

PROJECT EKCO REPORT
WORKSHOP IN NORRKÖPING, SWEDEN
MAY 5-8, 2025



Co-funded by
the European Union

EKCO WORKSHOP

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS



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Report by Kirsti Thisland
Uncredited photos by Kirsti Thisland
All other photos by Tim O. Levang and Peter Buur (credited)
All illustrations by Tim O. Levang

DAY 1





09:00 Group is welcomed by Helene to Linköping university campus Norrköping. Introduces herself and the university to the group. Talks about the history of the university, the programs here and the field of extended education.

09:10 Everyone in the group introduces themselves

09:20 Rundown of the program

09:50 Break, fika



THINK:
IN WHAT WAY CAN
SITUATED LEARNING
PROMOTE COLLABORATION
AND COMMUNICATION IN
THE EKCO-PROJECT?



10:10 Presentation by Silje Eikanger Kvalø and Inga Kjerstin Birkedal: Lave and Wenger, Situated Learning Theory

Everyone is asked to write down their thoughts on the following: "in what ways can situated learning promote collaboration and communication in the EKCO project".

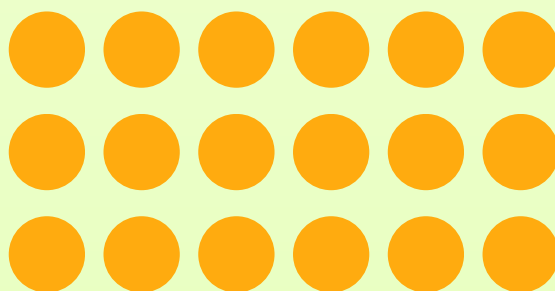
Pair and share – note your partner's input.

Pair and share 2 – Find a new partner and exchange points. Note down new input.



Plenary: What did the groups discuss. Points mentioned:

- not being stuck in structures
- processes (pedagogic)
- sharing venues
- Ekco is a learning community – what does it mean to be part of it
- get a picture of what is out there
- get perspectives from others
- Ekco is an opportunity to make a bank of experiences and a shared language
- easier for politicians and parents to understand why this is so important
- we would like to learn to get the most out of our resources
- more acknowledgement of our field
- learn from each other's strengths



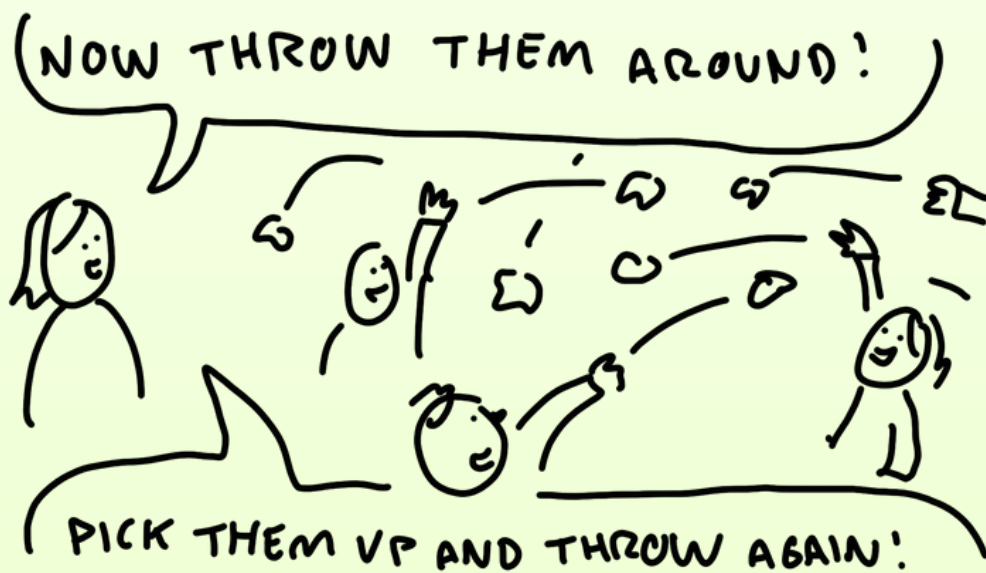
Snowball method

Write down 3-5 points on a sheet of paper; in what way can Lave and Wenger's theory of communities of practice relate to the EKCO project. Write individual thoughts, crumble the paper into a ball.

Throw the ball – snow ball fight!

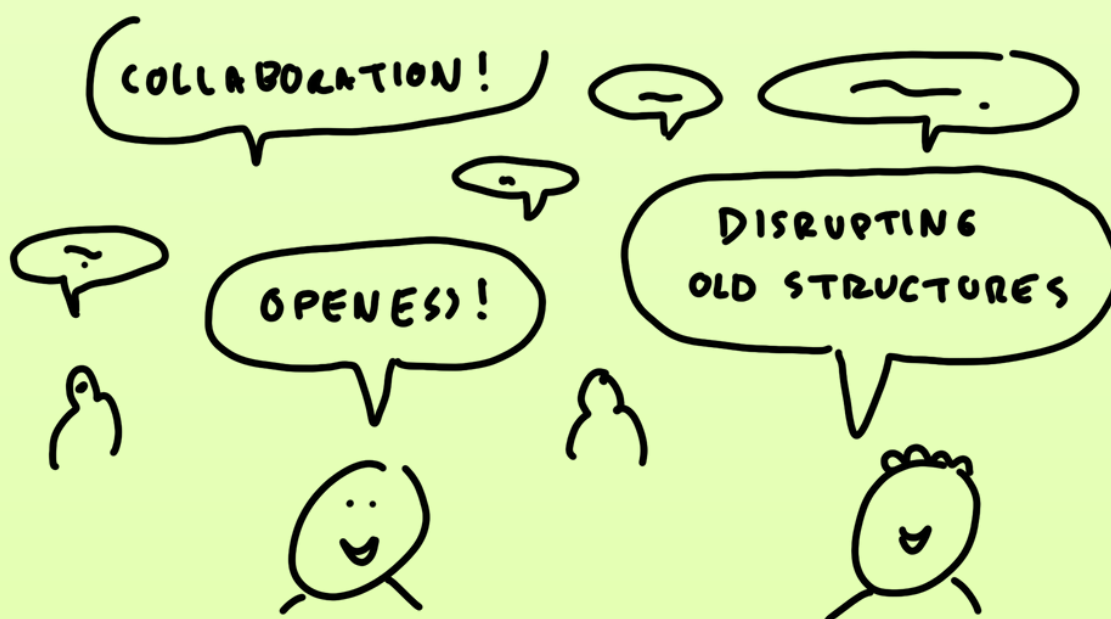


Pick a ball, groups of 5-6, read the balls and chose 3 points that you share in plenary.



Plenary, points:

- shared knowledge, group perspectives, shared goals
- collaboration between scientists and practitioners, openness to others perspectives
- community of common goals and common language, social interactions, learning from each other and sharing knowledge, authentic practice learning, sharing and trying
- disrupting old structures, learning communities, curious about new perspectives and practices
- we all have something to contribute with in this group. We can establish new knowledge together



...the context...
...each...
...change the context...
...reflect...
...values...
...background...
...feel...
...a count...
...motivati...
...developing...
...practices...
...Medicine...
...for...





SITUATED LEARNING THEORY

THROUGH TIM'S EYES:



THINK:
IN WHAT WAY CAN
SITUATED LEARNING
PROMOTE COLLABORATION
AND COMMUNICATION IN
THE EKCO-PROJECT?



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

- SHARED INTEREST
- COMMUNITY
- PRACTICE
- SOCIAL LEARNING



PAIR AND SHARE

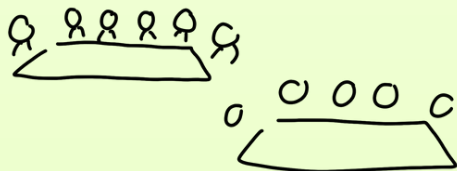
- PAIR: SHARE THOUGHTS AND QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EKCO LEARNING COMMUNITY AND WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE FROM IT.



OK! NOW YOU HAVE BEEN IN
PAIRS, AND NOW IT'S TIME
TO SHARE!



MOVE INTO GROUPS!



THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO
MAKE A BAG OF SHARED
KNOWLEDGE!



LEGITIMATE AND PERIPHERAL
LEGITIMATION



SNOWBALL

- IN WHAT WAY CAN LAVE AND WENGER'S THEORY AND PRACTICE RELATE TO THE EKCO PROJECT? WRITE DOWN 3-5 POINTS ON A SHEET OF PAPER
- CRUMBLE THE PAPER INTO A BALL
- THROW THE BALL



(NOW THROW THEM AROUND!)



