key words: special education, inclusion, organisation, administration, case study

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Introduction

Finland is known as a country where equality is highly appreciated. It is written in the Finnish Constitution Law (731/1999) that: “No one shall, without an acceptable reason, be treated differently from other persons on the ground of sex, age, origin, language, religion, conviction, opinion, health, disability or other reason that concerns his or her person. Children shall be treated equally and as individuals and they shall be allowed to influence matters pertaining to themselves to a degree corresponding to their level of development.” Equality is also a focal value in inclusive education.

As Villa and Thousand (2005, 10) say, inclusion is quite an elusive and ambiguous concept. Basically, dictionary defines inclusion as “the action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure” (Oxford Dictionaries n.d.). However, in relation to education, inclusion is understood as a matter of human rights and equality; everyone is considered to have a right to education despite their background, individual characteristics, gender, socio-economic status, or whatsoever. The classical approach in education has been to educate some children, such disabled children, exclusively, in separate settings. Traditionally, inclusion is seen as an approach to include these children in mainstream education. However, inclusion is not only the act of including certain individual learners in education. Rather, inclusive education responds to the diversity of *all* learners (Ainscow 2007, 147; Ainscow, Booth & Dyson 2006, 1–2; Forlin 2012; UNESCO 2003, 1–2.) This is also how inclusion is conceptualised in this research. After all, teachers are already teaching in inclusive classrooms, as every individual differs from one another somehow (Florian 2014). I will go more deeply into the concept of inclusion later in this research report.

The University of Lapland is a leading partner in A School for All – Development of Inclusive Education project funded by the EU’s Kolarctic ENPI CBC programme¹. The

¹ Russian partners of the project: The Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Murmansk State Humanities University, Ministry of Education and Science in Arkhangelsk Region, Murmansk regional State Educational Institution of Additional Vocational Education “Murmansk Regional In-service Training Institute for Education and Culture” and Murmansk Region Ministry of Education and Sciences

project aims at promoting inclusion in schools and teacher education in the area of North Calotte and Northwest Russia. There are also schools involved both in Finland and in Russia in developing school practice to be more inclusive. In addition, research related to inclusive education is carried out in these countries. As I am working as an assistant in the project, I was also given a chance to do my master's thesis for this research and development project. Inclusive education was not particularly familiar topic for me in the beginning, but I found an engaging approach to the topic by connecting it to my another subject of interest, administrative science. By joining these two fields, I started my path of research on inclusive education.

There is already much research about inclusive education. A great deal of research is based on the teachers' or teaching students' viewpoint and in some cases also on principals' perspective (e.g. Ahtiainen, Beirad, Hautamäki, Hiltavuori & Thuneberg 2011; Anati & Ain 2012; Florian & Rouse 2010; Lakkala 2008; Pinola 2008). Many studies concentrate on inclusive education in relation to teacher education (e.g. Forlin 2010). Then there is research on inclusion that focuses on the learners' point of view (e.g. Shevlin 2010). In my reading of books, articles and research reports about inclusive education, the importance of administrative support was mentioned many times, even though there is not that much research from that point of view.

For example, Watkins & Meijer (2010, 238–242) call for taking into account the role of the whole educational environment when enhancing inclusion. Halinen and Järvinen (2008, 81) emphasise more specifically the need for “changes in educational structures, policies, objectives, subject matters, and operating procedures” so that all learners can be educated in local mainstream schools. This means that inclusive education is not only a matter of teachers; it concerns the whole educational system at the municipal and at the national level (Naukkari 2005, 106).

Thus, I find it essential to carry out research on the administration's role in implementing inclusion. There is a need to provide more research that merges the field of administrative science and organisational theories concerning the topic since they are an essential factor in implementing inclusion, yet they are little researched. However, the aspect of leadership has been examined in many studies on inclusion (e.g. Ainscow 2007; the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education 2012). In addition, the

role of the legislation in inclusion (e.g. Rioux 2007) and the meaning of the organisational culture are acknowledged by many specialists in the research field of inclusive education (e.g., Naukkarinen 2005; Seppälä-Pänkäläinen 2009). It is stated that educational policies and infrastructure as well as the school culture and the value basis of education provide a path to implementing inclusive education (Watkins & Meijer 2010, 241). These aspects are viewed also in this study.

The main data of this qualitative case study have been collected from the principals in the development schools involved in the A School for All – Development of Inclusive Education project. I chose to collect data from the principals because many specialists highlight the importance of leaders in the implementation of inclusion (e.g. European agency for development in special needs education 2012, 20). Moreover, principals are some of the administrators in the school organisation. I have also collected research data from municipal administrators and decision makers of the educational organisation. Additional data come from teachers of the development schools involved in this project, and some educational documents were examined.

2. Defining inclusion

2.1. Background and legislative basis

A major international step towards inclusive education was taken in 1994 when the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action in Special Needs Education (UNESCO 1994) was signed by 92 countries, including Finland. This statement is about every child having a right to attend mainstream schools, instead of segregating some of the children in special schools or classes. The statement called on governments to take actions to make this happen. (Thomas & Vaughan 2004, 128–129.) Several years later, UNESCO (2009) published the Policy Guideline on Inclusion in Education. It gives an extensive list of international conventions and declarations that promote inclusive education. For example, there is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). The latter highly promotes inclusion in education. Finland has signed this convention, but it should be noted that the protocol has not been ratified yet.

Inclusive education is understood as the basic idea behind Finnish education (European agency for special needs and inclusive education 2013). The Finnish Basic Education Act (628/1998), the national core curriculum and the amendments and additions to the national core curriculum for basic education (2010) and the Special education strategy (MoEC 2007) emphasise all learners' right to go to their local schools and receive support in learning there by taking into account the diversity of learners. It is argued that the effect of the Salamanca declaration can be seen in Finnish legislation (Halinen & Järvinen 2008, 79) even so, for example, the national core curriculum (2010) actually allows segregation to happen, as it stipulates that the support for the learner must be given in pupils' "own school by flexible arrangements, unless its provision inevitably requires the pupil to be transformed to another teaching group or school". The fact that segregation is actually allowed in legislation has received criticism from the point of view of inclusive education. The Finnish government has been criticised on being too

slow and reluctant in taking action towards inclusion that has been promoted, for example in the Salamanca statement. (Saloviita 2010, 485–486.) In addition, the Committee of the rights of the child (Lapsiasiavaltuutetun toimiston julkaisuja 2011, 11) has recently shown concern that Finland is still educating a great number of children with special educational needs in segregation, that is, in special schools and classes. Thus, there seems to be a contradiction as the legislation guides towards inclusion but still allows segregation.

The contradiction might give rise to some problems from the point of view of implementing inclusive education. The legislation is claimed to elicit negative or positive orientation towards inclusive education in the country. For example, if the country agrees on the values of inclusion, it also promotes the implementation of inclusive education in practice since, in that case, it presumably also provides resources and support in realizing those inclusive values. (Anati & Ain 2012, 2–3.) One of the intentions of this study is to find out how the target group understands the state and the role of legislation on inclusion in this case; does it support or hinder the implementation of inclusion?

2.2. The ambiguous concept of inclusion

There are numerous ways to define what is meant by inclusion. The A School for All project defines it as “a process of identifying and reinforcing potential for learning, and removing barriers. It is an on-going educational development, based on intertwined values, practices and policies. Inclusive education is about access and equity of all students, at all levels of education and across lifelong learning.” (Väyrynen, et al. 2013.) As this case study is a part of the project, the previous definition is how inclusion is understood in this research.

This definition has much in common with UNESCO’s definition: “inclusion can be seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision

that covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children.” (UNESCO 2009.) I stress the word ‘process’ in these definitions; it means that inclusive education is not seen as some strategy that can be put into action, as developing new support systems for children with special educational needs or as an act of making certain accommodations (Villa & Thousand 2005, 5–10). Instead, inclusion “is an on-going development process, taking its shape within a context of society, local structures, school cultures and classroom interaction” (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013).

2.2.1. Narrow and broad conceptualisation

As said, inclusion can be defined in many ways. However, in the end, these definitions can be divided into two categories: descriptive and prescriptive ones. The descriptive conceptualisation is quite narrow. From this perspective, inclusive education is seen as a concern involving certain persons, such as disabled learners, juveniles, immigrants or those who have some kinds of special educational needs. From this point of view, the focus is only on these learners and how inclusion can enhance their participation and learning. The narrow way to see inclusion does not consider that inclusion can benefit all learners when barriers to education are removed. (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson 2006, 14–27; Booth & Ainscow 2002, 3.)

The prescriptive definitions, on the other hand, are broader, focusing on how the whole educational system can foster the participation of all learners in local schools by restructuring policies, cultures and school practice. It understands inclusion to mean a process of increasing each learner’s participation by making schools more able to meet the needs of diverse of learners, which is done by restructuring cultures, policies and practices. In addition, parents, carers and staff are seen as important partners in the learning process. (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson 2006, 14–27; Booth & Ainscow 2002, 3.) Often, the narrow perspective seems to be a dominant way of perceiving the meaning of inclusive education (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson 2006, 5; Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013, 11–30). The

way that inclusive education is defined in the A School for All project relates to the broader definitions.

One of the perspectives in this research is the aim to examine how educational administration and school staff understand the concept of inclusive education in this case. How the administrators perceive the concept of inclusion affects the decisions they make, and it defines the actions they take. If, for example, the administrators believe that inclusion refers only to disabled learners and to the aim of including these learners in mainstream education, it is not possible for inclusion to become a principled approach to society, as inclusion is perceived with a narrow perspective. In addition, different stakeholders can have different understandings about what inclusion means, and this might create barriers in the process towards inclusion. (Ainscow, Booth 2006 & Dyson, 14.)

2.2.2. Inclusion from the political point of view

There is also a political aspect in the concept of inclusive education, and it can be seen as a question of power. Someone always holds the power to decide what is best for children and what is best for the society. Thus, what decision makers and administrators think about inclusive education is not insignificant since they have the power. (Seppälä-Pänkäläinen 2014.)

Bernard, in her important study of 2001, divides the educational system into three levels: the micro level (schools), the meso level (the education bureaucracy) and the macro level (the national educational policy.) The meso level is the place where “system-based factors excluding children are officially created and sustained” as the educational bureaucracy at the meso level has the core experts on power over education. Additionally, at the meso level, the national education policy is implemented. The national policy might promote exclusion by commission (through regulations they apply) and by omission, failing to make a society that promotes –in reality– the idea of education for all. In addition, national policy might prevent inclusion, for example, by not identifying the barriers to education and overcoming them and by continuing to think that it is the (dis-

abled) learner that needs to change instead of changing the environment to become more suitable for diverse learners (narrow perspective). (Bernard 2001, 4–10.) This research concentrates mostly at the meso level.

According to Watkins and Meijer (2010), there are two factors in inclusion policy and practice that should be taken into account in the educational organisation system. These two aspects are the infrastructure (policies, support systems and structures) and shared value systems (the attitudes, professional values and beliefs of the people working in the school organisation). All these features are connected to each other and have affect to the success of inclusive education. The implementation of inclusion demands flexibility within policies and systems so that innovative solutions can be developed and implemented. (Watkins and Meijer 2010, 239.) I will also examine these features in this case study.

3. Administration and organisation from the perspective of inclusive education

3.1. Defining the concepts

Inclusive education requires changes at many levels (Halinen & Järvinen 2008, 81; Naukkarinen 2005, 106). When changes, such as inclusive education, are implemented in schools and when teachers develop their pedagogics, for example when they start co-teaching, they always do it in the framework of the organisation and within the limits set by it (Johnson 2006). At the municipal and at national levels it necessitates changes, for instance, in the structures and policies (Halinen & Järvinen 2008, 81; Naukkarinen 2005, 106).

In this research, ‘organisation’ is defined as a system where people work together to reach certain goals through collaborative work, acting in certain ways that are set in advance (Juuti 2006, 204). ‘Administration’, on the other hand, refers to the process and activities of the people running the organisation to reach those goals (Salminen 2011, 11; Oxford Dictionaries n.d.). The goals of the educational organisation in Finland are:

1. “The purpose of education -- is to support pupils' growth into humanity and into ethically responsible membership of society and to provide them with knowledge and skills needed in life. Furthermore, the aim of pre-primary education, as part of early childhood education, is to improve children's capacity for learning.
2. Education shall promote civilisation and equality in society and pupils' prerequisites for participating in education and otherwise developing themselves during their lives.
3. The aim of education shall further be to secure adequate equity in education throughout the country.” (The Finnish Basic Education Act 628/1998.)

Approaches to organisation research can basically be divided into realistic, interpretive and postmodern approaches. The selected approach gives a broad framework for how an organisation is conceptualised. The realistic viewpoint concentrates mainly on the structures and ethos of the organisation, whereas the interpretive viewpoint pays attention to the habits, beliefs and values of the organisation. The focus is, for example, on investigating the habits and rituals of the people working in the organisation, or on what they seem to appreciate and give value to. The third approach in organisation research is the postmodern approach. It emphasises the discourses in the everyday-life of the organisation, as the identity and the working methods can be examined through those discourses. (Juuti 2006, 204–207.) In this research, the realistic and interpretive approaches are applied. The postmodern approach will not be applied because of the limited scope of the research.

In the realistic approach, organisation theories are divided into those that see organisations as *closed* and those that see organisations as *open*. The theories that see organisations as closed relate to the classical approach, and theories that conceptualise organisations as open relate to a systemic approach. Organisations relating to the classical approach are highly systematic, hierarchical and structured. Actions in these types of organisations go through bureaucratic steps, people working in the organisation have well-defined tasks and places and things move slowly. (Juuti 2006, 204–207; Nivala 2006, 131–132.)

The systemic organisation theories are quite the opposite, as they suggest that organisations cannot work in rational, highly structured ways since human beings are involved. This approach pays attention to the environment of the organisation and understands that organisations need to accommodate ever-changing circumstances, as the environments and the organisation are related to each other. (Juuti 2006, 206.) When the organisation is in contact with the environment, the organisation should be structured so that it can meet the needs of the environment. Especially if the environment is changing rapidly, the organisational structure should be flexible and open. Then again, when the environment of the organisation changes slowly, the structure of the organisation can be bureaucratic and hierarchical. (Juuti 2006, 207–208.)

