



## SENNET PEER LEARNING VISIT TALLINN, ESTONIA 16-17 SEPTEMBER 2014

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All presentations and Case Studies are accessible [here](#)

### Present:

Elo Allemann (EE), Argo Ilves (EE), Tiina Kivirand (EE), David Lamas (EE), Jale Akbas (TR), Pille Tina-Kuusik (EE), Roger Blamire (EUN), Ida Brandão (PT), Jan de Craemer (BE), Leo Højsholt-Poulsen (DK), Katja Engelhardt (EUN), Patricia Lotti (IT), Silvia Panzavolta (IT), Jan Rottier (BE), Ursula Simmetsberger (AT), Pille Tina-Kuusik (EE), Jochen Vrancken (BE), Ingrid Vandenbempt (BE), Axel Zahlut (AT).

### **Introduction and welcome, Jan de Craemer, Education Ministry, Belgium Flemish Community**

Jan de Craemer welcomed participants to this last SENnet peer learning visit and thanked Elo and colleagues at HITSA and the ministry of education for the organisation and hosting of the meeting. Elo welcomed participants to Estonia.

### **Overview of Estonian education system and SEN policies, Tiina Kivirand, Estonian Ministry of Education and Research**

#### General Education

<b>Upper secondary education</b> Grades 10 - 12	
<b>Basic education</b>	Stage III Grades 7- 9
	Stage II Grades 4-6
	Stage I Grades 1-3
<b>Pre-school education</b> For children between the ages of 18 months to 7 years	

- compulsory school attendance lasts until basic education is completed or the child reaches the minimum school leaving age of 17

#### Curriculum

- the state curricula establish the standard for basic and general secondary education
- the study processes in the school are based on the schools' curriculum, which specifies study goals, the values and competences thereby developed, study

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Venue: Hotel Europa, Tallinn, Estonia

plans, study organisation of students with special needs and the arrangement for the provision of support services

### **Graduation**

- students who study by simplified curriculum or by Individual Education Plan (IEP) have to pass school exams which are composed for them according to their individual abilities

### **Questions & discussion**

In reply to Roger Blamire, Tiina Kivirand stated that Estonia did look at Finland as an example. Estonia has learned a lot from the Finnish Education system, but has also its own traditions.

In reply to Jale Akbas, she stated that the language of instruction was not always Estonian but also English or Russian (in that case Estonian is taught as the second language). Further, pre-school institutions are for free, parents only pay learning materials and lunch.

In reply to Ida Brandao, she said that children with Russian background could study in their own language in elementary school, but must learn Estonian as well. In upper secondary school, most courses are taught in Estonian. Further, there are no fees for higher education any more.

In reply to Jan de Craemer, Tiina Kivirand stated that assessment is binding so students with poor marks cannot graduate. This is, however, unlikely to happen, as the schools have implemented measures to support students with poor results.

### **SEN policy and study organisation of SEN students**

#### **Official definition of SEN student**

- a student with special needs means a student who is talented, has learning difficulties, a health status, disability, behavioural and emotional disorders, longer-term absence from schooling or insufficient proficiency in the language of instruction of a school
  - which brings about the need to make changes or adjustments in the subject matter, learning process, duration workload or environment of schooling, the expected study results or in the work plan drawn up by a teacher for working with a class

#### **Identifying a special educational need**

- use of pedagogical- psychological assessment, repeat and more accurate observation of the behaviour of a student in different conditions, gathering information about the student and their home environment, medical and speech therapy examination of the student

- talented students are identified based on the results of standardized tests carried out by licenced specialists or very good results in national or international competitions

### **Principles of study organisation of SEN students**

The organisation of instruction for students with SEN is based on internationally recognised and European Union member countries approved trends of inclusive education:

- generally, students with SEN attend their local school and are provided with the required conditions
- more students with SEN go to mainstream schools, but also 38 special schools exist; majority of special school designed for student with severe disorders
- generally, segregated special schools for students with SEN are state owned
- the parent will make the choice between the local mainstream school and a segregated special school