PICK THEM UP AND THROW AGAIN!



NOW GET TOGETHER IN GROUPS
AND CHOOSE THREE POINTS TO
PRESENT!



TIME TO
PRESENT!



COLLABORATION!

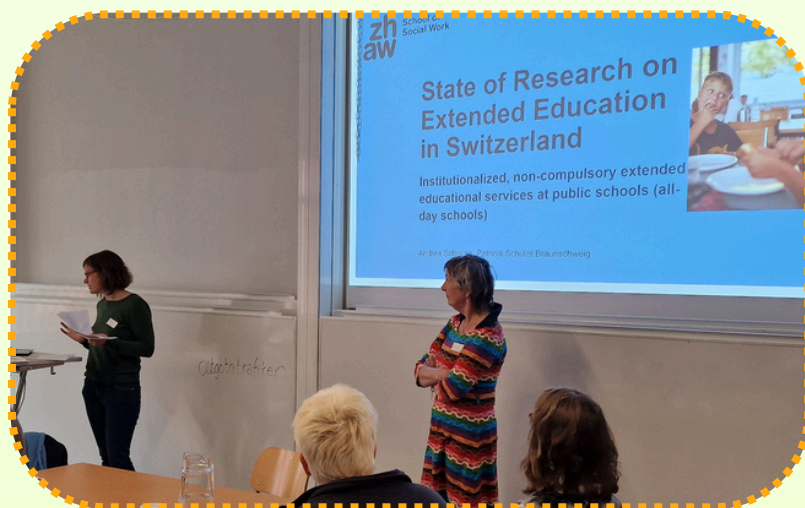
OPENESS!

DISRUPTING
OLD STRUCTURES





11:05 Switzerland, Andrea Scholian and Patricia Schuler Braunschweig, State of research on Extended Education in Switzerland



11:30 Austria, Romana Dorfer, James Loparics, All day schools in Urban Austria – Research and Reality

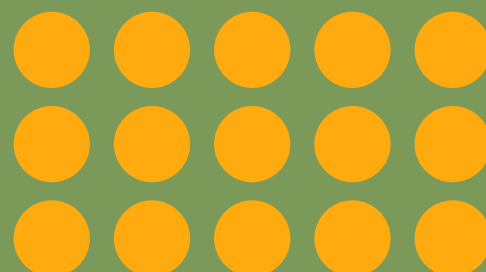
11:45 Norway, Gunn Helen Ofstad, Research from Norway, frameplan; evaluation. Transition between kindergarten and extended education, reading and writing in extended education

Photo by Tim O. Levang



12:00 Lunch

13:00 practitioners and researchers divide





**13:00-16:00 Practitioners school visit to Vilbergs school,
school age educare**
photos on this page by Tim O. Levang





13:00-16:00 Practitioners school visit to Vilbergs school,
school age educare
photos on this page by Peter Buur





13:00–16:00 Researchers meeting

Group moves to new room

Practical details

Analysis observation

Wera conference

Publication plan/strategy

Testing the practices

Practical issues:

Practitioners are to come to Norway for the final conference, hopefully they can show us their practices.

The final meeting/conference will happen from 18th to 21st of May.

17th of May is the Norwegian constitutional day, if anyone wants to come early, Norway will organize a social program for the celebrations.

Wera conference:

Symposium is accepted.

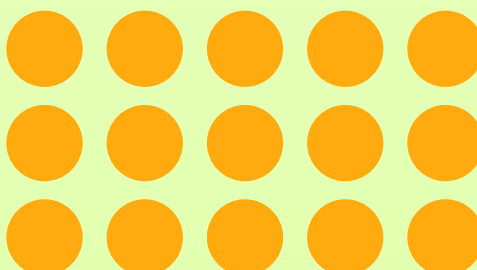
Several group members will attend.

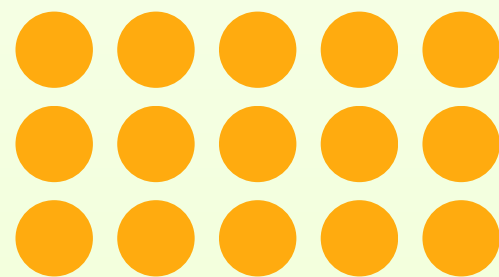
Folder in WP5 Dissemination for the Symposium.

Economy; we all have administrative funds that can be used for Wera. Also funds for dissemination.

Work packages are overlapping. After a travel has ended, you can apply for mobility.

Symposium discussion: we will arrange a meeting after the summer where we agree on the details, prepare for the conference, decide who presents what etc. September 4th 09:00h. Gunn sends out the invitation.





14:20 Coffee break

14:30 Meeting resumes

Analysis observations

Field notes are in “WP3 – Field notes” in Teams.

Some countries find the scoring scale hard to use, but it has led to interesting discussions with the practitioners. What is freedom, inclusion, food participation etc.

Some researchers used the scale together with the practitioners and agreed on the scoring.

Group agrees it is not possible to have a common understanding of each score, it should be seen as a starting point for discussions. The discussion might be more interesting than the score itself.

Important that practitioners understand that we are not here to criticize their work, but to observe and ask questions. We want to be critical friends – to develop something you need to look for things that might not work.

General feeling that we have learned a lot from the observations. Impressed with the work they do and how the adults set the mood in their institutions.

Researchers from Sweden and Denmark need some guidance on how to analyze the observations. This might all be clearer after we hear the practitioners presentations tomorrow.

The observations were added for research purposes. This is not Denmark and Swedens responsibility alone. This is a development project, the observations and research part of it is something else. You find lots of good practices; we can use different terms and reflect on it with the practitioners. There is good practice, best practice and practice.

Do we need to use the observation form in the process of inventing best practices?

We should see what comes up in the presentations tomorrow.

"WE WANT TO BE CRITICAL
FRIENDS!"



Testing the practices

Group sees the need to define the first part of the program on Thursday:
"Who tests what" – can they choose freely?

Different countries will not be able to apply the same practices.
Practitioners voice is very important.

Questions up for discussion:

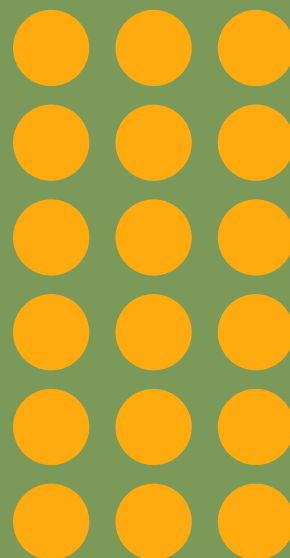
- How do we make sure that everyone tries out a minimum of 3 best practices?
- Everyone need to pick one with sustainability. The other one is free?
- How do we make sure everyone has their activities tested?
- How do we make sure all practices are tested?
- How many videos can we have on the platform?

Conclusive points:

- All 15 practices must be tested.
- The practitioners should decide themselves and negotiate so that every practice gets tested.
- Important that they understand that all the activities can be adapted to their access of materials, country context etc. and adjusted – as long as the goal of the activity remains the same.
- They must use the evaluation form.
- They all have to pick from 3 different countries and not their own. They can do more if they want. But we only want 3 evaluation forms.



"ALL 15 PRACTICES MUST BE TESTED!"





16:30 Walk to Wadströmska Villan, Södra Promenaden 122, 602 31 Norrköping

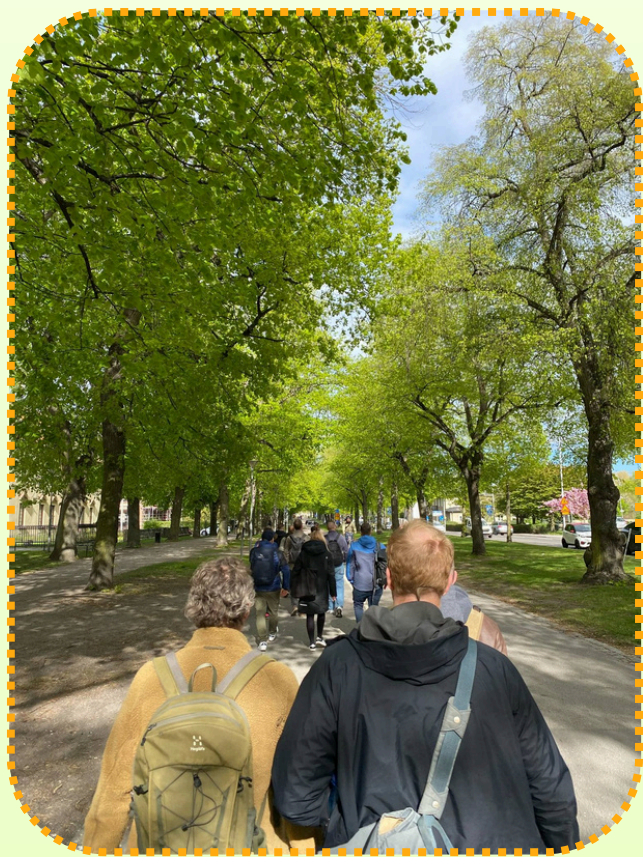


Photo by Tim O. Levang





17:00 Presentation by David, Danish research within leisure pedagogy

Group discussion:

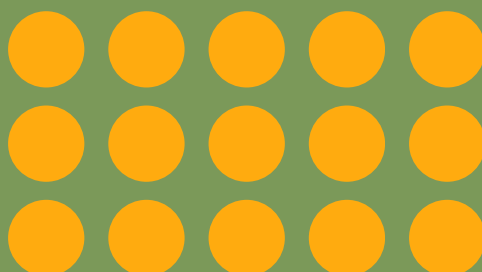
Many of these publications were sparked by the school reform.