When conducting research on organisations, traditionally, the focus is kept on the structure of it. The ‘structure of the organisation’ refers to the organisational scheme, to the actions that are repetitively taken in the organisation and to the hierarchy of the organisation. It also reveals the degree of formality and the roles of the people working in the organisation, and it also defines the tasks and responsibilities for everyone. It tells whether the organisation is centralized or decentralised. The way that the organisation is structured affects, for instance, how collaboration can be carried out. (Juuti 2006, 207–208.) In this research, I aim to find the features of the educational organisation in this case and draw conclusions in relation to the aforementioned theories. In addition, I aim to examine how these features get along with the implementation of inclusive education. The educational organisation and the administration will be examined using Bernard’s (2001, 4–10) classification of the levels of an organisation (micro/meso/macro), presented on pages 11–12. It should be remembered that as a master’s thesis scope is limited, it is not possible to concentrate deeply on the aspects of organisation and administration.

3.2. Inclusion demands changes

A successful change, for example, towards inclusive education requires a learning organisation. The definition of a *learning organisation* is well captured as follows: “A learning organisation has the ability to adapt, change and renew as the changing environment sets new demands all the time: it learns from its experiences and is capable of making rapid changes to its ways of actions.” In addition, in a learning organisation, mistakes are allowed because it is possible to learn from them. It is also characteristic of a learning organisation that the staff is encouraged to engage in a professional development and their well-being and commitment are seen as important. Further, a clear vision and values are the basis of all actions. (Sydänmaanlakka 2007, 54–56).

Characteristics of a learning organisation include, for instance, the habit of linking learning to change, innovations, participation, a change in working habits, delegation and leadership that facilitates these things (Sarala & Sarala 2010, 54.) The way I see it,

the concept of a learning organisation relates closely to the systemic approach in organisation research. However, public organisations (such as educational organisations) are often seen to represent the closed type of organisations. These organisations were built during an era when authorities were highly valued and appreciated due to their status. Moreover, the Finnish mentality has always been very strict and frugal when it comes to economics or following regulations. These are suggested reasons that they have been structured that way, and further, sustained. (Nivala 2006, 131 –132.) It is not a problem only in Finland; Fullan (1994), in his ground-breaking work on educational change management points out that educational organisations are conservative and aim at social reproduction.

On the other hand, schools do change and have reforms every now and then, but in organisations of a closed structure, changes have only short-term success, people get very defensive and changes are only superficial. Moreover, many times, people try to solve this problem by developing better strategies for implementing changes, but unfortunately, that will not be the right answer if there is not readiness for change. Instead, change should be a lifestyle, a natural part of the work in the organisation for the changes to succeed. The process of change is always dynamic, and many unexpected things can happen so as an organisation, it is more important to be able to get through changes successfully by growing and developing than just being able to implement separate school policies. (Fullan 1994, 18–22.) This means that inclusive education requires a shift in thinking, in the culture (Fullan 1994, 80; Seppälä-Pänkäläinen 2009).

3.3. Organisation culture

Inclusive education requires changes in the whole educational culture, not merely in the structures of the organisation (Naukkarinen 2005). The educational culture refers to the concept of organisational culture in administrative science. The same concept is referred to in the national core curriculum (2010, 19) as the working culture (and according to my understanding, it has the same meaning as school culture). It embodies all the formal and informal rules and behavioural models as well as the values, principles and cri-

teria that are the basis for the school work. The school culture is supposed to reflect those educational goals and values. (NCC 2010, 19.) However, conducting research on culture is not that simple.

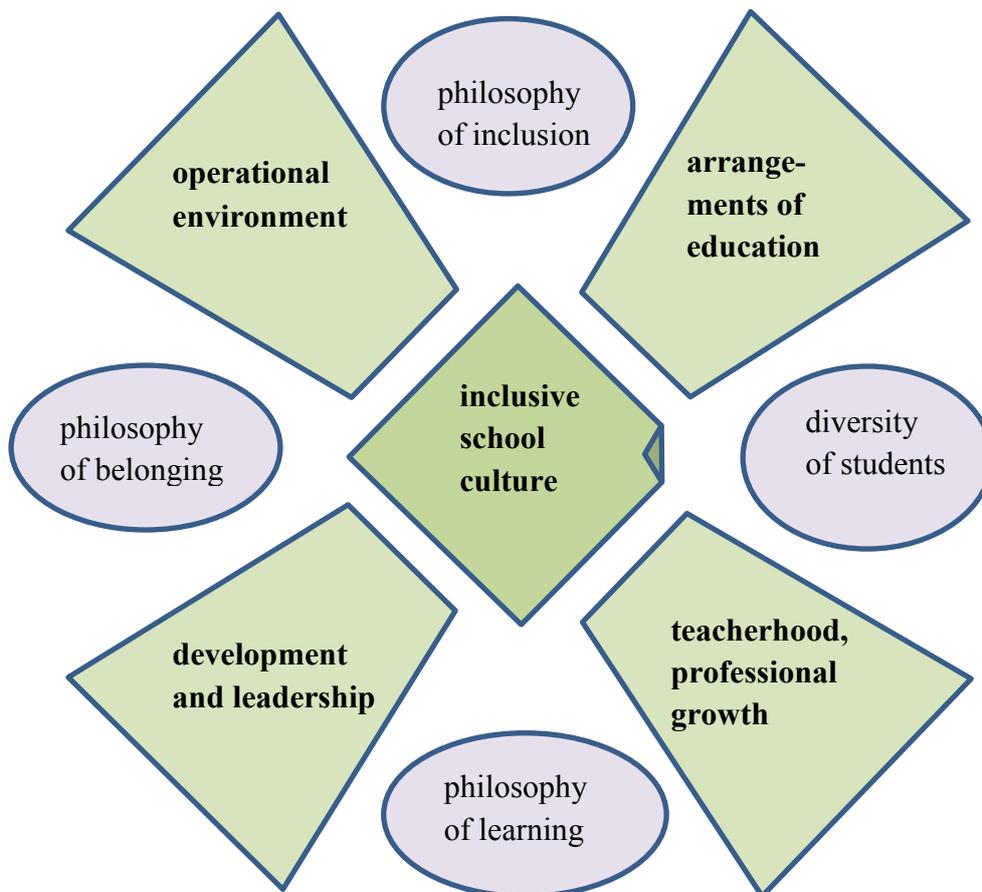
Schein (1991) is known as a significant researcher in the field of organisation development, especially on investigating organisational culture. According to him, the organisational culture consists of three parts: artefacts, values and assumptions. The artefacts are usually tangible, and they refer to the physical and social matters in the organisation, such as the technology, buildings, and behaviours that can be seen or heard. These can be observed, but usually they cannot be revealed by interviews. (Schein 1991, 31–32.) In this research, the physical artefacts include, for example, the curricula and official documents and diagrams of the organisation structures that I have examined. It would be too ambiguous for this type of rather small-scale research to investigate by observation the social artefacts, such as the way people talk and behave, so I will only examine them through the interviews – even so, they can be seen only to a certain extent, if at all. It should also be noted that, even though the artefacts can be observed quite easily, the true *meaning* and *relations* of them do not emerge that easily since there are different kinds of values behind them. As we all know, values are not tangible. (Schein 1991, 31–33.)

Typically, the culture of an organisation reflects values that originate from somewhere, usually from the leader of the organisation. In addition, there are values that are made explicit, and they work as guidance for the organisation. (Schein 1991, 33–35.) In this case, the written values can be seen, for example, in the curricula and the official municipal documents whereas, the leaders' values can be determined only from their interviews. However, there are two things that must be remembered when investigating values; firstly; people do not always necessarily operate in line with them and secondly, the values might represent only the wishes concerning the state of the future, not necessarily the current situation. (Schein 1991, 34–35.)

Values can change in time into assumptions. Schein (1991, 36) refers to Argyris and Schön when defining the third part of organisational culture, assumptions: “They are covert presumptions that tell people how to behave, observe, think and feel”. Assumptions are undeniable and difficult to change, and they lay deeply embedded in the cul-

ture. Moreover, it should be noted that they can distort how things are in reality. People, who conduct research on organisational culture, have a towering challenge in exposing the assumptions of the organisational culture. All we can do is to try to expose them by carefully observing and examining the artefacts and values of the organisation. (Schein 1991, 34 –37.)

According to Seppälä-Pänkäläinen (2014), the organisational culture of a school can be examined through four dimensions that comprise the conceptualised framework for an inclusive school culture. Every school has its own culture, but these four dimensions are the same in each of them. The dimensions are 1) the operational environment, 2) the arrangements of education, 3) teacherhood and professional growth and 4) leadership and development. These dimensions are surrounded by an inclusive philosophy, which is created, for instance on the basis of inclusive legislation and curricula. The following picture illustrates the dimensions in an inclusive school culture and the inclusive philosophy that surrounds it. (Seppälä-Pänkäläinen 2009, 62–64; 2014.)



Picture 1. Inclusive school culture (Seppälä-Pänkäläinen 2009, 63; 2014.)

An inclusive and developing school keeps all these dimensions in balance by preventing, solving and fixing possible disruptions in each of the dimensions. It is done in collaboration, and further, people learn through the process. If this does not happen, development and change is not happening, either. (Seppälä-Pänkäläinen 2009, 62–64; 2014.) I reflect my research data on these dimensions of school culture. However, I will use the term ‘pillar’ instead of ‘dimension’ since pillars are more concrete and provide a more solid base to review the role of the administration. Moreover, the word ‘pillar’ exemplifies the supportive essence of these dimensions in inclusive school culture.

3.4. Leadership

Leaders have a strong effect on shaping and creating the organisational culture (Schein 1991, 231; Spector 2010, 177). The process of developing an inclusive school demands changes in the school culture, and it requires consciously taken actions. These actions necessitate leadership. (Seppälä-Pänkäläinen 2009.) This argument makes sense, as, for example, according to the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2012, 20), leaders are responsible for “setting out values and vision, providing instructional leadership, promoting teacher learning and development, improving the curriculum, managing resources and building collaboration both within and beyond the school, in particular supporting the development of other schools and leaders to improve the entire system.” In this study, I focus on leadership at both, the micro level (schools) and the meso level (municipality) of the educational organisation.

According to Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006, 101), school principals in particular play a role in “determining the focus and direction of work in the school”. Thus, they play an essential role in creating inclusion in schools. Watkins and Meyer (2010, 240–241) describe what is needed from leaders who foster inclusive education:

- They have a personal vision of inclusive education, and they advance this vision to become a shared vision in the organisation.
- They enhance the kind of school culture that encourages parents and learners to participate.

- They actively initiate the change or strongly support others in doing so.
- They build the kind of school organisation where teamwork, collaborative problem solving and the sharing of ideas of teaching and learning are necessitated.
- They make it possible to develop and try new inclusive pedagogical methods through flexible resource use (physical, time and financial resources).
- They promote training for inclusion.
- They ensure that teachers, parents and pupils communicate and understand each other (p. 240–241.)

There are plenty of research studies and theories on leadership. On many occasions, leadership is divided into two concepts: managing and leading. The difference between these two concepts is that managing usually involves actions directed to *things* and leading refers to actions directed to *people*. (Huhtinen 2006, 221; Nivala 2006, 134.) However, Nivala (2006, 134) criticises this division because it presumes that leading is some “separate performance directed at people” and proposes to turn the focus instead to leadership styles and methods, when developing leadership in public organisations. In addition to the division between management and leadership, there is a third dimension to leadership: change management. This includes the leaders’ capacities to recognize new possibilities and develop the organisation. It demands courage, visions, activity the ability to foster collaboration. (Viitala 2013, 299–300.) In this research study, I aim to find the features and styles of leadership in this case and evaluate its possible impacts.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research framework

Inclusive education is topical in Finland. It seems that there is an overall consensus about aiming at inclusive education, but there seems to be a debate on which terms to use to talk about it and how exactly inclusion should be implemented. (Halinen & Järvinen 2008, 79). The legislation in Finland changed towards inclusive education after the establishment of Special education strategy (MoEC 2007). It is stated in the strategy that all learners have the right to attend their neighbourhood school and receive all the needed support for learning in mainstream classes through a three-level model of support. All learners are provided with (1) general support for learning, which is basically routine support in the everyday school life. If that is not adequate for a learner, then (2) intensified support is given, and if that is not sufficient either, (3) special support will be provided. A thorough assessment and a planning process with a multi-professional team will be carried out before the two latter stages of support are implemented. The main idea of this support system is to provide the earliest possible support in a systematic way, while keeping all learners in their local mainstream schools. (MoEC 2007.)

The Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) has evaluated how this reform has become reality in the municipalities. According to their report, municipalities have proceeded in implementing it, but the stages where municipalities in this task are and how they implement it differ. (MoEC 2012.) This is in line with the idea of Watkins and Meijer (2010, 241), that there is no single correct way to implement inclusive education and the ways that inclusion is implemented, depend on the local circumstances. In Finland, municipalities have pretty wide autonomy to arrange services, such as education, so there are presumably differences in the implementation of inclusion, too.

There are certain challenges in changing schools, and even though there are good pedagogical goals worth aiming for, the municipalities' possibilities in implementing them differ. The political level of education sets the limits and possibilities for change, for

instance by the decisions they make. Moreover, there are certain local factors that have an effect; for example, the financial situation varies between municipalities. (Johnson 2006.) In addition, MoEC (2012, 21), at the national level, acknowledges that reforms require time and resources, and a lot depends on the education providers' capacity and abilities.

My case study focuses on examining the aspects of administrative support in implementing inclusion in one Finnish municipality. This case study concentrates on investigating the role of the administration in implementing and fostering inclusive education, as schools always implement education in the framework of the whole educational organisation (Johnson 2006). The role of administrative support is highly recognised in the research field of inclusion, but it is still not much researched.

The research is a part of the A School for All – Development of Inclusive Education project that is being carried out in the area of North-West Russia and the Province of Lapland in Finland. The project aims to enhance inclusive education in schools and teacher education through research and development work. Some development schools are involved, and research is carried out in Finland and in Russia alongside the development work for inclusion in schools. The fact that I am doing the research for the A School for project predefines my research to concentrate on carrying out a case study on the three comprehensive schools involved in the project in Finland. The aspects of administrative support in implementing inclusive education are examined by posing the following research questions:

1. How is inclusive education implemented at the three selected schools?
2. How does the administration support the implementation of inclusive education in the three selected schools?

This study can serve as a basis for principals and municipalities for reflecting their solutions, structures and leadership from the point of view of inclusion. In the best scenario, this research is in compliance with the idea of Miles and Ahuja (2007, 141–142): "By providing practitioners an opportunity to reflect on the way inclusive education is interpreted and implemented in other contexts, can help to shed new light on their own practice, which can lead to change and development." They refer to differences between

countries in this sentence, but it fits the national or even more local level, too. However, a master's thesis is a small-scale research project, which means that it cannot cover all the aspects of the topic; but instead, it can elicit ideas and provide a starting point.