### **Movement towards inclusive education**

- committed to principles of inclusive education but still a long way to go
- started to pay special attention to students with SEN in 2004
  - reason: big number of drop outs without required basic education
- a) developmental conversation**
- in 2004, the Basic School and upper Secondary School Act introduced a developmental conversation to be held at school with each student at least once per academic year
- aim: supporting the development of each student, agreeing on further study and development goals
- the student, class teacher and a parent participate in the conversation
- if parents refuse to take part in this conversation, the school shall inform the rural municipality or city government, which shall organise measures, where necessary
- implementation: school teachers and heads were against it at first but schools that already implemented it give positive feedback
- b) immediate measures for unsatisfactory results**
- In 2005, the Regulation of the Minister of Education stated:
  - schools must immediately implement appropriate measures if students have no satisfactory marks in the end of a quarter of an academic year
  - generally, there is no implemented repeating of grades
- c) Strategy for developing the general education system 2007-2013**

- main goal: all students have equal opportunities and conditions to obtain high quality education according to their abilities and interests in the general education system which allows to continue studies and cope with life in dignity
- a lot of attention paid to students with SEN, measures taken to achieve goals
- follow up: in 2013, the 'Concept of organisation of instruction for students with SEN for 2014- 2020' was compiled

**d) classification of students with SEN**

1. students requiring additional support measures and conditions
    - learning difficulties, dyslexia, dysgraphia, behavioural problems
  2. students requiring specific organisation of instruction and resource-intensive support measures
    - disabilities, speech impairment, severe multiple disorders
  2. talented students
    - initially, a lot of discussions if talented students also fit in category students with SEN
- about 17% of students are labelled students with SEN, about 70% of them study in mainstream classes

**e) support**

- one of main principles by law: schools/ teacher obligation to support all children, observe and adjust where necessary
- students shall be provided with the services of at least a special education teacher, psychologist and social educator

**child's development observance map**

- for the purpose of observance of the development and coping of the student with special educational needs the child's development observance chart/map must be drawn up

**special educational needs coordinator**

- the head of school appoints a person whose duty is to organise cooperation between support specialists, instructors of students & teachers to support the study process and development of a student with SEN

**support measures**

By a decision of the head of school following measures may be applied:

- support specialist service, implementation of an individual curriculum, admission to the long day group, admission to boarding school facilities, transfer the student to remedial instruction group or a class for students with behavioural problems

Measures applied by recommendation of counselling committee:

- transfer the student to a class for students with special learning difficulties/with simplified curricula/with emotional and behavioural disorders, a small class (4 students), to schooling focusing on teaching one student, home teaching arising from health status measures or implement these conditions in an ordinary classroom

#### **f) school SEN policy**

All schools have to describe the SEN policy and the organisation of instruction for students with SEN in their own school curricula:

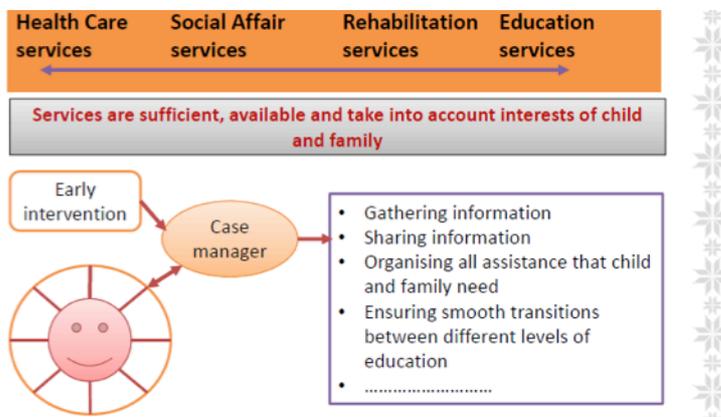
1. Philosophy – common values and principles
2. Coordinating system – responsibilities (teachers, SENCO, school leaders, etc.)
3. System of identification, support measures, data collection, evaluation
4. Cooperation and participation (parents, all students at school, all teachers, other schools, community, external institutions etc.)