The more current research is much more aligned with the pedagogues, more exclusively interested in the pedagogue.

The last 4 or 5 years there has been more research, but still so tiny field compared to other fields.

Would practitioners find it interesting? Yes, both researchers, practitioners and students would enjoy reading the book. Some of it investigates the relationship between researchers and practitioners.

The people funding it are heavily interested in the collaboration between the two, like we promote in this project.



Research Review (2019–2020)
Lea Ringskou & David Thore Gravesen

Knowledge about pedagogues' work in school and leisure-time pedagogy in
Denmark from 1980–2019

(68 texts)

Finding 1: Main focus on collaboration between pedagogues and teachers –
emphasis on learning.

Finding 2: Predominant focus on early primary school/SFO and younger
children; very little focus on leisure- and youth clubs/older children and
adolescents.

Finding 3: Is the pedagogue as a professional the central subject of
investigation in the research?

Yes! – in 5 out of 68 texts – corresponding to approximately 7%.

What does this mean for education, practice and research?

Compared with swedish research literature



FAGPROFESSIONEN
FOR PÆDAGOGER

Med viden skal skolen
fritidspædagogik by

En kortlægning og kritisk analyse af forskning
og fæfæet for skoler og fritidspædagoger

Lea Ringskou
Lektor, Pædagoguddannelsen
Aalborg

David Thore Gravesen
Lektor og ph.d. Pædagoguddannelsen
Aalborg

Alf Lea Ringskou og David Thore Gravesen
Hvad ved vi egentlig om
fritidspædagoger?

Engelsk oversat litteratur
fritidspædagogik i Danmark

Nordisk tidsskrift for pædagogik og kritisk
videnskab 8 | 2022 | s. 76–92

Keen on qualification
A comparative study of
and Swedish research
on leisure-time

Lea Ringskou* & David Thore Gravesen
ITM University College, Denmark

Abstract
This article is an extensive review of
the literature on leisure-time pedagogy
in Sweden and 11 Swedish
research articles, we compare the findings
with the Danish research literature.



Photo by Peter Buur

17:20 Presentation by Helene, Research in the field of school-age educare (Helene and Magnus)

Group discussion and Q&A:

Loneliness – did you catch up with it alongside a different project? How did you come across it?
We were just interested to see how social relations are made in the EE. It was affecting us when we saw children that nobody talked with the entire afternoon. One girl (7) said “I never have anyone to play with, but I am used to this, it’s how it is”. We felt that we need to write about this, we have done a lot of presentations and problematized it. Teachers think it is important but they say “it would never happen in MY school”, but I think it happens all the time because we include and exclude. How can we make it visible and work with it? It is not about being good or bad, it just happens. Children with different forms of disabilities are high risk for this.

How many SFOs did you visit, how many children involved in the study, how many lonely children?
Qualitative study, 3 different EE. Observations. No formal interviews, but ethnographic field work where we talked with the children alongside the observations.
What kind of exclusion strategies happens? We see them in relation to positive practices as free choices.

Would you as practitioners think this is a relevant question and studies that could happen in your schools?
We realize that we have these silent children, they won’t ask for attention, but they need it. We will try to be even more aware of this.
The children that seem to participate but they get the same role, always be an animal.
Difficult to find them because they don’t ask for help, they just try to be invisible, they don’t stand still and look lonely. They use hiding techniques, they blend in, they don’t want to be seen as lonely.
Difference between being alone and being lonely.
Even if you have autism, you might not want to be alone all the time. It is an important subject to do more research on. We want to do more research on it.

"THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
BEING ALONE AND BEING LONELY"



"THE VOLUNTARY ASPECT CAN BE USED TO EXCLUDE"

Project from the north of Norway: they have identified children who do not talk much. Every person has two children they are supposed to talk to every day. We have done interviews with the adults. The adults didn't see these kids, they were invisible. By just talking to them every day, an actual proper talk, it changed the relationship, so now those kids are seeking out the adults. It doesn't cost anything, it is not a big change, it identifies the kids we are worried about. My guess is that these are the same children that you found in your loneliness study. Adults say this is a little thing I am doing, but it has such a big effect.

If you create variation, both voluntary activities and activities everyone has to participate in, that is also good for the lonely children. I think it is important to say that in Sweden the voluntary aspect has been very important, but we must remember that it can be used to exclude.

First: we need to recognize and realize this is natural in social settings, we include and exclude, so how can we work with it?

18:00–21:30 Group dinner at Wadströmska villan





Day 1 summarized

Key Themes from Theoretical Session (Lave & Wenger):

EKCO as a learning community with shared goals and language.

Importance of flexibility, collaboration, and mutual learning.

Practitioners and researchers build knowledge together.

Snowball Activity – Communities of Practice:

Emphasis on shared knowledge, social learning, and openness to new perspectives and co-creating practices.

Country Research Highlights:

Switzerland, Austria, and Norway shared national insights into extended education.

Research Group Meeting:

Final EKCO conference set for May 18–21 in Norway.

WERA symposium preparation (meeting Sept 4).
Observations are for development, not critique;
valuable learning from practitioners.

All 15 practices must be tested:

Each participant selects 3 (not from own country),
including 1 sustainability-focused.

Use evaluation forms; practices can be adapted locally.

Evening Discussions – Key Insights:

Danish research in leisure pedagogy (David):

Field is growing, especially post-school reform.

Valuable for practitioners and researchers alike.

Swedish research on loneliness in EE (Helene and Magnus):

Ethnographic study revealed unnoticed loneliness.

Children use subtle strategies to hide loneliness.

Discussion on how to detect and address these children.

Importance of mixing voluntary and mandatory activities to promote inclusion.

Example from Northern Norway: simple daily conversations between staff and selected children showed major positive impact.



DAY 2



09:00 David and Helene open the day in the play lab at LiU

David introduces how to test each other's practices.

We would like everyone to choose 3 new practices from 3 different countries, not your own. We want you to solve this puzzle.

He asks the practitioners to face the task with an open mind, and ensure that all practices will be tried out by another country.

As for the best practices – they must be adjusted to your own country context. You do not have to be a copycat, but try them out in new ways and reflect your own context in it. You will also describe the testing later in the process through the evaluation forms.

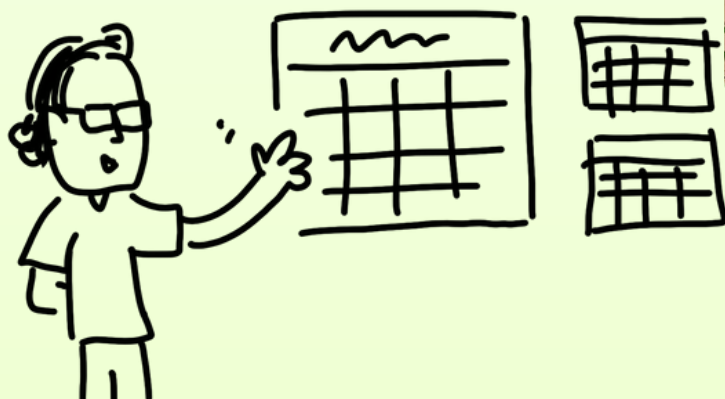
09:10 Presentation of best practices from each country