4.2. Qualitative case study research

Qualitative methods provide an opportunity to obtain the kind of information that makes it possible to study the topic thoroughly. Qualitative research does not focus on proving something that exists but instead aims at discovering and describing, interpreting and understanding phenomena, in this case the phenomenon of administrative support in this specific case. (Hirsjärvi, Remes, Sajavaara 2009, 161.) By using quantitative methods, I could have received generalizable information about the administrative support, but it would not have offered a chance to get deeper information, as qualitative data serves as an aid in the process of building conceptual understanding of the phenomenon (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 61–62). Even though qualitative methods can provide comprehensive information, I acknowledge that it is never possible to completely understand other persons' insights and experiences (Patton 1990, 13–14, 165).

A case study aims to examine contemporary phenomena with great subtlety. It is a beneficial method, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are faint. It provides an opportunity to examine and understand a certain phenomenon in a real-life context (Yin 2009, 2, 18.)

4.3. Target group

Case study research requires the collection of information from multiple sources to obtain all the information around the phenomenon. It is said that there is enough data when all the possible viewpoints and factors that might affect the phenomenon are taken into consideration. This is a challenge, as real-life phenomena have a multifaceted nature. (Ronkainen et al. 2011, 117–118; Yin 2009, 2.) When carrying out a case study,

data collection is not about having as much data as possible but about having the right kind of data. It is convenient to have some key persons who can provide information about the phenomenon (Ronkainen et al. 2011, 117–118.) I found this a challenge at the beginning of my research project, as the educational organisation and administration system are quite complex and broad in Rovaniemi.

According to Patton (1990, 169), sample size in a qualitative case study is usually relatively small, and further, it is usually chosen purposefully, which means that it is essential to find “information-rich cases” to answer the research question(s). Tuomi and Sa-rajärvi (2009, 85–86) describe this same concept as elite sampling. It does not matter whether the group is big or small; it is more important that these people are presumed to be able to provide information on the topic. I have followed this sampling technique in my research. I pondered the various aspects of the phenomenon of administrative support for inclusion by reading studies and becoming familiar with the organisation schemes, and on the basis of my understanding, I chose the following people among the target group that can provide information on the topic:

1. Principals involved in the A School for All – Development of Inclusive Education project
2. The municipal administrator responsible for coordinating special education in the municipality
3. The members and deputy members of the local education board and the head of the board
4. Teachers involved in the A School for All – Development of Inclusive Education project
5. Additional supportive data (e.g. official documents and papers, curricula)

School leaders’ represent the main source of data for this research since their role is important in implementing inclusion (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education 2012, 20). According to Honkanen (2012, 12), principals in general have a two-way task of managing the school and leading the human resources of the school (cf. Chapter 3.4. Huhtinen 2006, 221; Nivala 2006, 134). They are, for example, responsible for administrative tasks, practical matters in the school, setting goals, recruiting, setting the values and vision, being the pedagogical leader and handling the professional devel-

opment of the teachers. (Honkanen 2012, 12). Therefore, principals supposedly have extensive knowledge on both school practice and the features of educational administration.

The three principals in this case study are involved in the A School for All – Development of Inclusive Education project, so they foster inclusion in their schools. Therefore, I presumed them to have knowledge and experience on what is required from the administration in implementing and supporting inclusion. It is probable that this knowledge could not have been provided by random principals.

The special education coordination unit is a focal part of educational administration at the municipal level. It is a premier actor in educational administration, especially in preparing the way for inclusive education. This unit is responsible for planning and coordinating special education in the municipality. I also interviewed the municipal administrator who is responsible for coordinating special education in Rovaniemi. The administrator is presumed to have extensive knowledge about the state of inclusive education in the municipality. I also aim to find out how this unit sees their role in fostering and supporting inclusive education.

The members of the local education board are educational decision makers; more precisely, the members are elected officials, but the head of the local education board is an official. The board is governed by legislation (e.g. Finnish Basic Education Act 628/1998), which sets their assignments and responsibilities. (Rovaniemen kaupungin hallinto- ja johtosääntö 2014). I chose also to involve the deputy members in this research because they have participated in some board meetings and they are potential decision makers, just like the primary members are. This group is an essential part of the educational organisation since they make the political decisions in the field of education in Rovaniemi. What these people know, feel and think about inclusive education is significant from the point view of implementing inclusive education in schools. The local education board is responsible for organising educational services in Rovaniemi. There are 11 members and 11 deputy members on the board, in addition to the head of the board. Of these, four (4) members, one (1) deputy member and the head of the board were willing to participate in this research.

I also gathered some supplementary data from teachers, who are involved in the A School for All project. The two (2) teachers who wanted to participate in the research are presumably able to give information on what kind of support is needed because they are the ones who actually implement inclusive education in their work. These teachers have practiced inclusive education, so I presume that they can provide thorough insights. By including teachers in the research, I ensured that diverse aspects around the phenomenon are taken into account.

To some extent, I have also carried out a review of official documents that relate to education. These documents include, for example, the national and local curricula and the website of the city of Rovaniemi, which includes some official documents, records and other administrative documents. According to Hirsjärvi et al. (2009, 217), these types of document can assist in understanding the target group. Yin (2009) sees their benefits, for instance, in verifying unclear things. In addition, the documents can corroborate information from other key informants in the target group. In addition, inferences can be made from them, though, they should not be seen as “definite findings” but as guidance to what could be further examined. (p.103.) I use the documents in this research as described above, and they serve as a supplementary element of the research data.

Finally, I need to clarify that, to protect the anonymity of the target group, I use the term ‘administrative respondent’ when I talk about the educational official responsible for coordinating special education and when I refer to the head of the local education board. Since there is only one of each official in their position in Rovaniemi, anonymity is better ensured this way. Principals are referred to as principals and teachers as teachers, but I will not mention whether a member of the local education board is a deputy or primary member – they will be referred to as decision makers. The target group and their titles are summarised in the following table:

Table 1. Respondents of the research

Respondent	Referred to as
Principals	Principals
The municipal administrator responsible of coordinating special education	Administrative respondent
The members and deputy members of the local education board	Decision makers
Head of the local education board	Administrative respondent
Teachers	Teachers

4.4. Data collection

I started this research project by becoming familiar with the theories and previous research on inclusion, especially concentrating on what is written about administrative support. The themes of the interviews and surveys came from there. The questionnaire and the interview questions are provided in annex 1–4.

The data are collected mainly by using interviews. Interviews provide an opportunity to obtain information on people's experiences, feelings and thoughts (Patton 1990, 10). The main data is gathered from the principals, and I carried out the interviews face to face in their own schools during February and March 2014. Interviewing is advantageous because of its flexible nature – the researcher and the interviewees have a opportunities to ask for clarification and to interact, and the order of the questions can be re-organised if the interviewee starts to talk naturally about a topic that would have been asked later (I decided the themes of the interview beforehand). It is also possible to ob-

tain information on issues that the researcher would have not thought to ask about. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2009, 35; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 73, 75).

For these same reasons, I decided to interview one of the administrative respondents face to face. However, I acknowledged that I am inexperienced in doing interviews and that might increase omissions in carrying out the interviews (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2009, 35). Keeping that in mind, I conducted a test interview before conducting the real interviews, and in addition, I asked several people whether the questions are understandable.

I listened to and transcribed the interviews soon after conducting them so that I could assess my interview technique and learn from possible beginners' mistakes before conducting the next interview. The interviews were conducted in Finnish, and the transcriptions were done in Finnish, as it is the mother tongue of the researcher and of the target group. The quotes were translated into English by the researcher.

The teachers (9) and the local education board members (11), deputy members (11) and the head of the board (1) received a survey (Annex 1) that contained both structured and open-ended questions. The surveys were sent in January 2014 using Webropol questionnaire tool. On-line questionnaires save time, they are easy to send to many people at the same time and they enable the researcher to ask precisely the same questions of everyone (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 195).

However, surveys have some possible drawbacks. Surveys do not usually make it possible to delve deeply into a topic, people do not always take them seriously and it is possible that the respondents will not answer honestly and carefully. It is also possible that some of the questions will be misunderstood. Another weakness of a survey is that people are often reluctant to take part in them. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 195.)

In addition, I became acquainted with some official documents. They are all available on-line, and I found them by using a search engine and also directly from the website of the city of Rovaniemi. Overall, by collecting data from multiple sources, I aimed to increase the reliability of the research findings (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 233).

There are some things that should be noted concerning the validity of the target group. First, only five of the 22 decision makers, in addition to the head of the local education board, took part in the survey. I sent reminders to the respondents twice by e-mail, but still, not that many of them responded. The response percentage was only 22.73% (26.09% if the head of the board is counted). A higher response percentage would have increased the reliability of this research. It can only be guessed why so few decision makers answered the survey. Was it because of a lack of time? Was it because the topic was not seen as important? Or was it because these people felt that they did not have enough knowledge to answer the questionnaire?

In addition, the number of the teachers in the research is quite small, which means that all the viewpoints at this level have not necessarily come to light. After I transcribed the interviews and questionnaires into Microsoft Word documents, I read them many times. At that point, I noticed that I did not have enough data from teachers. Only two of the nine teachers answered the survey so I conducted a supplementary interview to obtain deeper and more thorough information. The interview questions (Annex 4) were based on the questionnaire. The small sample size of the teachers is not a problem as long as the experiences of these teachers (and the rest of the target group members) are understood as one part of the case and the focus is kept on linking these experiences to the whole phenomenon instead of concentrating on subjective experiences (Ronkainen et. al 2011, 117–118).

4.5. Content analysis

The most popular analysis method used in qualitative research is content analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 91). It is also used in this research study. Content analysis can be data-based, theory-based or theory-guided analysis. In data-based analysis, inferences and theories are developed on the basis of the data. The reasoning is in that case inductive (from specific to general), whereas in theory-based analysis, the reasoning logic is the other way around, deductive (from general to specific). In theory-based analysis, the concepts and frameworks of the research come from something that is already known. However, the analysis can hardly represent either of these in a pure way.

Theory-guided analysis is something in between these content analysis methods, as theory only guides and serves as an aid in the analysis process. In this method, prior knowledge has an influence, but there is also room for new thoughts to arise. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 95–100.) My analysis is mainly a theory-guided content analysis.

The interview questions and the survey questions (Annex 1–4) are formed on the basis of previous research on inclusion. Therefore, this part of the analysis has been theory based. After transcribing the surveys and interviews, I become acquainted with the material by reading it through many times. According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, 91–92), the basic idea in content analysis is first to decide what the focus of interest in the data is, and the research question usually defines or at least guides this decision.

After the decision is made, it is time to code the data that connect to the theme of interest, and everything else from the data is left out. Keeping all this in mind, I divided the data according to the target group (principals, teachers, administrators, and local decision makers), and I used different font colours for principals, teachers, administrators and decision makers. Then I started to write notes in the margins so that I could see what themes emerged in the data. At this point, the analysis was data-based content analysis. I divided the data into four thematic areas: 1) ways to implement inclusion in schools, 2) definitions, 3) supportive elements and 4) challenges. At this point, all of those things that were beyond the research interest were dropped from the data. The first two themes I thought would serve as background information. From those, it is possible to see how inclusive education is implemented in everyday school life according to the understanding of the target group. The theme of definitions indicates how the target group conceptualises inclusive education and whether there are differences in their understanding. The third and the fourth theme I thought to include the main data of my interest. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 109).

The next face of the analysis process was the reduction of the data (without losing information) under each of those themes. The idea is to make data easier to handle. (Eskola 2008, 137; Kippendorff 2013, 84–85; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 109.) I decided to use whole sentences and/or sets of sentences as an analysis unit. From those sentences, I formed reduced expressions. After I had marked all the reduced expressions, I formed sub-categories, as the next steps of the analysis process are to collect the codes from the

data and start to organise the data, for example, to themes, categories or types before writing a summary of it. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 91–92.) After forming the sub-categories, I developed higher-level categories on the basis of similarities and differences among them, and these upper categories I placed under four main categories from previous research (see Seppälä-Pänkäläinen 2009). An example of the analysis process is provided in Annex 5, and the chapters of this research report containing the results are built on them. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 108–113.)

5. Results: pillars of inclusive education

Certain pillars for implementing inclusive education were found from the research data. In this case, those seem to be understanding of inclusion, the right attitude, the legislative basis and structure of the organisation, diverse teaching methods and teachers' professional development and, finally, leadership towards change. I place and explicate these pillars more deeply in the framework of the dimensions of inclusive school culture, created by Seppälä-Pänkäläinen (2009, see 3.3). The four dimensions are as follows:

- 1) The operational environment;
- 2) The arrangements of education;
- 3) Teacherhood (professional growth) and
- 4) Development and leadership.

All these dimensions are in balance when the people in the organisation are able to collaboratively prevent and solve disturbances in each dimension and, further, to learn from that process. In that case, the development takes place and an inclusive school culture is manifested. (Seppälä-Pänkäläinen 2009, 2014.) It should be noted that I use the term 'pillar' instead of 'dimension' in this research report. 'Pillar' exemplifies better the supportive nature of these dimensions in implementing inclusion and further, it provides a solid base to view how inclusive education is implemented and how the administration supports it. Moreover, I do not examine the process of preventing and solving disturbances in the dimensions, but rather, focus on the concrete features that resemble these dimensions.

5.1. Operational environment

The operational environment refers to the environment of the schools, to the municipality. The focus is, for example, in the organisational structures and the development work of the municipality. (Seppälä-Pänkäläinen 2009, 65.) I understand it as also referring to the culture that is created by the municipality in addition to the educational organisation and the environmental surroundings. I further examine the explicit values that Rovaniemi as a municipality represents, how different stakeholders (e.g. administrators and decision makers) conceptualise inclusive education and what attitudes they have towards inclusive education. According to my understanding, these aspects also reflect the operational environment of the case schools.

The annual report and financial statement states that the values of Rovaniemi are creativity, responsibility, communality and environmental consciousness. From the point of view of inclusive education, I see especially the value of communality as significant. The meaning of this value is specified as follows: “We enhance equal opportunities to a good life. We work in ways that promote trust, safety and equality. We value openness, collaboration and civil dialogue. We build companionship and we create networks. We accept dissimilarity.”² (Tilinpäätös ja toimintakertomus 2013.) It seems that there is a stated value in the municipal organisation that promotes inclusion in education. To what extent does it come true in reality by the actions of the administration?

We have been for a long time a city that pretty much emphasises inclusion in services, so in 2005, we closed down the municipal special school and started to organise services on the basis of the neighbourhood school principle. So we have implemented it for a long time or had an inclusive orientation. (Administrative respondent 1)

The way I see it, yes, I think Rovaniemi is inclusive compared to many other Finnish schools, or should I say municipalities. (Principal 2)

² The Finnis-English translation was done by the researcher herself.

Many respondents considered the schools in Rovaniemi to be quite inclusive compared to other municipalities in Finland.

5.1.1. Structure of the educational organisation

In this case, the municipal organisation is split into an administrative organisation and a service delivery organisation. The municipal administration and financial steering are based on a contract control system, where the quantity, quality and costs of services to be produced or ordered, are defined in service contracts. (Kuntainfo n.d.1)

The model is a rather new way of structuring organisations, and it aims to make the relations between policy making and administration more clear. The main idea behind this division is that, when the municipalities are able to order services, there is an opportunity to discuss and decide on the contents of the services on the basis of what is thought to be most convenient for the inhabitants of the municipality. The purpose is to order the services from the producer by engaging in a service contract between the board and the directorate. This model is kind of an extension of orderer–producer model as the ordering and producing of services are administratively separated. It is thought to reduce the imbalance between the users (inhabitants of a municipality) and the service providers (municipality or nation) because they often have different points of view concerning the quality and accessibility of services. (Kuntainfo n.d.2)

When we think about this model from the point of view of municipal education services in this case, it means that the local education board is responsible for organising the school services. Thus, it orders school services from the municipal services directorate, and they enter into an official contract for producing the services. The contract addresses for the issues of the quality, the quantity and the costs of the services. In Rovaniemi, the local education board sets basic principles for organising education. Further, a handbook that expresses them is published and updated every five years, and it serves as a framework for education in Rovaniemi. The assessment tools for following-up on the realisation of those principals are set in the service contract. (Opetuksen järjestämisen periaatteet 2010.)

In Finland, different administrations can be jointly responsible for some public services. This is the case, for example, with Student Welfare Services which fall under the responsibility of more than one administrative branch. By working jointly on this level, cooperation and inclusive practice at school level can also be fostered. (Naukkarinen, Ladonlahti & Saloviita 2010.) However, one of the respondents pointed out that, at the municipal level, collaboration is not particularly genuine because the organisational structure is divided into many sectors. The respondent continued by saying that it leads to a situation where overlapping and crossing work occurs and it does not benefit anyone. However, this may have been recognised in Rovaniemi, as the local newspaper (Uusi Rovaniemi 7.5.2014) reports that one of the political parties has proposed that the existing applied orderer–producer model of the municipal organisation should be broken down (especially the education committee organisation). They further suggest that new ways of organising them should be tried out to make it more efficient.

5.1.2 Understanding of inclusion

As pointed out at the beginning of this research report, inclusion can be understood in many ways, and there are several definitions to it. The definitions can roughly be divided into the ways of conceptualising inclusion from a narrow perspective and from a wide perspective. The focal fact from the point of view of implementing inclusive education is, that the different conceptualisations of various stakeholders (e.g. teachers, principals, parents, administrators and decision makers), can act as a barrier to moving towards inclusion in education. (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson 2006, 14–27.) Therefore, I find it reasonable to examine how the research group defines inclusive education and whether there are differences in their understandings.

Teachers' conceptualisation

I asked the teachers to describe in their own words what they think inclusion means and, further, to speak out what kind of thoughts inclusion awakens.

For me, it means a common school for all. Flexible ways in organising teaching is the main thing. (Teacher 1)

Inclusion means that all learners, despite their skills and abilities, belong to the same group in the school (for example, the disabled and the not disabled). They work together, they are supported in different ways and they have their own differentiated goals in learning. Differentiation and support are made possible by co-teaching and school assistants. (Teacher 2)

Inclusive education is said to be a school for all, as all learners should have the right to go to their neighbourhood school and receive support in learning there, if needed, for example by using flexible teaching methods. In addition, teachers emphasise collaboration in implementing inclusion. The values of equality, collaboration and participation were pointed out.

Principals' conceptualisation

I asked the principals to tell in their own words what they understand inclusion means and how they define it. Principal 1 stated that inclusive education is implemented when, using old terms, a learner with special educational needs is placed in a mainstream classroom, and school work is organised in that setting. The principal specified that this does not have to mean that the learner is in the mainstream classroom all the time, but most of the time. Principal 2 emphasised participation and equality when defining inclusion. According to this principal, inclusive education means that every learner has the same rights and opportunities to participate and work together. Further, the school has a role to make it happen by using all kinds of solutions and support with the right attitude. Principal 3 defined inclusion as a school for all where children and adults are all the same. The principal pointed out that, even though the school is for all, individuality should also be appreciated.

I define inclusion and the thought of inclusive school... as having a school that is common for everyone. Like very broadly. Actually, the basis of my thinking is that all the children and adults... we are alike and together in the school.
(Principal 3)

The principals seem to have a clear viewpoint on inclusive education; they are open-minded towards it and it is the basis of their actions. Inclusive education is conceptualised as a school for all where everyone can participate and learn together. It is a question of equality, and no one should be excluded, as one of the principals said:

Well, inclusion means that everyone participates. It... well, no one is excluded or has unequal rights to participation, and instead, the basic idea is that different kinds of people have an opportunity to work together in different situations.
(Principal 2)

The principals pointed out that the starting point is that all learners are in the mainstream classroom, where various kinds of solutions and support are implemented so that everyone can learn. Overall, these principals seem to understand inclusion as having all learners in mainstream classrooms, where they receive all the needed support through flexible solutions (e.g. teaching methods). Inclusive education is seen as receiving education in the same setting for everyone so that everyone is equal. Further, what is best for the learner seems to be what matters the most.

It would be easier to categorise all the children and things, and it would in many ways be easier to make working schedules then, but it does not grow children. Especially for modern society. And then there is the fact that we should be thinking thirty years ahead. (Principal 3)

Principal 3 further elaborated by saying that, even though implementing inclusive education can sometimes be hard, it helps when one keeps in mind what the consequences are in the long-run for the learner. It was understood that inclusion is the only possible way when talking, for example, about learners with socio-emotional challenges:

Especially with them, I see no other option because the skills that they need to learn, cannot be learnt in special classes. These skills can only be learnt in a big,

heterogenic group. I basically think that they need healthy models, models that help them to survive in life. Those models do not exist in special classes. (Principal 3)

The principals think that all learners belong in mainstream classrooms, but Principal 1 addressed its limits by saying that some learners actually need special classes, at least to some extent. Perhaps this relates to the thinking that Principal 3 pointed out by saying that inclusive education should be implemented so that individuals are taken into account. Inclusive education is seen as the starting point, as including all the learners but with a sense of reality – if a learner needs some other solution to learn, then it should be taken into account. All three principals seemed to keep in mind the point of view of the learner.

However, even though the learners' best interests are at the forefront, this does not mean that teachers' well-being is forgotten. The principals showed concern for teachers' welfare too, as the following quote shows:

The fact is that it is our responsibility as principals to stop for a moment and think how we can be prepared for new tasks and how can organise this so that it works for the children and for the teachers. (Principal 2)

This kind of thinking reflects that, in inclusive schools, the well-being of the whole school community should be taken into account and everyone, including the teachers, are appreciated and valued (Booth & Ainscow 2002, 3).

The principals and teachers seemed to conceptualise inclusive education from the broad perspective compared to the definitions described by Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006). The wide understanding of inclusion aims to develop a school where everyone is welcome and appreciated, and this is shown in its methods of organising teaching so that diverse learners can participate equally in education (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson 2006, 14–27). The principals and teachers in this case emphasised the importance of using diverse methods and collaboration between teachers when implementing inclusive education.

The broader understanding of inclusive education perceives inclusion as developing a common school for all and sees the school as a place for each learner. The school is seen as responsible for finding ways to educate learners with different kinds of needs. In addition, diversity is appreciated, and inclusive values are seen as the basis of education. The most broadminded understanding of inclusion understands it as a principled approach to education and society, and inclusive values such as equality, participation, collaboration and communality are actually made explicit. (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson 2006, 14–27.)

In addition, the principals mentioned change at many points during the interviews. The principals acknowledged that inclusive education demands some kind of a change and that it challenges the old ways of working in schools.

And then, I think, there must be a certain kind of management of change and readiness for change because this brings new situations to us, which we are not used to be in, the staff is not used to being in, and the teachers are not used to, either. (Principal 2)

And overall, I think that these kinds of big changes... the best way for them to move on is to, sort of, so that it happens kind of slowly. So that it starts somewhere and then it spreads little by little. (Principal 1)

As the principals mentioned change so many times, it can be concluded that they see inclusion as a process. This is also characteristic of a broader understanding of inclusive education. In this kind of thinking, inclusion is not a specific goal to be achieved but instead it is a process of learning and participating that never ends. (Booth & Ainscow 2002, 3; Booth, Ainscow & Dyson 2006, 25).

Administrators' conceptualisation

I asked the teachers and principals what is their impression on how the meaning of inclusive education is understood among decision makers and administrators. One of the teachers had some doubts about administrators' and decision makers' understanding of what inclusive education actually requires in schools, saying, "Welcome to watch, hah!"

so that they would understand better what is going on in every-day school life. In addition, Principal 3 had a feeling that the decision makers might have a somewhat thin understanding on what is really going on in the schools. However, the principal trusted that the decision makers gain understanding after they obtain enough knowledge and reasoning of inclusive education. Another principal said,

Well, according to my impression, for example in Rovaniemi, yes, I have a very positive impression of their understanding [the educational administration].
(Principal 2)

According to this quote and on the basis of the research data, the overall understanding of inclusion at the administrative/political level of education in Rovaniemi seemed to be seen as adequate, though some respondents had doubts concerning it. Two of the principals thought that the administrators and decision makers do truly understand, but it was pointed out by Principal 1 that every stakeholder, teacher, principal, administrator and decision maker look at it from his or her own perspective.

I also asked the administrators and decision makers to define inclusion according to their understanding to assess the state of their knowledge base on inclusive education.

Well, inclusion means participation, a school that is common to all. (Administrative respondent 1)

Administrative respondent 1 seems to understand inclusive education in its broad meaning and to have a wide knowledge base on it. The administrator further highlighted that it is important to keep in mind both the learners' and the teachers' points of view so inclusive education can work. Administrative respondent 2 pointed out that inclusive education occurs when all the learners are placed in mainstream classrooms and that inclusive education is quite commonplace in schools these days. These administrators clearly have an understanding of what happens in everyday school life when inclusive education is implemented. One of them mentioned that there needs to be knowledge of special educational needs, organisation skills and preparedness. Co-teaching, which was mentioned by teachers and principals, was also mentioned by the administrators. It seems that collaboration is understood as an essential factor when defining the meaning of in-

clusion. Furthermore, the pedagogics in schools is important from the point of view of inclusion:

Pedagogics needs to change; the culture of teachers working alone that is characteristic of schools needs to be broken. It is necessary to learn to work in teams together so it favours the children and parents. (Administrative respondent 1)

Teachers' collaboration, more precisely co-teaching, is one significant and beneficial way to foster the change towards more inclusive schools (Ahtiainen et al. 2011, 57). This topic is going to be examined more deeply in Chapter 5.2.2.

Decision makers' conceptualisation

I examined how the decision makers understand what inclusion means. However, it should be noted that only 22.73 % of the decision makers answered the questionnaire, so this does not give a full picture of the state of knowledge on inclusion among the local decision makers. According to the legislation, only two of the members of the local education board must be teachers (Laki kunnan kouluhallinnosta annetun lain muuttamisesta 174/1991), so I decided to give them a brief definition of inclusive education in the questionnaire. I also assumed that the target group would feel more motivated to answer if I let them know that I did not presume them to have prior knowledge on the topic. When I viewed the minutes of the meetings of this committee during their term of office, it became apparent that topics concerning inclusive education have not been included in the agendas. This was also pointed out by a decision maker, and one of them even wished that the topic would get more publicity.

To examine the knowledge base of inclusive education among these decision makers, I first asked whether they had heard the concept of inclusion before. Two of them said that they had heard the concept before, whereas three of them were not familiar with the concept. Thus, the concept of inclusion was not familiar to all of the decision makers, and they had not discussed it in their meetings.

I asked the decision makers to define inclusive education in their own words. Some of the decision makers defined it the way I had defined it at the beginning of the question-

naire (Annex 1). I cannot be sure whether they gave this similar definition on the basis of my given definition or whether it sincerely was their way of thinking. Overall, the conceptualisation of inclusive education varied a lot among the decision makers. Some of them understood it from the narrow perspective:

A learner in a comprehensive school with special educational needs having a chance to study in the neighbourhood school. (Decision maker 2)

A small deviant minority is merged into a mainstream group. (Decision maker 4)

Some of them had not heard of it before and described what the concept sounds like:

I have not really come across this word before. The first thing that comes in mind [about the word] is something being running-in (in Finnish: sisäänajetaan). (Decision maker 1)

The data show that there is a great deal of variety in the knowledge base among educational decision makers and among their definitions. To examine more deeply the knowledge base, I asked the decision makers what they think inclusive education requires from teachers. Their answers can be divided into the characteristics that are needed from a teacher and the practical requirements. The decision makers seem to think that teachers need to have flexibility, patience and the ability to accept differences. It was also pointed out that teachers need to know their limits so that they can offer the best possible teaching for learners. In addition, teachers must have desire to do it.

Patience and persistence, a big heart and a good attitude. (Decision maker 3)

According to the decision makers, the practical things that are needed are mainly training and knowledge on special needs and pedagogics.

It can be concluded from the data that there is a lack of knowledge, at least to some extent. The fact that the concept was not familiar to three out of five decision makers might arise from the fact that these members of the local education board do not necessarily have training in the field of education, or they are not necessarily educational professionals.

5.1.3. Attitude

The respondents highlighted the importance of attitudes. A positive attitude is essential at the meso level of educational administration. One of the principals explained that, if the decision makers think negatively about inclusion, in worst the case, they can water down the implementation of inclusion. Crawford (2009) states that inclusive education has the best possibility to work if stakeholders have a common understanding and goals regarding inclusive education. If some stakeholders do not reach for the goals, or work against them, inclusive education is in danger of failing. (p. 50–51.) However, this was not seen as a problem in the case of Rovaniemi. The principals and teachers were quite sure that the administrators and decision makers have a positive attitude towards inclusion.

Yeah, I think that they have a very positive attitude. When the decision was made in Rovaniemi to eliminate the special school, it was a decision made by officials. So they surely have had the idea that, by way of inclusion, all the children will go to their neighbourhood school and the support will be arranged in that school. (Teacher 1)

I asked the decision makers directly whether they have a positive, negative or neutral attitude towards inclusive education. Three out of five said that they have a positive attitude, one reported a neutral attitude and one had a negative attitude towards inclusive education. Two of the decision makers mentioned that, in principle, inclusion fosters tolerance and understanding of differences in schools and that this is a good thing. One of the decision makers mentioned that inclusive education should not be implemented if it is not the best solution for the learner even though the main idea is that no one should be excluded. The decision makers showed concern about the peace and order in the classroom, group dynamics, the skills and resources of the teacher and the possibilities of getting bullied. This was an interesting finding that the differences in the attitudes showed up even in this small sample of the target group.