09:10 Denmark, Houlkærskolen: Thomas, Kristian, Peter

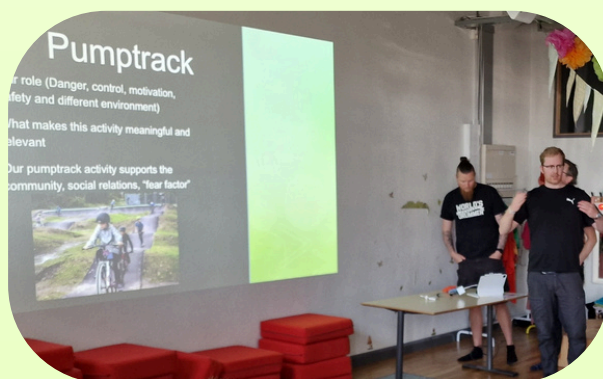
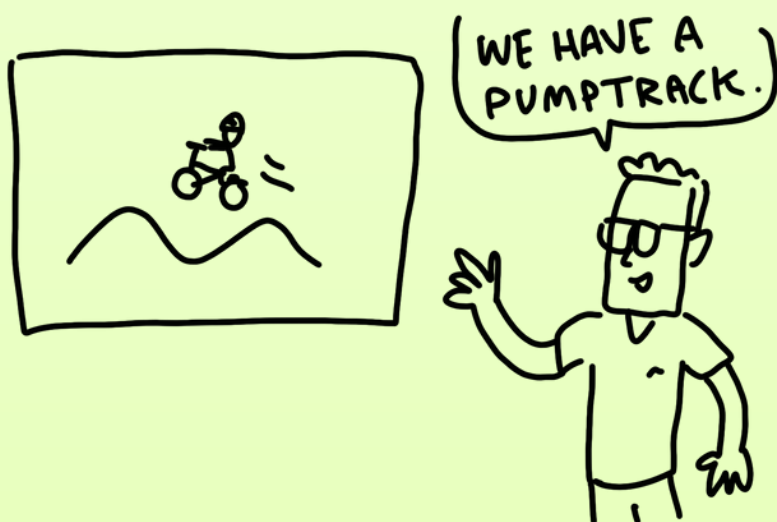




DENMARK



Activity and structure (Thomas) – how to visualize the daily program for parents, kids and employees.



Pumptrack (Kristian) – the activity supports community, social relations, “fear factor”. The activity itself is not important, it could be anything. We spend time on each kid. Not competitive. If one kid says “I am faster than you” we will say “Maybe that’s because of your bike” etc. Very rare that the kids hurt themselves. Our role is to make sure it is a safe environment.

"WE SPEND
TIME ON EACH
KID"



Gym-hall (Peter) – Gathering before, between and after activities.

Inform, arousal regulate, investigate, child involvement in upcoming activities.

How to take care of each other and the inventory we use (sustainability).

We teach them to take care of the materials. Ask the children for ideas on how to use the equipment in a new way.

Sustainability. Mindful consumerism, educate children why we don't waste or overuse, use what we have, social sustainability: basic understanding of the rules to make them self-reflect and be inclusive in the environment and interaction with each other. Child democracy, adult guiding and structure, providing growth and allowing children to thrive.

QA with Denmark:

The activity plan is on the wall every day right by the entrance.

We send out a letter to the parents each week. They can also check on the computer when the children go home. The activities are on the wall.

The activity board can be found 5 or 6 places in the SFO.

The kids discuss the activity board, and they are excited to go because they can arrange with their friends what to do and what to participate in.

Gym-hall: the gathering after activities, what do you do? We ask "do you like this game, would you like to do it again?" "Could we play it in smaller groups" etc., child democracy. They suggest games for next time. "Who think they are the strongest here, we need help to clean!" "Some of you can play for ten more minutes, but then you have to help us clean up." 90% stay.

We listen to the kids and ask what they like. Then we improvise and adapt.

We sometimes split them up in different activities. We try to do it the kids way.

Great to have the gym hall on rainy days. The vampire game is very popular – lights out, kids hide, we try to catch them. Two rules: You can't scream, and you can't run. If we catch them, they must sit on a mattress until the game is over.

"WE LISTEN TO THE KIDS
AND ASK WHAT THEY LIKE."



Photo by Peter Buur



09:30 Switzerland – Schule Zurlinden: Natalie, Tim, Jörg, Seraina



Photo by Peter Buur

SWITZERLAND



Conflict management – child centered method of independent conflict resolving by the kids used in the school.



Group games – role of the pedagogue during group games, negotiating rules, organizing materials and support. Discuss with the children, what is fair play, what is a fair player? Traffic light system. 20 minutes rule.



Free play during lunch time – learning without reglementation, room and material as a third pedagogue. Making sure the materials are inviting to the children.

Q&A with Switzerland:

Free play/Group games – the children can choose, how do you observe what activities they use, is there gender segregation? Yes, we see gender related games. Boys: building blocks, Girls: painting. Use timetable, they can chose gym, music room etc.

Sustainability is in all the activities. Sustainable that they learn to be self confident, important for their further life.

I have two groups, two houses, two EEs. They meet and talk about activities and organization. Adults meet shortly every day and organize.

They can choose if they want to go to lunch or go to free play. Can they choose not to have lunch? We have lamps that change color. Red light means it´s full in the lunch area. We go around and remind them that if they have not eaten, we make sure they all eat. We try in every activity to increase their self-confidence, self-efficiency. A bell is ringing at one o´clock, there is only 30 minutes left of the lunch hour.

Are they trained in conflict management? What happens with the children who can´t use that method? We start it in kindergarten with theater role plays, they learn it and go with it. There is always a pedagogue there who can help.

The kids can leave the blocks, and other kids can build on to it.

The special trained kids in conflicts are from 3rd to 6th grade. They have a 3-day training, and then someone from outside the school, like a social worker, is educating and mentoring them. Teach them to not take part in the conflict or take sides.

"WE TEACH THEM
NOT TO TAKE SIDES"





09:55 Sweden: Vilbergs skolan, Therese and Söderporten, Andreas

SWEDEN

(CONFLICT MANAGEMENT)

Conflict management model (Therese, Vilbergs skolan) – provide students with tools and strategies to handle conflicts. Questions for the children: Talk and listen, understanding, responsibility, future. We want them to talk directly to the person they have a conflict with, not through a third party (adult).



Questions for the children:

Talk and listen – share how you feel and what you think. Listen to how your friend feels and what they think.

Understanding – try to put yourself in your friend's shoes. How does it feel?

Responsibility – describe your part in how things turned out.

The future – what needs to happen for things to feel okay? How can it be avoided in the future? Would an apology feel right? You can't force it.

"WE WANT THEM
TO TALK DIRECTLY TO THE
PERSON THEY HAVE A CONFLICT WITH"



Pro-Social behavior (Andreas, Söderporten) – Book: The social life in school. Not about raising kids, it is about developing these key competences in EE: Social and personal competence, civic and democratic competence, sustainable relationships.

Provide students with tools and strategies for their possibilities to perform good deeds.

We worked with feelings for 6 weeks. We changed our approaches towards the children, gave each other very honest feedback.

Before every new activity, we gather the students. They tell us how we should play together, how they will act. Create a sense of togetherness and security. We write it down, give it a quick evaluation. We take part and guide them in the process.

Q&A with Sweden:

There is a reason why this is important where we work, so everyone must adjust it to their own context.

When you gather the children – if they want to do one thing and they start another activity, how do you manage that? Our goal is to teach them how to start an activity and stay in it.

10:20 Break

10:30 David introduces the next part of the program

We have two more presentations, when we have finished, we will have fika somewhere else.

After that the practitioners will go to one room to make the puzzle of trying out each others practices. Researchers stay in this room.

"WE WANT TO
PROVIDE STUDENTS
WITH TOOLS TO
PERFORM GOOD
DEEDS"





10:30 Austria, Linz School of education: Martina and Karin



AUSTRIA

CHILDRENS PARLIAMENT

- Participation
- Political education
- Leadership



Children's parliament (Martina) – Participation, political education, leadership. Hold parliament every 6 weeks under pedagogical guidance. Two age groups.

Upcycling day (Karin) – Learning to use everyday materials and therefore save resources. Creativity. Creative buffet, make works of art of utilitarian objects from recycled materials. Can ask adults for help if they need it. They reuse things from their lunch etc., they use what is available.

UPCYCLING DAY

- LEARNING TO USE EVERY DAY MATERIAL, SUSTAINABLE
- CREATE AND DESIGN NEW THINGS





Self-determined leisure time (Martina) – promotion of positive leisure behavior, participation, self-efficacy, promotion of talents, social learning, inclusion. Children choose their own space/partner/time, 1 educator in the room. 1–3 hours pr day.

Q&A with Austria:

What is the educator's role in that room? Facilitate materials or interact with kids? How could the other schools adapt this to their environment?