Finally, some of the research participants mentioned the parents, and there were two kinds of impressions of the attitudes of parents. Some of the target group said that, ac-

According to their understanding, parents and learners themselves are not opposed to inclusive education. One of the principals said that there has been only one situation where parents were against inclusion and that they usually want their children to be treated the same way with their peers. However, one of the administrators said that the parents of children with special educational needs usually want their children to study in special schools and classrooms because they see other children with special needs as the peer group for their children, not the children in the mainstream classrooms and schools.

One of the teachers pointed out that the parents are usually the only stakeholders opposed to inclusive education. Sometimes, when parents are told that their child is in a classroom where a special class is integrated into a mainstream classroom, some blazing opinions emerge, although most of the parents are approving and satisfied. However, some parents have doubts about whether the classroom is good for their child if there are learners from special classes in the same classroom.

When we told the parents that we have this merged group where the special class has been united with a mainstream classroom, then there comes quite strong – some, not all, most are approving and nod their heads and are satisfied, but then there are some who strongly question whether it the best place for their child to learn if there are also children from the special class. (Teacher 1)

The teachers decided to discuss the matter calmly with these parents and explained to them more precisely how they work. The teachers stress the importance of staying in contact to parents and invited them to observe their lessons; in fact they even organised lessons so that the parents had a chance to participate in some ways, too. This has helped in changing the negative attitudes. In addition, Administrative respondent 1 mentioned that, when there are negative attitudes among parents, the administration also has challenges in justifying why inclusive solutions are implemented. This respondent pointed out that it is especially challenging because, even in the specialist network (doctors who give diagnose, researchers, etc.) there are people who tend to think that special schools and special classes are actually needed.

5.1.4. Conclusions on operational environment

It seems that Rovaniemi represents inclusive values both explicitly and in practice since the schools are considered to be more inclusive than Finnish schools in general. I see the role of the administration at this point as enhancing the culture of the school so that it exemplifies inclusive values, too.

However, the structure of the organisation at meso level was said to be complex, and it does not really enhance collaboration at the meso level of the administration. These types of organisations change slowly (Juuti 2006, 204–208; Nivala 2006, 131–132), so it is not beneficial for implementing inclusive education. Naukkarinen (2005) explains that, to enhance inclusion, collaboration should be a part of the working habits at each level of the educational organisation, not merely in schools. However, as Juuti (2006, 207–208) points out, if the organisational structure is hierarchical and complex, there is no room for collaboration. If the organisational structure were be more open, it would be able to accommodate changes and develop at the same time (Juuti 2006, 206–208). As Fullan (1994) points out, successful change demands a learning organisation, and I understand that a complex and closed organisational structure is not compatible with that idea.

The knowledge base of inclusive education is good at the micro level and, to some extent, at the meso level. Naukkarinen, Ladonlahti and Saloviita (2010) argue that it is essential that there is a clear understanding about inclusion and its requirements at the municipal level and municipal administrators should see it as a matter that concerns them, too. One of the administrators mentioned, that it is important that the administrators at the meso level know what inclusion demands in the everyday life of the schools.

The principals at the micro level seem to understand inclusion in its broad meaning and see it as an on-going process. They see inclusive education as a school for all, where learners can receive the support they need in learning in mainstream classrooms and where everyone is seen equal and having the same rights to education. Even though, inclusive education is seen worth aiming for, inclusion or any other ideology, doctrine

or trend is not meant to be implemented as such; instead, ideals work as a good basis that channels to the golden mean, as Principal 1 described.

The teachers reported feeling supported in implementing inclusion. It is evident that the principals offer support as much as they can, and the two administrative respondents seem to understand the requirements of inclusion. However, the knowledge base among the decision makers who are elected officials is not well covered. How can it be that the teachers feel that they receive support in implementing inclusion from administration despite that there is lack of inclusion knowledge among educational decision makers? It is possible, that the members of the previous board who made decisions concerning the basic principles of education in the municipality had more knowledge on the topic, but the answer might be in sharing of the information,

They [the local education committee] are the ones who do it; they decide what the basic principals in education are that define how things are done, as well as the limits of it. No doubt, they are in central positions, and they need to be convinced that this is the right direction. – It is our job to convince them. In addition, what is legislated, directs the decisions too. (Administrative respondent 1)

It seems that the flow of information is of great importance to the top of the organisation, to the decision makers. When the decision makers do not have former knowledge on a topic, it becomes salient for them to get enough of the right kind of information, and further, the information should be understood so that the decisions made on the basis of it are appropriate. In Rovaniemi, it seems that knowledge on inclusion is relegated to decision makers so that they can make decisions. The schools give information to the (operational) administration, and they provide knowledge to decision makers, who are responsible for setting strategies and making decisions concerning the educational organisation.

What's important, when it comes to whichever municipality, is that the person who is responsible for developing special education or inclusive education in the municipality is also an active participant in the leadership of the educational organisation. Because now it is possible for a municipality to vitiate the whole development process of inclusion if this person is passed by and not taking part in

the leadership of the educational organisation that makes the decisions at the municipal level. If this person is heard only every now and then, it is possible that it [inclusion] is not taken into account enough. But I think that we, for example, have it in order here in Rovaniemi. (Principal 2)

They are the ones, like I said, who decide the principles of education where the lines and limits are defined, so they are in a central position, basically the central actors, so they need to be convinced that this is the right way. (Administrative respondent 1)

Nivala (2006, 138–139) stresses the importance of ensuring that the decisions are made by people who have an understanding on the topic. He criticises the Finnish way of running an organisation that is heavily split into operational and strategic parts and suggests that the administrators have more power in making decisions, whereas the decision makers would have responsibility only for the strategic definitions of policies. In this way, it would be ensured that the decisions are made by people who have knowledge on the issues at hand, and it would simplify things. (p. 138–139.)

Watkins and Meijer (2010, 329) express similar thoughts, as they claim that the local decision making process should involve all stakeholders involved in inclusion. They also suggest that the policy makers should actively take part in mobilising resources (human, physical and financial) to help local decision making and innovation to emerge. First, there must be a political commitment “to support innovation, creativity and degrees of freedom for practitioners to innovate their work”. (p. 239.)

In Rovaniemi, the sharing of information seems to work. One suggested reason for it, according to Administrative respondent 1, is the small size of the municipality. However, is it a sustainable solution to leave the decision making on the basis of adequate knowledge in the hands of separate stakeholders who share information? Can it always be ensured that the knowledge reaches the decision makers and further, that they truly understand the issues? Moreover, are the municipalities in equal position if so much depends on separate persons who share information? If, for instance, the school principals or municipal administrators have a narrow understanding of inclusive education or they have a negative attitude towards it, it is presumable that the decision makers will not

necessarily make decisions that foster inclusive education in the municipality. As one of the principals said,

And yet about the local education board, I would say what is important is that the local education board has enough knowledge about the meaning of inclusion, that they have a positive attitude. If the attitude there is negative towards this, then, the local education board can ruin many good things. That's the way it is; they are not specialists in this field, so it necessitates adequate information. (Principal 2)

It seems that the sharing of knowledge also plays a role in changing attitudes, as some of the principals and teachers stated that decision makers and administration concentrate too much on the costs and do not see the effects in the long run.

Well, maybe it isn't... Well there are also school people among the decision makers, and they clearly understand, but also believe that it is still quite thin [understanding]. But then again, when specialists give justifications why resources are allocated here and here and that it is in compliance with the policies, it is in line with our goals, strategies, then they will provide it [resources]. (Principal 3)

And that, particularly, decision makers would like to see numbers, and they ask what the costs of this are. Well, at best, it can save some money, but the way I see it is that an inclusive school might cost a bit more, but what can it pay back in the future? There can be fewer people who go to prison over and over again; there can be many fewer people who get marginalised. So it is like you cannot look at the cost effects in a short-sighted way or compare them over five years. Instead, the focus should be on the bigger picture when thinking about educational organisations. (Principal 3)

Principal 2 also pointed out that the results of education can only be seen in the future, and it is hoped that the decision makers would keep it in mind when they are making decisions on where to save money. One of the teachers thought that the belt-tightening falls too easily on schools.

5.2. Arrangements of education

Arrangements of education refers, for instance, to school facilities and to how learners are grouped and what kind of support system there is for learning. (Seppälä-Pänkäläinen 2009, 83). I examine this dimension at all levels of the educational organisation. At the macro and meso levels I examine what kind of legislative basis is provided for arranging education in inclusive ways, and I show how the schools' work is arranged at the micro level to foster inclusion.

5.2.1. Legislative basis for arranging education

In Finland, the Parliament decides on the basic principles of the educational legislation and education policy. The government, and the Ministry of Culture and Education as a part of it are responsible for the organisation and planning of education policy at the central government level. The actions of the providers of education, at the municipal level are taken to provide education for children living in the area and have power to decide about many things themselves, but they are still governed by the law, which has set goals through the Education Act. (MoEC n.d.1.) The Finnish Basic Education Act (628/1998), the national core curriculum for basic education (2010) and the Special education strategy (MoEC 2007) do not directly mention inclusive education, but they do say that all learners have the right to go to their neighbourhood school and receive support in learning there through a three-level support system (see page 22).

The Finnish National Board of education is responsible for the administrative tasks and the development tasks of education at the national level. They also formulate the national core curriculum, which is based on the Basic Education Act. The idea of the national core curriculum is to ensure fundamental educational rights, equality and quality and the consistency of education as well as legal protection. This national core curriculum is the framework of all education in Finland. It sets the framework, for instance, for educational values, structures and tasks as well as the principles related to learning theories,

the educational environment and the working culture and methods. In addition, it defines the goals and the contents to teaching subjects. It also determines the policies regarding learner support, instruction and evaluations in addition to student welfare and collaboration between home and school. The education provider (municipality) is required to create a municipal-specific curriculum based on the goals and contents set in the Basic education act and in the national core curriculum. Further, school-specific curricula can be created following the same logic. (MoEC n.d.2.) The curriculum is the basis of education in the municipality, and every learner has the right to be educated in accordance with it (MoEC n.d.3).

It is written in the national core curriculum (2010) that everyone has the right to grow and develop as a learner and to succeed in education on the learner's own terms. Everyone is entitled to receive support to succeed in this goal. The education provider is responsible for ensuring that support is given. This is ensured by distributing the work and defining different responsibilities for each stakeholder in the work relating to determination and implementation of the support. Further, the school management is responsible for organising, how support is provided. Pedagogical expertise and teacher collaboration are essential in recognising the needs for support and in planning and organising it. (NCC 2010.)

The principals consider the role of the legislation and curricula significant, and they are seen as the basis for inclusive education. Rioux (2007, 114) states that one possible barrier to implementing inclusive education, a school that is common for all, comes from legislation and segregating policies. Thus, what they say about inclusive education is not insignificant. According to Principal 2, legislation plays a role in working as a supportive element when changes are implemented. For example, if there are arguments, it is convenient to look up what legislation has to say about the topic of the debate. After all, people must work in line with the law. It is important that the principals know what is written in the law:

Legislation is the basis for everything, and principals need to be familiar with the things that are written in it to be able to organise things. The way I see it, it is kind of a framework. After I'm familiar with the framework, I can organise things in my school. (Principal 3)

Principal 3 sees that the legislation and curricula are in order from the point of view of inclusion in the municipality. All of the principals think that the legislation does guide towards inclusive education. However, it was also suggested by one of them, that it does so only in an implicit way. One of the administrators thinks the same:

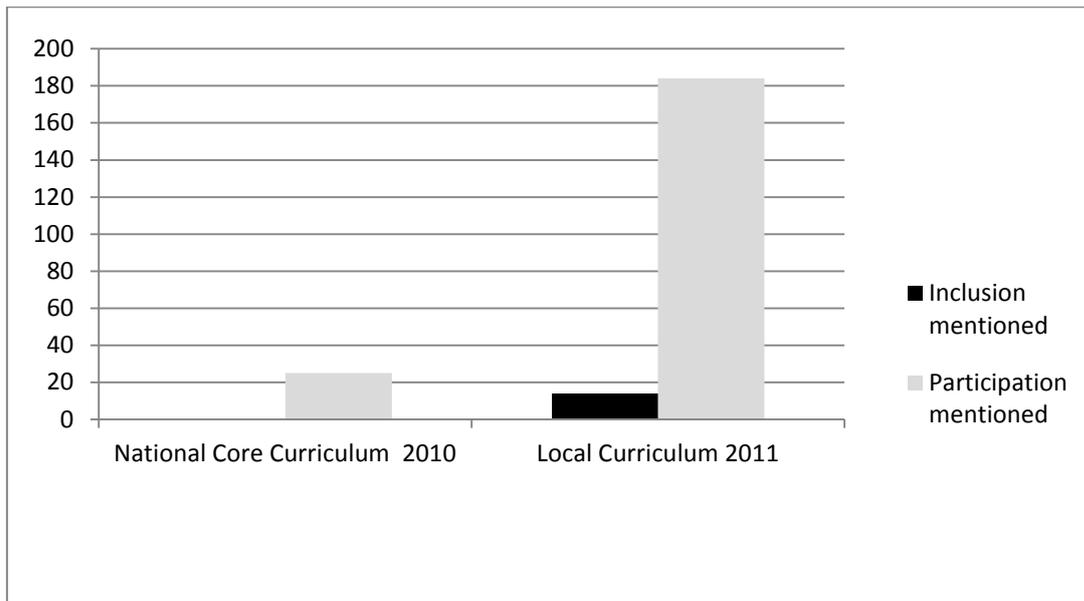
Well, the curriculum guides well, but the legislation is not that inclusive after all. (Administrative respondent 1)

To understand this statement, I decided to take a deeper look at the contents of the national and local curricula from the point of view of inclusion. The curricula are the basis of education and the most important norm that determines the activities in the school (MoEC n.d.). I examined the curricula by applying quantitative content analysis simply by counting how many times the word 'inclusion' is mentioned in the curricula text (Eskola 2008, 164). I took in comparison the newest curricula at the national and local levels, the national core curriculum and the amendments and additions to the national core curriculum for basic education (2010), and at the municipal level, the curriculum from 2011.

As texts, curricula have a unique nature because every expression in the curricula has significance. This means that even one expression of a certain theme has weight. I acknowledge that the number of certain words in the curriculum does not necessarily directly indicate the volume of emphasis of certain themes in the text, but it still can reveal something about the state of the volume of guidance for certain themes – in this case, inclusive education. (Vitikka 2009, 42.)

I chose the words 'inclusion' and 'participation' as search terms since they are commonly used concepts in the literacy of inclusive education and clearly refer to inclusion. It should be noted that, in Finnish 'participation' has two meanings, as it can refer to 'osallistua' when the impulse to participate comes from the participant him-/herself. The word can also refer to 'osallistaa' when the impulse to participate comes from outside. It should be noted that I have not distinguished whether the word 'participation' refers to a learner, a teacher, a parent or another type of stakeholder in the text because in inclusive education, the participation of every stakeholder is valued (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson 2006, 25–26). It should also be kept in mind that there can be other expressions in the

curricula referring to inclusive education than 'inclusion' and 'participation'; those are just the words that I chose to represent the expressions of guidance towards inclusive education. The following chart shows the number of times these words appear in the chosen curricula:



Picture 2. The number of times 'inclusion' and 'participation' are mentioned in the curricula

As Picture 2 points out, the national core curriculum and the amendments and additions to it (2010) does not mention inclusion at all, but the word appears in the local curriculum (2011) 14 times. The word 'participation' can be found in both the national and local curricula. In the national core curriculum (2010), it is mentioned 25 times, and in the local curriculum (2011), as many as 184 times. It seems that the importance of participation is acknowledged both nationally and locally, but locally, participation is much more emphasised than at the national level. The differences do not stem from differences in the overall number of words in the curricula, as there is not a considerable difference between the overall number of words in the curricula.

At the moment, the new national core curriculum is under review process and it is expected to be established by 2016 (MoEC n.d.4). For now, it seems that 'participation' is

going to be strongly present in the upcoming curriculum, but there is still no mention of the word 'inclusion', at least in the draft of the curriculum. (MoEC n.d.)

Finally, I must point out that, even though the curricula promotes inclusion in education, this does not necessarily mean that inclusive education is practiced. As Schwartz (2006) mentions, teachers interpret and put a curriculum's content into action in their own ways. In addition, teachers use curricula only to a certain extent (Schwartz 2006, 449). This means that the administration can support inclusive education by making it an explicit theme in the curriculum, but that does not necessarily become reality in school life. On the other hand, if the curriculum does not even mention inclusive education, the odds that inclusive education will be present in school practice are even shorter.

Sometimes the curricula writers ease the path to bring the curricula content to school practice by providing manuals or some other practical guides for teachers to use (Schwartz 2006, 450). In Finland, there are practical guides for teachers in each teaching subject. These and other practical documents that are designed for the use of educational staff are usually available on-line, as they are in this case. I see that these types of reference material are one factor that supports the implementation of inclusion well in this municipality.

5.2.2. Implementation of inclusive education in the schools

Now that the frameworks for implementing inclusive education have been reviewed, it is time to address on how inclusive education is implemented in the everyday life of the schools. First, the research data show that, as inclusive education is about having all the learners in mainstream classrooms, principals must aim to place all the learners in same classrooms. That is the starting point, as Principal 3 described.

Teacher 1 said that, when implementing inclusive education, the first thing to do is to assess what kind of support the learners in the classroom need. On the basis of that, it is necessary to think about the different kinds of pedagogical methods and solutions that

would work the best. Flexible and diverse teaching methods and collaboration between teachers are stressed when describing how to implement inclusion in the classrooms.

Then I ponder together with another teacher what kind of pedagogical practices or solutions we will implement in our teaching... I mean, whether it is going to be co-teaching, flexible grouping, differentiation or another kind of working form. So inclusion... It appears as a very... Like, diverse and heterogeneous classroom that is taught in the school. (Teacher 1)

Differentiation and giving support is made possible by co-teaching and classroom assistants. (Teacher 2)

Differentiation means that the teachers modify their teaching methods according to the abilities and needs of the learners. One of the teachers described that differentiation is basically just considering and implementing different ways to teach, such as flexible grouping (for instance, on the basis of learners' skills or learning styles), splitting lessons, different kinds of assignments to different learners, giving some learners extra time or reducing some tasks in exams, giving some learners tools to ease some assignments, and many other kinds of practical solutions developed with the help of the official three-level support system. UNESCO (2009, 11) extends this implementation list by clarifying that inclusive education can be organised, for example, by using multi-grades, through peer teaching and by converting special schools into resource centres that can offer help and guidance to other schools.

Teacher 2 and some of the decision makers pointed out that too many learners should not be placed in a classroom. The high number of learners in the classrooms seem to be a challenge in implementing inclusive education. One way to handle this problem is to have two teachers in one classroom. Rovaniemi received words of thanks for providing resource teachers in local schools. Having another adult in the classroom is one of the most important resources mentioned by the teachers, principals and administrators.

We have received financial support from the government that is meant for decreasing group sizes by using resource teachers, and we decided to do it, so we employed resource teachers. It has been a really excellent thing in practice; it has enhanced arrangements there [in schools]. (Administrator 1)

According to the target group members, another adult in the classroom can be another general teacher, a special teacher or a classroom assistant. It seems that collaboration is seen as an essential resource in implementing inclusion. Co-teaching was seen as a beneficial method in making inclusive education possible. It makes it easier to consider different methods, too. According to Cook and Friend (cited in Ahtiainen et. al. 2011, 17–18), “co-teaching occurs when two or more pedagogical experts teach in the same physical facility a heterogeneous classroom” and both of these teachers are active participators. Some research studies have addressed co-teaching, its benefits and its challenges (see e.g. Ahtiainen et. al. 2011; Thousand, Nevin & Villa 2010). The teachers in this case study see it as an excellent way to implement inclusive education. However, inclusive education can be practiced without a pair teacher too, for example by using differentiation in the classroom.

5.2.3. Conclusions on educational arrangements

At the macro and meso levels of the educational organisation, the legislation serves as a basis for educational arrangements and provides the framework for school activities. It seems that, from the point of view of implementing inclusion in education, the legislative basis is not that firm, but the research data show that the curricula encourage inclusive education. The national core curriculum and the amendments and additions to the national core curriculum for basic education (2010) and particularly the local curriculum (2011) encourage participation in education, but again, inclusive education is directly encouraged only locally. There is a considerable difference, as inclusion is mentioned 14 times in the local curriculum (2011) but not a single time in the national curriculum and the amendments and additions to the national core curriculum (2010). This means that there might be huge differences between the levels of direct guidance towards inclusive education between municipalities in Finland since the municipalities have great autonomy in what they emphasise in their local curricula.

It is interesting that, even though Finland is stated to have inclusion as the basis of education (EASNIE 2014) and the country has signed international agreements, such as the

Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, that emphasise inclusive education (UNESCO 1994), inclusion is still not directly mentioned in the national core curriculum and the amendments and additions to the national core curriculum (2010). It is not mentioned in the legislation, either. The schools in Rovaniemi are strongly guided towards inclusive education in the local curriculum, but it is not nationally ensured that this is the case in other municipalities, even though the importance of participation is at some level taken into account nationally.

In this case, the school arrangements at the micro level are very diverse, and the teachers collaborate with each other. Principals should make this possible in their schools by creating a school culture where teachers are encouraged to try new methods and solutions. At this point, school leaders must also have management skills so that the teachers are able to organise their work, individually and collaboratively, in innovative ways. In addition, the principals play a role in creating a school culture where learning and development are an essential part of teachers' work.

5.3. Teacherhood and professional growth

Teacherhood and professional growth are about training and professional development. Teachers training and learning can be both formal and informal. (Seppälä-Pänkäläinen 2009.) I include in this theme what the research data indicated about teachers' training and learning.

5.3.1. Training

As teachers who implement inclusive education seem to develop their own teaching methods and solutions, teachers' competence is not insignificant. Principal 3 pointed out that teacher training should provide special educational skills to all teachers, whether they are general or special educational teachers because, after all, they do the same work

in inclusive classrooms. According to this principal, adequate training would make teachers more prepared, and perhaps the attitudes would then be left behind and professionalism would receive more emphasis. In addition, training makes teachers feel more secure in teaching diverse learners (Hwang & Evans 2011, 144–145; Anati & Ain 2012).

However, two principals pointed out a problem in teacher education. The fact that special education teachers and general teachers have different training and titles means that they also receive different wages even though they might do the same work if they have inclusive classes. Moreover, special education teachers may have different teaching obligations and titles. Principal 1 and Principal 2 in particular criticised this, as in inclusive schools, the teachers actually do the same work but are paid unequally because of their different titles. Principal 1 clarifies that there is certain inflexibility since, for example, if there are two kinds of special education teachers in the school and they have different compulsory teaching times, but in reality, they do the same work. The principal would like to change the special education teachers to be in completely co-ordinated positions because it would help in organising the school work, and they would also be paid equally. The principal calls for flexibility and unification from the administration.

In addition to teacher education, the importance of training in general was emphasised. This was mentioned by teachers, principals, administrators and decision makers, so it is seen as important at each level of the educational organisation.

And then of course, second, there is... Like proper knowledge... I mean that there is enough training available, enough instructions, enough support. (Principal 2)

More precisely, as one of the administrators pointed out, training must be right kind of training from the point of view of inclusive education. This respondent also sad that it is important that training in inclusive education is also provided for parents and other school staff members. There are guidance and consulting services in Rovaniemi, in addition to a web-site that has information on the topic of inclusive education. The information on the website is available to everyone.

5.3.2. Learning from each other

Furthermore, teachers learn from each other. The data reveals that it is also essential that the various methods and solutions can spread in the schools.

After someone starts to implement [inclusion], it spreads to others too and they get the courage to teaching [in an inclusive way]. (Teacher 1)

There are many ways in which the spreading of solutions and methods is fostered in this case. Teacher 1 pointed out that the best way to learn from each other is to go and see how colleagues teach. However, unfortunately there is not that much time for the teachers to observe each other's work in the everyday life of the school. Still, the teachers have regular meetings where they can, for example, discuss about their work.

There is not a single way to implement inclusive education, and it necessitates trying different solutions and methods. Moreover, these methods and ideas come from other teachers, special education teachers, parents, principals and even from learners themselves, as Principal 2 described. Furthermore, setbacks are acceptable.

Yeah, it demands a kind of flexibility from everyone, so it can be seen-... There is courage to try new things and courage to develop new things, but on the other hand also courage to accept that, if something is tried and done, it does not have to be that definite. And when it is seen that it does not work this way, there is courage to take a step back and go in a somewhat different direction. It is the normal development of things. It should not be thought that now that I have started to develop this, and I'm taking it in that direction, that it is some kind of a defeat if or something, if it does not work like that. Instead, one must take a step back. (Principal 1)

In addition, Principal 3 mentioned that setbacks are always discussed. Principals need to be courageous and open to experiments and trials and new methods and solutions.

5.3.3. Conclusions: Administration as an enabler

I see the role of the administration in creating resources. For instance, the principals organise the school schedules so that it is possible for the teachers to organise their teaching in collaboration and develop their working methods.

And then we come to this, that in order for inclusion to work, resources are needed. So, it cannot be implemented with the same amount of resources, if we have a lot learners that need individual support or learners who have different kinds of learning plans. So naturally, it means that sometimes there is co-teaching and possible support from classroom assistants in some of the lessons, split lessons, things like that, so it can be organised. (Principal 2)

However, resources are always in question in education, particularly in the case of educating learners with difficulties. The respondents, especially the decision makers, pointed out the everlasting lack of them. No matter how many resources there are, usually it is thought that there is not enough to meet every learner's needs (UNESCO 2003, 13). Then again, resources include more than just money, technology and assistants, and there is no justification for not implementing inclusion because of a lack of them. Actually, there are a great number of resources – in learners, teachers, communities, policies, practices, cultural changes, parents and so forth. It is important to mobilise these resources, learn to recognise them and start to use them. (Booth & Ainscow 2002, 5–6; UNESCO 2003, 13.) It seems that the principals and teachers in this case have internalised this notion.

There is carried out a research on schools in small, rural municipalities of northern Finland where special education services are not available because of the long distances. In these municipalities, resources have been very scarce for organising education, but they have still succeeded in implementing inclusive education. However, the change in thinking could not have happened without committed administration, school management and teachers and without investing in professional development and collaborative problem solving. (Väyrynen 2013 forthcoming.)

The administration plays a role in facilitating teachers' professional growth and in making the implementation of inclusive education possible by creating a culture where there is room for innovations and for collaboration. Especially, when the new ideas and solutions come from teachers themselves, principals need to have the capability, attitude and courage to allow and enable them to be realised.

We have always had a principal that is very open-minded when it comes to experiments and all kinds of inclusive things. (Teacher 1)

One way of creating resources is taking part in projects. They are seen as one meaningful source of resources among the target group members. Teacher 1 cited the value of development projects in supporting the implementation and development of inclusive education. For example, the A School for All project has facilitated visits to other schools so that teachers could observe each other's lessons, methods and inclusive practices and learn from each other. Another benefit has been planning time for the teachers to develop their work. It seems that participating in this kind of project fosters professional development.

I recommend it to people that, if there is any aspiration to try some inclusive method, that kind of a project is a tremendous opportunity. (Teacher 1)

Principal 2 mentioned that it is important for schools to take part in projects and to develop school work in collaboration with them. It seems that these are one kind of a resource.

5.4. Leadership and on-going development work

There are specific features of leadership that characterise principals who foster inclusive education in their schools. They have the courage to try new things, and they aim to organise school work in flexible ways. Further, it was also acknowledged that the role of the administration is to be courageous. There needs to be readiness to handle problems. Knowledge and understanding are needed to stay strongly behind the principles that foster the well-being of learners. As stated before, the principals emphasise openness, col-

laboration and discussion in everyday school life. These principals seem to listen to teachers, parents and learners, and they appreciate finding solutions through collaboration. They do not see inclusive education as something that can be governed from the top.

Discussions are also good because inclusive education often arouses often different kinds of opinions. This is one of the reasons that principals see the culture of discussion as important:

Everything new is not always good, and all old is not always bad and old-fashioned. On the contrary, reconciliation and having discussions together, that kind of openness in new things, is the most important thing because, otherwise, there will be charmed circles and barricades and trifling arguments. (Principal 1)

One of the teachers emphasised the culture of discussion and collaboration when describing the working culture in the school:

But then... there are discrepancies, but we can always talk and negotiate, and we have rules and actions that we have agreed on in collaboration, and we all pursue them. But I can't say that it is completely harmonious because there are value-related things in the working culture. But one important thing in our working culture is that those rules and actions become reality. Then there are some small diamonds that can be polished and on which we can even disagree. (Teacher 2)

This quote shows that there is no need to have a completely mutual understanding in the school community on inclusive education. What is more significant is that the leader has enhanced a culture where there is room for discussion since there will always be arguments and different viewpoints when different people are involved. This is a part of human nature. In addition, one of the principals pointed out that teachers and all other stakeholders can be at different levels of understanding, and this should be taken into account. There is no use in forcing people into inclusive education; rather, the principals see their role as guiding the school towards it in an understanding but assertive way.