Karin: My room is the psychomotoric room. My role is to speak with the children about what materials they want, balloons, mats, pillows. I make sure the materials are there for a few weeks or months. We made the North Pole in the winter. Bottles and boxes covered with white paper, built igloos etc. I tell my colleagues what I want to do, these are the rules, please make sure the children use the materials how we decided. Every hour another pedagogue is in the room and tries to make sure that it works.

Our school has these rooms, many schools don't. You can have an area in a room with certain materials, you do not need a specific room for it like we do. Make areas. Kindergarten in Austria: usually they have corners for different activities in the same room.

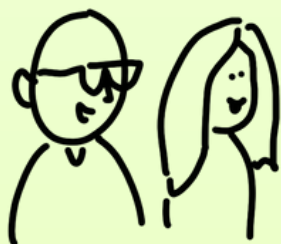
It is also about involving the children. Children gave suggestions about what to do in the summer holiday – interesting that the children do that in the parliament. Great that you think in the child's perspective.

"IT IS ABOUT INVOLVING THE CHILDREN"



10:50 Norway, Våland: Susanna, Morten, Ståle

NORWAY



SFO BUDDY

- SFO BUDDIES LOOKS OUT FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE ALONE AND PLAYS WITH THEM.

SFO-Buddy / After school buddies (third grade), (Susanna) –

Children should feel included and have someone to play with.

Practice taking responsibility for others. Two children are buddies for two weeks. They are prepared for what to do. Adult support. Gave them blue vests and ID-card to be visible for others.

Mission to look out for children who are alone. The adults play a key role in creating a sense of safety and success.

Children like it, it's popular. They ask every day when it's their turn.



"CHILDREN SHOULD FEEL INCLUDED AND HAVE SOMEONE TO PLAY WITH"



4TH GRADERS SUPPORTING 1ST GRADERS

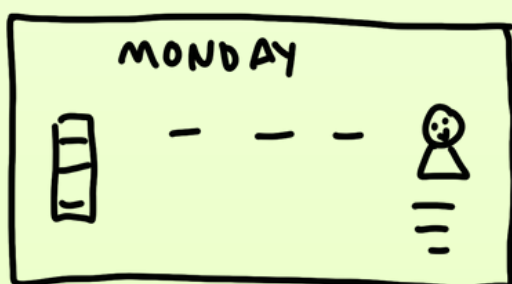


4th graders supporting 1st graders (Susanna and Ståle) –

Strengthen connection between students, create a safe environment. 4th graders help serve meals for 1st graders. Careful selection of students that work well together. We see that they now seek each other out in recess.



PROJECT RESPONSIBLE AND INDEPENDENT



Project responsible & independent (Morten) –

Give children more control of their own day. Adult lets them know that the sfo-time starts. We show them the schedule for the day, what activities they can choose from. Children look at the activity board and decide what to do, tell the adult about their plan, leave the classroom with their backpack and go to their chosen activity. Children who need support are guided with questions. We present activities visually on the board, ensure that each child is seen and confirmed before leaving. We know the kids and know who needs more support and control questions. Consistent routine.

Feedback from the children: more time to play, I control my own time, lower volume in the classroom, (some girls say:) the boys sit in their place, nice to see the clock, I know what to wear outside.

Promotes independence and decision-making, children take greater ownership of their day, less time lost in transition and fewer behavior issues, fewer interruptions, less volume.

Q&A with Norway

SFO-friend: In the start they are safe around the SFO-friends. I had a meeting and informed them, they get a diploma for including other children. They are proud of their role.

"I HAVE MORE
TIME TO PLAY"



11:00 Gunn introduces Tim´s animation draft

When you have tried out the best practices, they should be in a way that children can see them. It must be understandable for the children. We will show you a first draft of the SFO-buddy animation. Some practices should have an adult and child version.

Tims draft is shown on the screen.



11:05 Fika, then groups divide in two rooms (This report follows the researcher group)



11:30 Presentation of tentative results of analysis observations

Impressions from the presentations (researcher group)

Researchers are excited to see what the practitioners will choose from the best practices.

Maybe the conference could have a workshop area where we could do upcycling, try good practices hands on, like an active conference. We want a conference in the spirit of EE.

If the conference is a workshop, other countries can apply for funds for their practitioners, this is important if we want many practitioners to be able to participate.



Sustainability discussion.

We need to figure out if we have promised to link all activities to 2 of the 3 sustainability-themes; environmental, social and financial sustainability. Do they all have to choose at least one activity aimed at sustainability?

In the application: We have promised 1 practice about sustainability. Is that from each country? Gunn will check and clarify.

There is a need to evaluate what practices can be further developed to include even more sustainability. Maybe deeper conversations with the children about sustainability can be emphasized in the upcycling-practice, for example.

Can we give the practitioners more resources to further develop the sustainability aspect? Lectures, short movies, Landa-model, theoretical background. Group will take on different responsibilities and provide the practitioners with something. This material can also be resources for people in schools who do not attend out meetings.

How to further develop what we saw now. It is already good but can still be developed further. How is the process to finish this? The practitioners test them, evaluate and give each other feedback with an evaluation form.

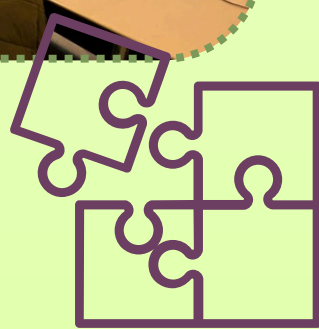
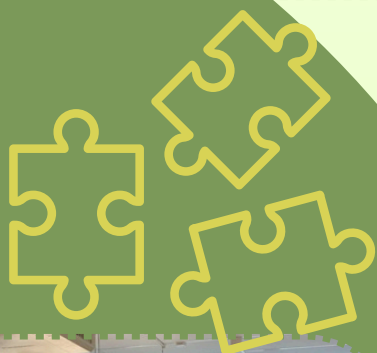
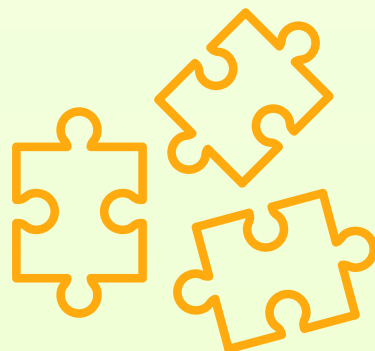
Suggestion: Form a team of the sender, the receiver and the researcher who is responsible for the specific theme, be it inclusion, cooperation or sustainability. 3 meetings in one year to develop from good practice to best practice.

"HOW TO FURTHER
DEVELOP WHAT
WE SAW NOW?"





Meanwhile – the researchers work on the puzzle of testing the best practices, all photos by Tim O. Levang:

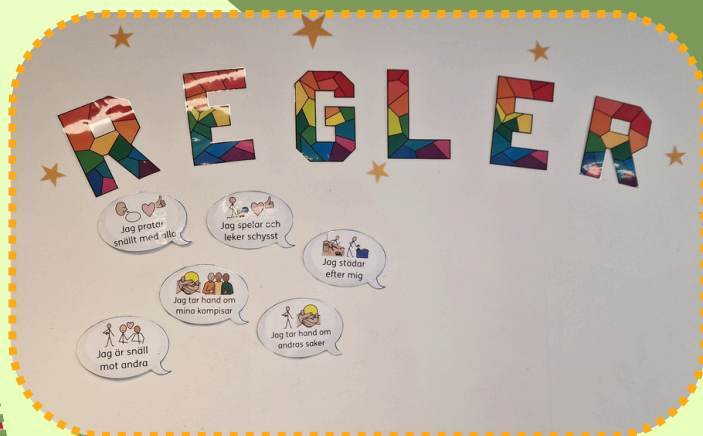
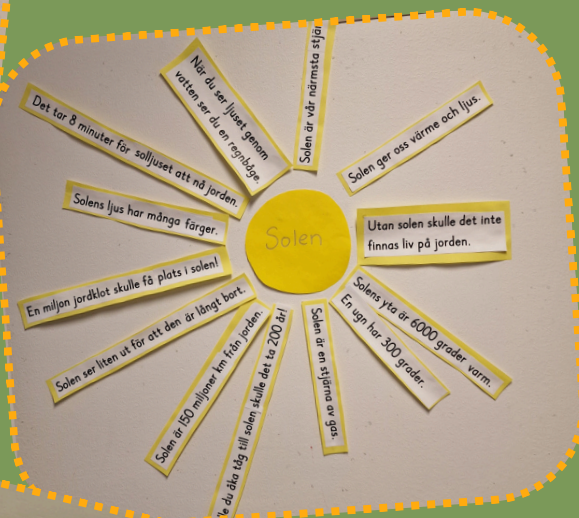


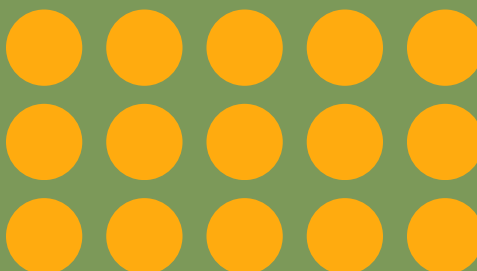
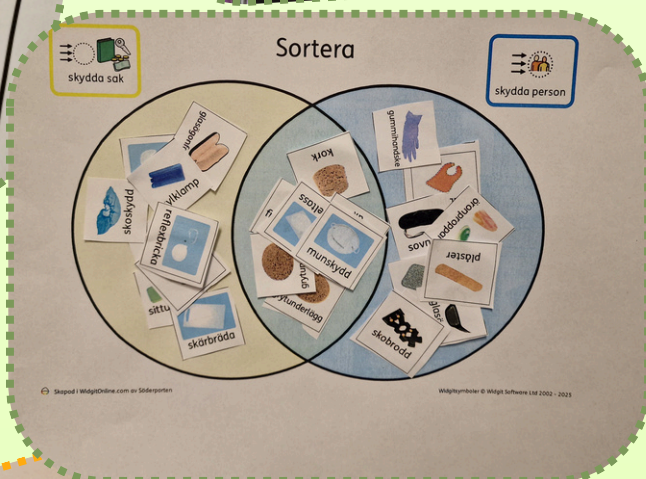


12:30 Lunch close to Söderporten school

14:00 School visit to Söderporten school

The group gets a tour of the school premises, before we go to the forest to play games with a group of children.







On our way to play "Banana tag" and "Under the wings of the hawk" with a group of children in the forest.



15:45 Andreas welcomes us to his school

Points from Q&A:

We always have to clean for school each day, we can't leave art projects etc. We have rooms and facilities, but we always need to clean it. The school ends at 13:45, we have a snack at 14:20, activities start around 15:00, and then 16:15 we need to clean. It disturbs the ongoing activities.

Does parents pick up children at a certain time? Mostly siblings pick them up. A few students go home alone. In 3rd grade they start to go home alone; they do not live far from here.

We had 2 teachers in every class, but now the economy says you can't continue with that. We are down to 3 classes and 4 teachers + one extra.



Photo by Tim O. Levang



Photo by Tim O. Levang

15:50 Kajsa Andersson, headmaster at Söderporten, welcomes us

Asks about our experience with the children: we describe it with words like laughter, curiosity, engagement, friendly children, good in English.

Kajsa talks to the group about her school. I work all day long with the children in the center. This is the biggest school in Norrköping.

Söderporten is in an area that is very beautiful, but this is an area with people with poor economy, they do not speak the language, many are unemployed, a difficult area socioeconomically. I live my dream when I can work here and help the children reach their goals. One of them is to make them feel safe. The area is not always safe, but the school is.

We want it to be meaningful to go to school, we want them to have knowledge and a great future.



"THE AREA IS NOT ALWAYS SAFE, BUT THE SCHOOL IS"
-KAJSA ANDERSSON



We want to be able to communicate with others and each other in many different ways. We work with visualization and body language.

We want to love reading books, to know lots of words, to talk about what we read. We want to be able to tell and write about our dreams and thoughts.

We want them to feel safe with each other, have friends and create the feeling of the worlds safest school together. Friends are important. If you don't have any friends, you feel miserable and maybe do not want to go to school.

I want my students here to win the Nobel price – maybe we can?

Knowledge is important. We also want to learn. It is difficult to work here, so you need to know many things to develop. Never too late to learn.

The future is ours! We want them to feel like they have a future. The world needs them.

High mobility among the students. Many new students. Extensive diversity of mother tongue and cultures. Extensive diversity of knowledge and extensive problem complexity.

Leisure time is not so rich for these kids. Leisure time in school is very important. They will try to do leisure time activities that they don't have a possibility to do otherwise. We do not want the children to go home, we want them to stay here. Why? Because it is safe, with social interactions, they will learn, develop their language. Why do they not stay? Because it costs money to be here. My vision and dream is that kids in areas like this could go for free to the leisure time center. When parents can't afford it, the children pay the price. Half of our kids unfortunately go home every day. It is about 1000SEK pr. month to go here.

We say that sometimes you can feel a little bit burdened to work here. So much to do, so much lack of things that children don't have. But it feels real to work here. Why do you stay here? Because it makes a difference to work here.



"I WANT MY STUDENTS TO WIN THE NOBEL-PRICE!"
-KAJSA ANDERSSON



Q&A with Kajsa Andersson, bulletpoints



Photo by Tim O. Levang

- Many parents from other cultures do not know what the leisure time center is and what it means. Even if it is only 300SEK a month, they do not know what it is, they are not employed, why should they send their children to something that costs money?
- It takes from us, but it also gives. I never have an angry parent write an e-mail to me. They have respect for our profession. They are always very respectful, and we respect the parents as well.
- Question to Magnus and Helen – what is different with this school compared to others that you see. Answer: The language, pupils here struggle to understand each other. Come in conflict with each other that they would not be if they had a language to express themselves.
- One big difference, the teachers here never complain about the parents, about lacking things, demand things etc. The expectations you have to deal with. They don't give the responsibilities for everything to everyone else. Very unusual.
- I will not employ people without a mission to work here. You need some special heart, respect for the children, the parents and the rest of the staff. You need to work tight with each other. The employees here know what to do just by looking at each other. Important to feel that you have colleagues that are supportive.
- I think that my leadership is very clear. I am clear what my mission is. I think that I work with trust. I want them to trust me and each other, I trust them.
- Seems like the teachers don't see the obstacles in the same way as others. One school never take the children outside because the lunch boxes are too heavy, in a well-situated area. They only see obstacles.
- About 500 kids here.
- We want our students to feel that their future is bright. "I can be what I want to be". Some of them feel sad that they are leaving this school.

The school is celebrating the Leisure centres day today.

After the Q&A we are invited to hang out in the school with all the parents for coffee, cakes and sausages.

19:00 Group dinner

"THE FUTURE IS OURS! WE WANT THEM TO FEEL
LIKE THEY HAVE A FUTURE. THE WORLD NEEDS THEM."
-KAJSA ANDERSSON

"IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO LEARN"
-KAJSA ANDERSSON





Day 2 summarized

Country Presentations: Best Practices

Denmark: Daily Program Visualization, Pumptrack Activity, Gym-hall Use

Switzerland: Conflict Management, Group Games, Free Play

Sweden: Conflict Management Model, Pro-Social Behavior Program, (Turn-taking)

Austria: Children's Parliament, Upcycling Day, Self-Directed Leisure Time

Norway: SFO Buddies, Independent Day Planning, Responsibility Projects

Practitioners are to test 3 practices from other countries, adapted to their own national and institutional context.

Emphasis on reflection, documentation, and evaluation through a common form.

Practices should reflect at least one aspect of sustainability (social, environmental, or financial).

Discussion on how to deepen this aspect in activities such as upcycling or free play.

Proposal to provide additional materials and lectures to help practitioners integrate sustainability.

Suggestion to hold a hands-on workshop conference.

Recommendation to form thematic development teams (sender, receiver, researcher) with regular meetings to turn "good practices" into "best practices".

School Visit: Söderporten, Sweden

Focus on safety, inclusion, and meaningful learning, both during and after school hours.

Leisure time activities are crucial as many children lack access outside school.

The school aims to create the world's safest school, where friendship, identity, and future hope are central.

Next Steps

Practitioners will implement and evaluate selected best practices.

Plans to further develop sustainability aspects.

Potential for expanded resources and follow-up meetings to support continued development.



DAY 3



09:00 Helene welcomes the group and informs us about the agenda for the day

Group splits in two: researchers and practitioners



09:15 Researchers group

Gunn has gone through the application to find out what we have promised to do. Certain things we need to discuss;

- Criteria/ things we need to do
- Films for the practitioners
- Testing in your own country
- Meeting plan
- How to evaluate

WP3 – in the application we have stated key competences as our goal, so the practices must support the development of basic skills. Cooperative learning and inclusion are criterias for all our best practices. If these criterias are not present, it is not a good practice. In addition to this, we have promised that one practice from each country must be recognized as a sustainability practice. The key competences are linked to 21st. century skills.

Cooperative learning, inclusion and sustainability are not defined. We need to define it and make it adaptable for the practitioners. We will make some lecture films for the practitioners. We will explain what cooperative learning is and how they can recognize it and develop it.