5.4.1. Leaders changing attitudes

Fullan (1994, 57) states that change is merely a process that needs to get started somewhere and that the positive stimulus just needs to be spread around. In this research, the principals and teachers in the target group are those who seem to lead the change in their schools, they are pioneers who spread the inclusive practices and slowly change others' thinking and attitudes. Fullan (2006, 7–8) points out, change does not happen simply by leading individuals towards change, instead, leadership should at the same time concentrate on changing the whole culture. It is the leadership that creates, renovates and maintains the organisational culture so they play role in fostering change in other people's thinking, too. (Fullan 1994; Schein 1991; Spector 2010, 177; Viitala 2013, 28.)

Many research participants mentioned attitude as the most important factor relating to inclusive education. Attitude comes before anything, and it is seen as the primary factor to implementing inclusive education. Its importance was highly stressed among the target group members, and the principals stated that the right attitude is the basis for the development and change that inclusive education often requires.

First, the right attitude is needed and a desire to do it. It is the most important thing. You can force it by legislation, but as a whole, it is a poor starting point. (Principal 1)

If the principal has a negative attitude towards inclusion, he is able to completely destroy that [inclusive] activity and constantly finds “buts”, reasons why it could not work. (Principal 2)

The importance of the attitude is also recognised among specialists in the field of inclusive education. For example, Watkins and Meijer (2010) highlight the importance of positive attitudes in promoting inclusive education and they even see it as the core issue in the school culture in meet diverse educational needs. (p.241.) The target group in this case pointed out that the right attitude is needed at every level of the educational organisation: at the micro, meso and macro levels (see Bernard 2001).

Some of the teachers and principals mentioned that not necessarily all teachers and principals have the same positive attitude as they have, and it takes time to convince others that inclusive education is worth aiming for.

Many times, teachers have fear of it, they're like, "certainly not in my classroom". I can't manage and do I need to cope on my own. (Teacher 1)

Hwang and Evans (2011) report similar research results. They find that even though the teachers' attitudes towards inclusion might be positive in principle, they are not necessarily willing to teach learners with disabilities in general classes. The reasons behind this may be the concern about the limited time, knowledge and skills that a general teacher has. Teachers were also concerned about learners not getting enough support in mainstream classrooms. Teachers might feel that they do not have enough skills and knowledge to teach learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms. This makes them reluctant to change towards inclusive education. (Hwang & Evans 2011, 144–145.) Also Anati and Ain (2012) in the United Arab Emirates show that teachers might be uncertain for these reasons. In the case schools, it seems that the uncertainty and doubtful attitudes are changed through pioneer teachers:

There must be kind of pioneers in the house who vigorously start to try and search for new models and who represent their ideas and thoughts, for example, to principals so that it is possible to ponder together whether these [ideas] are possible to implement and try. --The whole school community has to be aware of what is going on and what kinds of ideas there are, so there won't be a feeling that just a small group of people twiddles things that pop out every now and then and perhaps have an impact on other people's work, too, and so on. So it must be very open, and there must be discussion, and overall, I think that the best approach to these kinds of huge changes is to proceed slowly, so that it begins somewhere and starts to spread little by little. --Like us, we have a good situation here, as some [teachers] courageously started to try out things, and I hear all the time people saying that it looks good, and they want to try it, too. I think it goes well this way. (Principal 1)

Teacher 1 found that there has generally been a shift in teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, but it has taken some time. It was also pointed out by other respondents that, after the attitude is right, training and support (resources) should be offered. One of the administrators at the meso level stressed the importance of this exact order by saying,

Well, inclusion requires... It requires attitude – first. And then of course resources. But I think this is the order. I mean, if it's not a common principle and if one doesn't sincerely stand for it, then it doesn't matter how many resources there are because, in that situation, it does not play out. (Administrative respondent 1)

The attitude-before-resources thinking is in line with a Korean study that reveals that, if teachers have negative attitudes or even prejudices towards inclusion, the support and resources given might not be enough to yield the best outcomes (Hwang & Evans 2011, 145).

5.4.2. Development work

At the micro level, the principals and teachers are apparently open to trying out new solutions and methods in schools. On-going development work seems to be characteristic for the respondents at the micro level. The respondents perceive Rovaniemi, at the meso level, as a municipality open to development. It has received many thanks for taking an active part in national development projects and in developing things locally, too. One of the principals mentioned that it has been significant that the development work has been done systematically and with persistence in addition to involving all the stakeholders actively.

And of course, at the municipal level, then it is allowed to experiment and develop and examine different kinds of models in the first place so that it is not categorically prescribed, that it should go according to some pattern. (Principal 1)

It was also mentioned that the research and development projects play a role in providing information, such as what should be further developed as the projects are carried out in collaboration with schools so that the practices are also researched. As one of the principals' point out, that way the development work stays connected to reality and does not become some separate development. Therefore way it truly is beneficial.

Rovaniemi, for example, has taken part persistently in all kinds of development projects of the national education board and also made good use of that knowledge. And at the same time developed it in the field, here, what is going on in practice, and in that interaction has systematically continued developing.
(Principal 2)

Principal 2 underlined that it is also important at the municipal level to discuss reforms (such as inclusion), for instance on what it means precisely in their own municipality. This allows it to become reality, and through discussions and pondering, people become committed to it.

5.4.3. Conclusions on leadership and development

Watkins and Meijer (2010, 240–241), in addition to Fullan (1994) point out that enhancing inclusion in education necessitates some key groups or individuals who have a vision of inclusive education. These people are the ones who actually initiate the change of policies to become more favourable to inclusion. In addition to fostering the change, they also set the principles and the values, which characterize the support systems and policies. (Watkins and Meijer 2010, 240–241.)

At the micro level, the principals are the leaders who, together with innovative teachers, foster inclusion in their schools. The principals seem to be open-minded to experiments and new things, they accept failure and they encourage and listen to teachers so that they can further develop. Seppälä-Pänkäläinen (2009, 193) also clarifies that the culture of leadership is significant in fostering inclusive education.

The way I see it, in addition to principals, the teachers in this case also lead the change process in their schools. These people are pioneers who aim to foster the change process towards inclusion by serving as examples. It is characteristic for these teachers and principals to develop new ways of working and different kinds of solutions, and they are also allowed to fail in their trials. These features relate to the theory of a learning organisation (see 3.1 and 3.2) that for instance Fullan (1994) calls for to succeed in changes.

However, I see a resemblance to entrepreneurship education, too in these features. Entrepreneurship is a cross-curricular theme in the national core curriculum, which means it is not a teaching subject, but a theme that is meant to be included in all educational and teaching work. “The goals of ‘participatory citizenship and entrepreneurship’ cross-curricular theme are to help the pupil perceive society from the viewpoints of different players, to develop the capabilities needed for civic involvement, and to create a foundation for entrepreneurial methods. The school’s methods and culture of learning must support the pupils’ development as independent, initiative-taking, goal-conscious, cooperative, engaged citizens, and help the pupils form a realistic picture of their own possibilities for influence.” (NCC 2004, 36, 38) However, the concept of entrepreneurship education is ambiguous (Kyrö & Carrier 2005, 21) and it is not insignificant how it is understood and implemented (Komulainen, Keskitalo-Foley, Korhonen & Lappalainen 2010).

Basically, ‘entrepreneurship education’ can be interpreted in relation to business life and corporations, and on the other hand, in relation to entrepreneurial features in a person, in which case it is called ‘individual entrepreneurship’ (Hietanen, Uusiautti & Määttä 2014; Hägg & Peltonen 2014; Kyrö & Carrier 2005). The characteristics of these types of people are, for instance, risk-taking, innovating, self-renewal and proactivity (Antoncic & Hisrich 2003, 9), in addition to flexibility, initiative, creativity and collaboration (Ministry of Education 2004, 15). These features are found among the pioneers in this case study. When they implement and enhance inclusive education, they seem to represent the characteristics of individual entrepreneurship.

In addition to the previous ways to conceptualise the concept, there is also a viewpoint of ‘organisational entrepreneurship’, which relates to the entrepreneurship in the whole organisation. When individual entrepreneurship and organisational entrepreneurship are

in interaction, it is intrapreneurship (Kyrö & Carrier 2005, 22–23.) Antoncic and Hisrich (2003, 13) explain the differences between a learning organisation and intrapreneurship as follows: “organisational learning, hence, starts predominately from what already exists, and makes an effort toward improving it, whereas, intrapreneurship leaps into the relatively unknown, regardless of its starting base in terms of knowledge, routines or resources”. This is actually in line with what Fullan (1994) referred to two decades earlier as a learning organisation. He states that, as we live in a world where changes happen all the time, it is important to be able to adjust to them and to keep up in developing. People living in this kind of postmodern, dynamic society need to have flexibility and change forces. These people need to have a curious and explorative character, and they need to be problem solvers because changes are always unpredictable and complex. The educational organisation is the only institution that has the potential to grow people like this. However, it cannot grow people to develop these characteristics if the educators themselves do not have them. Every member of the educational organisation needs to have these characteristics so that it can survive and succeed in the changing world. This should not be left to the responsibility of a few leaders, but those leaders are needed in fostering this process. (Fullan 1994, 9–22, 29, 57.) It seems that in order to enhance inclusive education and succeed in changing the whole educational organisation, the occurrence of individual entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship is advantageous.

Lemström and Virtanen (2014) have recently conducted research on intrapreneurship and its disincentives in health care. I see the health care organisation in Finland as very hierarchical, bureaucratic and slow to change, just like the educational organisation is, for example, according to Nivala (2006). Lemström and Virtanen (2014) report that there are some features in the organisational structure and culture, leadership, working community and individual that can prevent intrapreneurship from taking hold in an organisation. These include, for example, the following:

- Development is seen as a problem-based activity
- Development is not a focal point in work
- There is a hierarchical organisational structure
- Collaboration is not working as it is supposed to

- Feedback is not given; there is a lack of encouragement by leaders
- Ideas are not further developed
- Leaders do not lead
- Support is not provided
- There is a lack of enthusiasm
- The possibilities and responsibilities of the staff members in developing the organisation are not recognised. (p.12.)

I think that this list also applies well to reflect the solutions in educational organisation too, from the point of view of implanting and supporting the implementation of inclusive education.

6. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine how inclusive education is implemented in the case schools and how the administration supports it. I have examined it by viewing the operational environment of the schools, how legislation stipulates the arrangements of education and how teachers work within that framework in inclusive ways. I have also viewed the aspects of teacherhood and professional growth, leadership and the role of on-going development work in implementing inclusion.

My aim was to provide insights into how administration and organisational factors support, and on the contrary, hamper the implementation of inclusive education. I aimed to give opportunities, for example, to administrators, decision makers and principals to reflect their ways of implementing and supporting schools through changes that, for instance, inclusive education requires. This research found some pillars for implementing inclusion in this case.

This research study reveals that inclusive education requires diverse methods, new solutions, collaboration and professional development. In addition, a great deal of thought should be given to teachers' training so that they feel ready to teach in inclusive classrooms. The role of the administration is to foster a working culture where this is made possible. Moreover, it was seen meaningful that the meso level of the educational organisation also aims for development and collaboration. It was pointed out that a closed, bureaucratic organisation does not favour the implementation of inclusion; an open, systemic organisation that has flexibility works better. In addition, leadership is one focal factor in enhancing inclusive education.

The respondents considered the schools in Rovaniemi quite inclusive compared to those in other municipalities in Finland. I learned that the municipality has explicitly expressed inclusive values, and further, emphasised inclusive education in the local curriculum. Those might be some factors that enhance inclusion in schools. Further research could be carried out in the municipalities of Finland on the explicit and enacted

values and their relation to the occurrence of inclusive education in the schools of the municipality.

In this case the operational environment of the schools seems to represent inclusive values not only explicitly but also in the actions taken. The role of these values is also essential also at the micro level. Schein (1991, 33–34), the forerunner in researching organisation culture, explains how values have an effect in organisations: “Someone in the group, usually the leader, has their own understanding of reality and how it should be seen, and this person suggests solutions to problems based on these beliefs. It is possible that this person thinks that, the solution is based on facts, but the group becomes convinced only after they have solved the problem successfully, in collaboration. – If the suggested solution works and the group has evidenced the success together, the value slowly goes through a cognitive transformation into a belief and further, into an assumption. If this transformation happens –it only happens if the same solutions work repetitively– the members of the group forget they had doubts and arguments about the value in the first place. As the values slowly transform into axiomatic and become assumptions, they move away from the consciousness, and become subconscious and automatic”³. (Schein 1991, 33–34.)

The values that the leader appreciates are not insignificant. It has been made clear in this study that the principals in this case think highly of inclusion. It is in their hands to transform these values into assumptions in the school. One of the principals described the change process towards inclusion in their school as pioneers leading the way serving as example to other teachers. The principals sees their role as enabling this to happen by organising the school work, schedule and culture so that new methods and solutions can be developed and shared. This was pointed out by principals and by a municipal administrator.

Perhaps they also lead the process of inclusive values changing to assumptions little by little, as Schein (1991) describes, so that the leader (principal or pioneer teachers) ”offers” inclusive education as a solution to organise school work. However, for this to become an assumption, that is, the ordinary way of schooling, the school staff needs to have repetitive experiences with its benefits (Schein 1991, 33–34). The challenges lie in

³ The Finnis-English translation was done by the researcher herself.

motivating teachers to implement inclusive education in the first place. Teachers presumably do not start to implement inclusion because a principal or administrator tells them to. As the target group members pointed out, it does not work that way if the attitude is negative. Attitudes are changed by providing good examples and allowing people warm to up to the idea of inclusion calmly. As one of the principals stated,

The implementation of inclusion, it is... it is interesting and... also a challenging journey that needs to be given time, and just the same, it needs to be carried out mercifully so that it is understood to give respect to teachers who are at different levels in their understanding, different stakeholders. (Principal 2)

A successful change in schools necessitates the kind of “change agents” that the teachers and principals represent in this case. A mentality of change and development is also needed at the meso level of the educational organisation. There must be room for innovations and collaboration. As Principal 1 said, the municipality also needs to be open to new things. Administrative respondent 1 also described that the role of the administration is to listen to what is going on in the schools and what is needed there. Then, administration should work in accordance with that information.