We need to discuss the term “best practices”. We need to define it as the best practices developed in this project, instead of best practices for the world or EE in general. We can't prove that they are best practices, but they are developed practices cross countries. We need to write about the process behind these practices.

"WE NEED TO DEFINE
COOPERATIVE LEARNING,
INCLUSION AND SUSTAINABILITY."



It is essential for the project that we have knowledge sharing. That is what we achieve through testing and evaluation. We do not say that these are the best practices in the world, but they are practices that we have done some quality check on, we have tested, evaluated and commented on them. This must be visible to everyone.

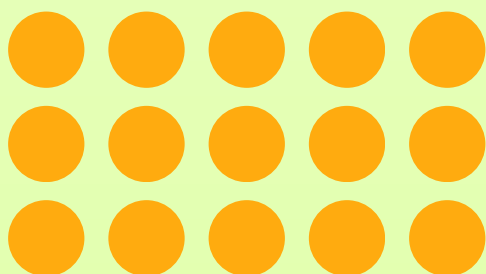
We have most of the things we promised already in the practices they showed us. I saw inclusion, democratic learning, cooperative learning. We need to make it clearer and talk about it. Maybe in the next steps we could comment; would it be a good idea to do it like this etc. More like a cooperation between us and the practitioners.

Group agrees on short educational films about cooperative learning, sustainability etc., maybe combined with texts. We will use the material from the practitioners for further discussions and reflections.

How will the testing be done? We must communicate that now you have other people's practices; you can develop and test it. Now is the opportunity to put emphasis on the criteria (inclusion, cooperative learning, sustainability). And the criteria must be defined to create a mutual understanding of the concepts.

All the 15 activities can relate to any of the key competences, but they must relate to one of the three criteria.

We need to reach a certain grade in EU for this project, dissemination counts the most. If EU thinks our web page is not good, we might not get the high enough score. The films and articles must be framed so they are relevant and understandable for anyone visiting our web site.



"IT IS ESSENTIAL
THAT WE HAVE
KNOWLEDGE SHARING"



We should observe as researchers when they test them out, follow the discussion and make notes on what do they do, how do they do it. The notes can be used for research on how this works in a different country.

Practitioners and researchers should analyze the children's evaluation of the practices together. You need to give feedback to the original developer of each practice.

Work is started on a new evaluation form for cross country practice testing. What kind of adjustments did you do, what have they done, how did it work, what did the children say. Denmark and Sweden will finalize the form. The form must contain "we had emphasis on this key competence."

We do not want children as decoration, we need real feedback from them as well.

Steps: Initially developed by sender. Another country develops it. Deliver it back to the sender. Then the original sender must try it out again with the feedback and adjustments – if they see the adjustments as useful and doable.

The one who invented the activity is the owner. They will get feedback and consider the adjustments/suggestions. They decide if they want to change it from the original and write down what they did. It says we should test it, not necessarily change it.

Group agrees.

Researchers should also observe the next steps. And give feedback. Not all activities are possible to observe 100%, but you need to have observed the process.

Could we agree that we are evaluating one of the main topics, like sustainability, inclusion etc.

Group agrees.

Researchers will take responsibility of linking it to the Key competences.

Gunn will send out a timeline to the group.

"WE DO NOT WANT
CHILDREN AS
DECORATION, WE
NEED REAL
FEEDBACK FROM
THEM!"





IN BRIEF

Reviewed project promises and key deliverables.

Practices must support key competences: inclusion, cooperative learning, and sustainability.

These concepts need clear definitions for practitioners. Group will create short educational films and texts.

“Best practices” refer to those developed in the project, not globally.

Emphasis on testing, evaluation, and knowledge sharing across countries.

New evaluation form in progress (led by Denmark and Sweden).

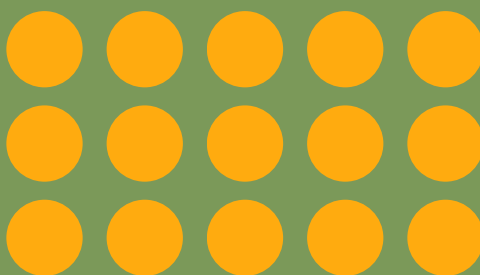
Children’s feedback must be genuine and included. Practices will be tested, adjusted, and returned to the original creator, where they will be tested with feedback and adjustments. However the sender is the owner, and will decide if adjustments should be applied in their context.

Researchers will observe, analyze, and ensure link to key competences.

Group agreed to focus evaluations on one main topic (e.g. sustainability).

Dissemination is critical for EU scoring; website and materials must be clear.

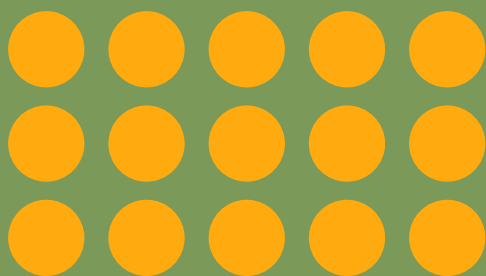
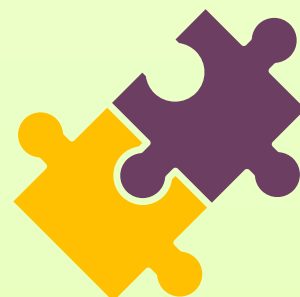
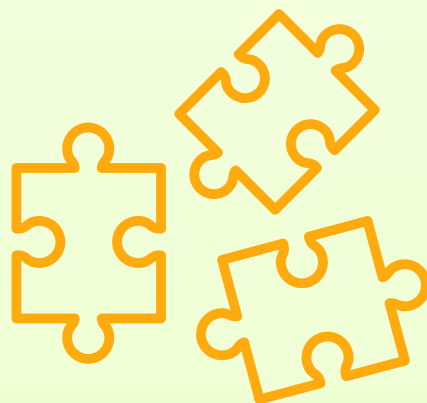
Gunn will send out a project timeline.

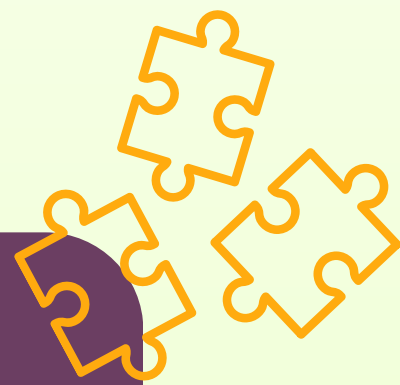




MEANWHILE IN THE PRACTITIONERS ROOM: THE BEST PRACTICES-PUZZLE IS FINALIZED

All photos by Tim O. Levang





PUZZLE RESULT

Denmark's practices will be tested by:

Whiteboard structure – Sweden

Pump-track – Austria

Gym-hall – Switzerland

Sweden's practices will be tested by:

Conflict management – Norway

Pro-social behavior – Denmark

Turn-taking – Switzerland

Switzerland's practices will be tested by:

Conflict solvement – Austria

Free play during lunch time – Denmark

Introducing group play – Norway

Austria's practices will be tested by:

Children's parliament – Denmark

Upcycling – Norway

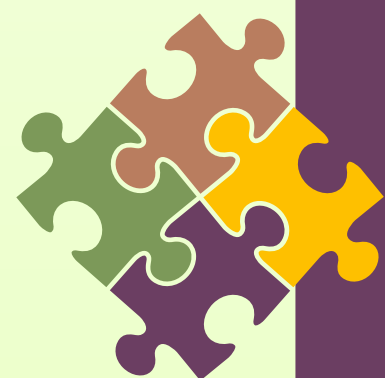
Self-determined leisure time – Sweden

Norway's practices will be tested by:

SFO-Buddy – Sweden

4th grader support 1st grader – Switzerland

Project Independent and responsible – Austria







10:00 Break and group photo

10:25 David and Helene update the group on what we have promised in the application, and what the group needs to do from here on

Great work by practitioners in distributing all the activities between them.

Next phase is to test your 3 activities.

You need to discuss with researchers how the activities are related to inclusion, sustainability and cooperative learning.

At least one of the activities needs to relate to sustainability – this is for you and the researcher to discuss in dialogue.

We also have a big pool of key competences that we should look for in each activity, and you will discuss this in dialogue with the researcher.

These activities will in the end be resources on our web site for other practitioners all over Europe, it is something to be proud of.

After summer we will make films and resources to put online.

For each of the three themes (inclusion, cooperative learning, sustainability) there will be films, discussions and articles.

This material can be a resource to your colleagues etc. Resources to open up on what inclusion can be etc.

How do we relate the activities to one of the themes? We must make it visible. More visible and clear than it is today.

You have a lot of knowledge, but different definitions about f. ex. cooperative learning.

When the country groups have discussions, we will consider "Is this about inclusion? How can we relate this to cooperative learning" etc. Researchers will support you in all the phases.

"THE NEXT PHASE
IS TO TEST YOUR
THREE ACTIVITIES!"



David sums up the next phase:

1. Choose activity – done

2. Test and evaluate by staff and children. We will provide material. It must be evaluated more thorough than just a thumbs up or down from the children. We will help you. Discuss your adjustments, how do we relate it to the key competences etc. This is to qualify it. Children's feedback and perspective is very important, it is in the application.

3. Send your testing and evaluations to the host country of each activity. Host country gets it back with feedback and evaluation.

4. November meeting – all day meeting online for everyone. This is a quality check and feedback. The 3 activities should be tested and evaluated before this meeting in the 2nd half of November. 20th of November suggested as a date.

5. Before 1st of March, last phase: Host country will then test the activity again with the evaluation and feedback in mind and evaluate it again with staff and children. You should take all the feedback into consideration, but you chose if you want to make the adjustments. Keep the process going, finalize it before the beginning of March. Test your own 3 activities with feedback and adjustments in mind.

6. May: final conference – this is where you present your final product. Tim must select what practices to animate. Not all 15 should be animated, maybe 5? 10? Some as PowerPoints, some as workshops etc.

Films, discussions, articles must be done before summer (15th of June).

We need the material before the conference.

"TEST YOUR OWN
ACTIVITIES AGAIN
WITH THE
FEEDBACK AND
ADJUSTMENTS IN
MIND"



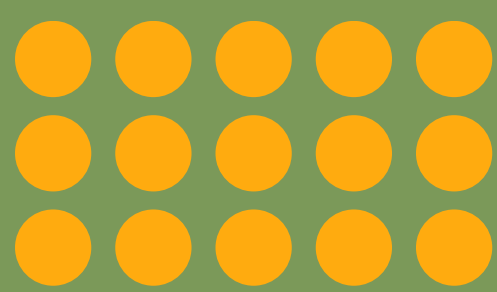
Denmark:
- whiteboard structure (SW)
- ramp-track (A)
- gym-hall (CH)

Sweden:

- conflict management
- social behavior
- turn-taking

Switzerland:

- conflict Solvement (H)
- free play during Lunch
- introducing a group p



Group discussion and questions:

Good that the original activity comes back to the owner with feedback.

Maybe some activities need more work during the autumn. Is it OK to give that specific activity more attention – to prioritize it, or should we put equal effort into each activity? This will be discussed with your researcher.

Come 1st March we need to know what you have done, it must have been tested and given feedback. Some activities take longer to test thoroughly. It would be awkward for anyone to get two activities back that have not been tested thoroughly.

We have experts that will provide material before 15th of June on inclusion, sustainability and cooperative learning.

10:50 Break

11:00 Information about the final conference in Norway in 2026 by Gunn

We must present the resources we have developed in this project.

Dates:

18th of May travel day

19th of May preparation day

20th of May Big Day! (We should not call it a conference, it limits us. If we call it workshops etc, practitioners might get funds to participate.)

21st of May travel day

17th of May is our constitutional day. For those who come early we will organize something for you. We will make a survey for the group shortly to see who would be interested in this.







11:05 Brainstorming in country groups

How would you like to do the conference. Audience will be mixed, researchers and practitioners. How do we make it interesting for everyone? Hands on workshops? Presentations in interactive form? We want your input, so we don't do it in a boring researcher way. 15 minutes to give input.



11:20 Suggestions from country groups

Norway:

- including the children, for example by having them serve food in breaks
- interviews with children to show films in relation to the practices
- animations
- maybe different rooms; one for films, one for workshops/upcycling etc.
- visualizing things
- audience involvement through apps
- making an EKCO song to present the project

Switzerland:

- group play
- we could do a small film including the children, free play
- Maybe organize VR-goggles and go through our facilities before children come, show the thoughts of the pedagogy before the children come in. Maybe do the same with photos.
- Conflict management: Have the children draw their thoughts, visualizing it. Kid drawings. Add them to a poster of some sort.

Austria:

- Doing interviews with kids for children's parliament, show photos or collages
- Upcycling: Maybe have materials on site/workshop, people can try out to come up with their own ideas, show them photos of what the children did with the materials.
- open/free time: small roleplay

Denmark:

- interactive stations where you can play, play scenes
- pictures
- having a football where the kids write what they have experienced: football evaluation

Sweden:

- Conflict management: let the kids try it, film it and show how they use it and how they feel about it.
- use Kahoot with audience
- Workshops where we combine different activities that are similar. Cluster the activities into different themes.





The conference will be a combination of speeches and activities. You guys in this room must be involved. This is why we need a prep day in Norway.

All your suggestions are noted, and we will discuss them.

Language: If we involve children, how do we use the kids, should they speak their mother tongue or English?

We will put together a program that is doable, send it out to you and you can give us feedback.

Remember to frame everything to the themes, key competences and the project. We as researchers will take responsibility for this.

Who will be invited to the big day? We will also stream some of the conference. We estimate around 100 participants. Must check the EU-rules if the 100 participants must be from outside the organization, and if one day is enough, how many hours it must last etc.

Prep day could be split into two, school visit etc.

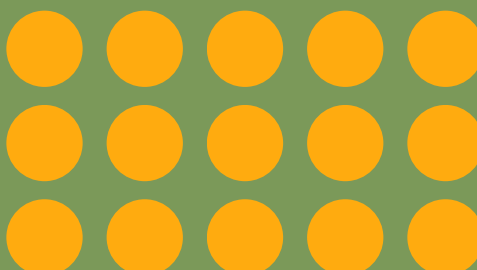
Last few things to remember:

Sweden has sent out an evaluation form, please fill it in on your return travel.

Please put your presentations on Teams under developing – each country has a green folder to upload your presentations in.

There is also a folder under dissemination – communication – social media with content you can post on your own social media. Remember to register your posts so we can count them. You will find everything you need in the same folder.

11:45 Sweden thanks the group for the work put in during these days, and group splits up.





11:45 Researchers have a last meeting to set some dates for the next steps

We must settle the following: Who makes which films, is it enough that one of the activities are filmed. Loose ends. Things have come up. We need to find a time for a new meeting very soon.

Group agrees on a meeting time: May 21st 08:00–09:00, Inga Kjerstin writes the minutes.

Who will write what on the theoretical part? This will be discussed in that meeting.

If you have anything to discuss in the meeting, send it to Gunn ASAP

Responsibilities:

Helene – inclusion

James – sustainability

Patricia – cooperative learning

Meeting ends.



Day 3 summarized

Researchers reviewed project promises; discussed key topics: criteria, films, testing, evaluation, and meeting plan.

Key themes: All practices must support cooperative learning, inclusion, and sustainability.

Short educational films and clear definitions will be developed for practitioners.

"Best practices" refer to those developed within the project; must be tested, evaluated, and documented.

Children's feedback must be meaningful; new evaluation form is being finalized (led by Denmark and Sweden).

Testing process: Each practice is tested in another country, feedback returned, then re-tested by the original creator.

Researchers to observe and support throughout; ensure links to key competences.

Dissemination is crucial for EU scoring; films/articles must be completed by 15 June 2025.

Final conference in Norway set for 20 May 2026:

- 18 May 2026: Travel day
- 19 May 2026: Preparation day
- 20 May 2026: Conference day ("Big Day")
- 21 May 2026: Return travel

Conference ideas from country groups: interviews with children, visual displays, hands-on workshops, interactive tools like Kahoot, animations, and inclusion of children's voices.

Next steps:

- Complete testing and evaluation of all activities by 1 March 2026.
- Researchers are responsible for drafting a presentation of the following:
 - Helene – Inclusion
 - James – Sustainability
 - Patricia – Cooperative Learning

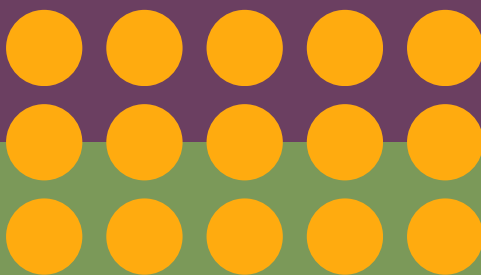
Upload presentations to Teams; register and share dissemination content via social media.


Next researcher meeting: 21 May 2025, 08:00–09:00 to finalize responsibilities and film planning.



GROUP PHOTO

PROJECT EKCO 2025





THE FINAL CONFERENCE
WILL TAKE PLACE IN
STAVANGER, NORWAY
18TH-21ST OF MAY 2026