A qualitative case study does not aim to statistical generalisation. Rather, the aim is at describing and understanding a certain phenomenon and conducting analytic generalisation through widening and generalising theories through interpretations. (Eskola 2009, 65–68; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 85; Yin 2009, 15.) Thus, it is essential that the information on the phenomenon is collected from persons that have knowledge and experience on it (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 85). In this case study, the main data are provided by principals who are involved in the A School for All project that aims to promote inclusive education. This means that the principals have a positive attitude towards inclusion and that they already enhance inclusive education in their work. Thus, they presumably have specific knowledge on what is needed from the administration. The teachers and the principals are involved in the project, so they are open-minded towards inclusive education. That can also be seen in the research results. I have collected data from multiple sources around the case (data triangulation) and I have approached the topic with different theories (theory triangulation) and this kind of triangulation is one way to increase the validity of a research (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 232 –

233). However, the research results could be different if I had chosen the target group and theories differently.

Moreover, as I am also involved in the A School for All project, it may have some impacts on the research. The fact that special education and inclusion were not familiar to me in the beginning has helped in examining the data without preconceptions. On the other hand, it might hamper in understanding the data and the phenomenon thoroughly. However, working along with the project that relates to inclusive education has provided me a chance to deepen my knowledge in versatile ways all along.

Generalisation is also about transferability. Transferability refers to being able to apply the research results to other cases and environments. (Eskola 2009, 68.) This case study has verified the existence of the four dimensions in an inclusive school culture (Seppälä-Pänkäläinen 2009, 2014), and additionally provided some concrete examples for examining them. Moreover, this research provides examples for implementing inclusion in schools and brings insights to principals, administrators and decision makers for supporting and enhancing inclusive education. There are some aspects for administrators and decision makers to ponder. For instance, what are the values that the municipality represents and how are those shown in practice? What kind of attitudes there are towards inclusion? What is the knowledge base of the meaning of inclusive education? How is the organisation and administration structured and is there something that could be improved? Does the legislation and curricula provide a solid background for arranging education in inclusive ways? To what extent are the teachers encouraged and supported to grow professionally? Are there some possible new ways to create resources for education? Finally, does the municipality take part in development work and does it have capacity to change?

The offering of this research is not exhaustive, and overall the topic of administrative support in implementing inclusion necessitates more research. This research study has revealed some aspects that provide a starting point, but more thorough and extensive research is needed at all the levels of the educational organisation locally, nationally and also internationally. For example the understanding of inclusion and the attitudes towards it would be interesting to examine in a more wide scope among administrators and decision makers. In addition, as inclusive education can be implemented in many

ways, more attention should be given on how administration can enhance these methods and solutions to spread. Also the affects of the structure of the organisation necessitates more thorough research from the point of view of inclusive education since there apparently exists some barriers.

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Appendices

Annex 1 English translation of the questionnaire

The support of the educational administration in implementing inclusion in comprehensive schools

This questionnaire is for teachers and the local education board and the head of the board. The aim is to find your views about inclusion and support in implementing it.

Basically, inclusive education means that all learners have a right to go to their neighbourhood school and receive support in learning there instead of placing them in special schools and special classes.

What year were you born? _____

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- I do not want to answer.

Have you heard of the concept of 'inclusion' before?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know.

There are many definitions for inclusion, and people understand it in different ways. How would you define what inclusion means? Please, answer as thoroughly as you can with your own words.

The next questions are determined by whether you are a teacher or a member/head of the local education board. Please, choose the option that fits your situation. If both of the options fit you, choose the option 'member/head of the local education board'.

- Teacher
- Member/head of the local education board

Questions are only for teachers:

How many years have you been a teacher?

- 0–5 years
- 6–10 years
- 11–15 years
- 16–20 years
- 21 years or more

What kind of thoughts does inclusive education awaken in you? Please, answer as thoroughly as you can with your own words.

In what concrete ways can inclusive education become apparent in teaching? Please, answer as thoroughly as you can with your own words.

What kind of experience do you have in implementing inclusion? You can explain, for instance, what factors help in the implementation or work as a barrier.

What kind of support have you received in implementing inclusion? Please, choose the options that best describe your situation. You can choose more than one options.

- Planning time
- Making collaboration possible
- Enhancing professional growth. In what ways? _____
- Teaching materials
- Assistants
- Training. What kind of training? _____
- I do not have experience in implementing inclusive education.
- I think I have not received support.
- Something else: _____

If you like, you can provide more information about the support in your own words:

Do you feel you have received enough support in implementing inclusive education?
Please choose the option that best describes your situation.

- Yes
- No. I need the following kind of support more: _____
- I do not know.
- I have no experiences in implementing inclusive education.

Please state your reasons for your answer:

What would you like to say to administrators and decision makers about the support provided in implementing inclusive education?

The questions are only for the members and for the head of the local education board:

How many terms have you served in the local education board?

- 1–2
- 3–4
- 5–6
- 7 or more

One of the tasks of the local education board is to accept the local curriculum. In what ways you think that the local education board as a part of the educational administration fosters the implementation of the educational principles that are stated in the curriculum?

In an inclusive classroom everyone learns in the same classroom, despite possible special educational needs. If there are some special educational needs, they will be provided in the mainstream classroom and the learner is not moved to a special classroom or a special school. What kind of thoughts does this awaken in you?

- Positive
- Negative
- Neutral
- I do not know.

Please explain these thoughts in your own words:

What do you think that inclusive education requires from the teacher? Please, answer as thoroughly as you can with your own words.

In what concrete ways do you think the educational administration supports the implementation of inclusive education? Please, answer as thoroughly as you can with your own words.

Do you see any challenges for the educational administration in supporting inclusive education?

- No
- Yes. The following kinds of challenges: _____
- I do not know.

The questions are for everyone:

How important are the roles of these stakeholders in implementing inclusion? Please choose the option that is closest to your opinion.

	Not im- portant	A bit im- portant	Quite im- portant	Very im- portant	I do not know
Ministry of Education	<input type="radio"/>				
National Board of Educa- tion	<input type="radio"/>				
Local Education Board	<input type="radio"/>				
The special education coor- dination unit	<input type="radio"/>				
Principals	<input type="radio"/>				
Teachers	<input type="radio"/>				
Parents	<input type="radio"/>				
School staff. Speci- fy:_____	<input type="radio"/>				
Other. Speci- fy:_____	<input type="radio"/>				

Please state your reasons for your answer:

Do you think there are enough resources for implementing inclusive education?

- Yes
- No. These kind of resources are needed: _____
- I do not know.

Please state your reasons for your answer:

What kind of a legislative basis does the international declarations, the Finnish Basic Education Act, curricula and other sources of guidance provide for inclusion?

- Strong basis
- Weak basis
- I do not know.

Please state your reasons for your answer:

Please state in your own words what the sources say about inclusion?

Thank you for your response. Remember to press 'Send' at the end of this survey so the answers are saved. If you have any comments about the questionnaire or the topic, you can write them here.

Thank you for your time, and I wish you a happy new year!

Annex 2 English translation of the interview questions for the principals

Background

1. How would you define inclusion; what does it mean?
2. How does inclusive education become apparent in your school?
3. How inclusive is the Finnish education system in general?

Implementation of inclusive education

4. What kinds of things help inclusive education to succeed?
5. What does inclusive education require from different stakeholders?
6. How do you see your role as a principal in supporting the implementation of inclusive education?
7. What kinds of barriers do you see for implementing and supporting the implementation of inclusive education?
8. To what extent do the legislation, curricula and other guiding documents foster inclusive education?

Administration and organisation

9. What is your impression on the understanding of inclusion among administrators and decision makers?
10. Is there something in the educational organisation you would like to change to enhance inclusion?
11. Finally, is there anything else you would like to say about the topic?

Annex 3 English translation of the interview questions for the special education coordinator

Background

1. What does the special education coordinating unit do?
2. How would you define inclusion; what does it mean?
3. How inclusive are the schools in Rovaniemi?
4. How inclusive is the Finnish education system in general?

Implementation administrative support

5. What kinds of things help inclusive education to succeed?
6. What kinds of barriers you see in implementing and supporting the implementation of inclusive education?
7. What is the role of the special education coordinating unit in supporting inclusive education?
8. What role does the educational administration play in general in supporting the implementation of inclusive education?
9. To what extent do the legislation, curricula and other guiding documents foster inclusive education?
10. Is there something in the educational organisation you would like to change to enhance inclusion?
11. Finally, is there anything else you would like to say about the topic?

Annex 4 English translation of the teachers' interview questions

Background

1. How would you define inclusion; what does it mean?
2. How does inclusive education appear in your work?
3. How inclusive is the school you are teaching in?

Implementation and support

4. In what ways inclusive education be implemented?
5. What kinds of things help inclusive education to succeed?
6. What kinds of barriers do you see in implementing inclusive education?
7. What kind of support and from whom have you received in implementing inclusion?
8. What kinds of resources does the implementation of inclusion require?
9. To what extent do the legislation, curricula and other guiding documents foster inclusive education?
10. What would you like to say to administrators and decision makers about inclusive education?
11. Finally, is there anything else you would like to say about the topic?

Annex 5 An example of the analysis process

Analysis unit	Reduced expression	Sub-category	Higher-level category	Main category
<p>“I define inclusion and the thought of inclusive school as having a school that is common for everyone. Like very broadly. Actually, the basis of my thinking is that all the children and adults, we are alike and together in the school.” (Principal)</p>	<p>School is for all, and everyone is alike</p>	<p>Broad understanding of inclusion</p>	<p>Understanding of inclusion</p>	<p>Operational environment</p>
<p>“I have not really come across this word before. The first thing that comes to mind [of the word] is something being running-in (in Finnish: sisäänajetaan).” (Member of the local Education Board)</p>	<p>Something is being runned-in [the expression has nothing to do with the topic]</p>	<p>Narrow understanding of inclusion</p>	<p></p>	

<p>“Yeah I think that they have a very positive attitude. When the decision was made in Rovaniemi to pull down the special school, it was a decision made by officials. So they surely have had the idea that through inclusion, all the children will go to their neighbourhood school and the support will be arranged at that school.” (Teacher)</p>	<p>Teacher thinks that administrators and decision makers have a positive attitude towards inclusion</p>	<p>Positive attitude</p>	<p>Attitude</p>	
<p>“These kinds of practical solutions, with the help of the three-level support system.” (Teacher)</p>	<p>Using the three-level support system as an aid in implementing inclusion</p>	<p>Three-level support</p>	<p>Legislative basis</p>	<p>Arrangements of education</p>
<p>“Then I ponder together with the another teacher that what kinds of pedagogical practices or solutions we will implement in our teaching, I mean, whether is it going to be co-teaching, flexible grouping, differentiation or another kind of working form.”</p>	<p>Pondering teaching methods together with another teacher</p>	<p>Different kinds of teaching methods</p>	<p>Co-teaching</p>	

Annex 6 Research permit

Rovaniemi

Koulupalvelukeskus

Palvelupäällikkö

Antti Lassila

Viranhaltijapäätös

19.2.2013/22§

Dno KAUPKIRJ: 2177 /2012

Tutkimuslupa/ A School for All -hanke/Sai Väyrynen

Asia

Lapin yliopisto johtaa A School for All – Development of Inclusive Education tutkimus- ja kehittämishanketta, johon osallistuu kouluja ja korkeakouluja Suomesta ja Venäjältä. Tutkimus- ja kehittämishankkeen tarkoituksena on edistää inklusiivista kasvatusta kouluissa sekä kehittää opettajankoulutusta. Lapin yliopistossa hankkeeseen liittyvä tutkimus jakautuu kahteen osaan:

- 1) Hankkeeseen osallistuvien kehittäjäkoulujen tutkimus ja
- 2) Lapin pohjoisten kuntien opettajien kokemukset oppilaiden monimuotoisuuden kohtaamisesta sekä oppimisen ja koulunkäynnin tuen toteutuksesta kasvu-keskusten ulkopuolella sijaitsevilla kouluissa.

Tutkimuslupapyyntö koskee kokonaisuutta " Kehittäjäkoulujen tutkimus". Rovaniemellä kehittäjäkouluja ovat [REDACTED] ja [REDACTED]. Lapin yliopiston opettajankoulutuksen läpileikkaavana ajatuksena on inklusiivinen kasvatusta. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on tuottaa tietoa opettajankoulutuksen kehittämiseen erityisesti pohjoisen Suomen olosuhteisiin analysoimalla tarkemmin millaisia teoreettisia, käytännöllisiä ja asenteellisia valmiuksia vaaditaan opettajilta samanaikaisopetuksessa ja miten oppilaiden sosiaalisia taitoja kehitetään, kun erityisluokka ja tavanomainen luokka yhdistetään toiminnalliseksi kokonaisuudeksi. Kummassakin koulussa kehittämistyö kohdistuu nimenomaan samanaikaisopetukseen ja oppilaiden sosiaalisten taitojen kehityksen tukemiseen.

Tutkimus toteutetaan ns. mixed-methods tutkimuksena, jossa aineisto koostuu opettajien haastatteluista, havainnoinneista kouluissa sekä palautekeskusteluista opettajien kanssa. Tutkimuksen toteuttavat Lapin yliopiston tutkijat [REDACTED], sekä heidän ohjauksessaan olevat opiskelijat [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]. Tutkimusta toteutetaan keväällä ja syksyllä 2013, tuloksia valmistuu loppusyksystä 2013 alkaen. Tutkimuksen tieteellisenä johtajana toimii PhD, yliopistonlehtori Sai Väyrynen

Rovaniemi

Koulupalvelukeskus
Palvelupäällikkö
Antti Lassila

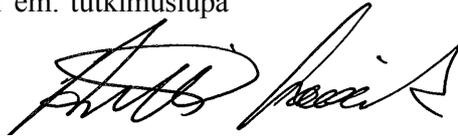
Viranhaltijapäätös

19.2.2013/22§

Tutkimusluvan myöntämisehdot:

1. Hakija sopii käytännön järjestelyt koulujen kanssa.
2. Hakija toimittaa yhden tutkimusraportin Rovaniemen kaupungin koulupalvelu- keskukseen, PL 8216, 96101 Rovaniemi.

Päätös Sai Väyrysen johtamalle Lapin yliopiston tutkimusryhmälle myönnetään em. tutkimuslupa



Allekirjoitus Antti Lassila Palvelupäällikkö

Toimeenpano Ote: [REDACTED]

Muutoksenhakuosoitus

Päätökseen tyytymätön voi tehdä kirjallisen oikaisuvaatimuksen. Oikaisuvaatimus on tehtävä 14 päivän kuluessa päätöksen tiedoksisaannista. Asianosaisen katsotaan saaneen päätöksensä tiedon, jollei muuta näytetä, seitsemän (7) päivän kuluessa kirjeen lähettämisestä. Kunnan jäsenen katsotaan saaneen tiedon päätöksestä, kun päätös on asetettu yleisesti nähtäväksi.

Valitusviranomainen

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