#### **g) weaknesses in the current structure**

- students with SEN cannot get enough support, therefore their participation in mainstream schools is lower than in other European countries
- education officers, school leaders and teachers are not prepared enough and lack knowledge on the implementation of inclusive education
- students with SEN are not ensured equal conditions in accessing the support specialist services as local governments have very different levels of capacities
  - schools very different (size, location, capacities), cannot assure that all specialists work in every school, schools must organise these services
- the network of segregated special schools for students with SEN does not conform to current and future needs – the distribution of segregated special schools by region, type of disability and ownership is not proportional

#### **h) future trends**

- the educational, social and health services that support the instruction and development of students with SEN should be cohesive and adjusted according to the needs of the students
  - currently, weak cooperation between education, social affairs, health and rehabilitation work sector
  - aim: case manager as main person to organize all support
  
- move from system based approach to child and family centered approach



- the allocated state educational subsidy for students with SEN should take into account the specific character and needs of students and support the implementation of inclusive education
  - upon the allocation of a subsidy, there will be no financial identification as to whether the student with SEN has been involved in a mainstream class or a segregated special class – this will be decided by the school and by parents
  - students with SEN who are legally eligible to receive special education that differs from the national basic school curriculum will generate a so-called capitation fee that facilitates the flexible organisation of instruction while being involved in a mainstream class
- support specialist and study guidance services should be available to the schools regardless of the region or size of the school
- the network of segregated special schools for students with SEN will meet societal expectations, take into account the special needs of students and use the resources optimally and efficiently, as a part of the network of general education schools
  - main aim: reduce number of special schools, students in special schools
- the competence of school leaders, teachers and support specialists in the organisation of study for students with SEN has increased
  - new practice, training system has been developed which is being piloted
  - how to teach students with SEN became part of national in service training program
- for the support of students with SEN teachers have provided modern instructional materials and study materials applicable for students' need
  - the biggest challenge is to change mentalities & values of society
  - things start to change and best way forward is learning together

## Questions & discussion

In reply to Ingrid Vandenbempt, Tiina Kivirand explained that students with severe problems attend special schools. Often, parents prefer to send their child with SEN to a mainstream school. There, classes for students with SEN are organised, they are taught partly with other students, partly separately. Finally, she explained that the case manager is a person in the institution where rehabilitation service is available.

In reply to Silvia Panzavolta, she explained that the counselling committee exists in each county and is usually composed of psychologists, special teachers and sometimes speech therapists.

In reply to Leo Højsholt-Poulsen, she said that the developing appropriate resources was a responsibility of the Ministry of Education, a national state programme to work one alternative study materials has been in place for six years, the preparation of materials is to be completed by 2020.

In reply to Ingrid Vandenbempt, Tiina Kirivand specified that segregated schools existed since the 60s. SEN teachers usually have a lot of responsibilities, they guide children, work with them and teachers and sometimes in the classroom. SEN teachers come weekly or are at the school the whole week, depending on the number of students. The individual education plan fixes for how many lessons a student gets assisted by a SEN teacher.

In reply to Roger, Blamire, she confirmed that ICT was important and attention was paid to e-learning materials.

### **Evaluation of software applications for improving speech and language development, *David Lamas: PhD Hleen Saaroja, MSC***

David described research undertaken in 2011-12.

- problems: price of out of box devices, finding suitable apps
- research questions: how to choose right Augmentative and Alternative Communication app?, how to create benchmarking tool?, how relevant are the results?
- first steps: interviews with speech therapists, expected criteria, subjects
- method: usability test, accessibility test
- main barriers: device selection, knowledge for using device, learn to use AAC, teaching/ learning with device a whole process, support by society, lack of information for parents, lack of knowledge of using AAC devices for speech development
  
- results of initial evaluation:
  - many speech therapists never used devices at all, even out of box devices
  - some speech therapists prefer to use own materials
  - a lot of apps exist but not in Estonian
  - goal was to identify free apps: difficult to find fully functional apps for free

- o developed benchmarking tool to rank apps

Alexicom AAC - <a href="http://www.alexicomaac.com">http://www.alexicomaac.com</a>	5,66
TapToTalk - <a href="http://www.taptotalk.com">http://www.taptotalk.com</a>	4,5
JABtalk - <a href="http://www.jabstone.com">http://www.jabstone.com</a>	4,83
AAC speech - <a href="https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.enfl.android.aac_speech">https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.enfl.android.aac_speech</a>	3,83
GoTalk Now - <a href="http://www.achievementcompany.com">http://www.achievementcompany.com</a>	4,33
FCS Lite - <a href="http://education.conovercompany.com/mobile/apps/fcs/">http://education.conovercompany.com/mobile/apps/fcs/</a>	5,33
Spell-A-Word Lite <a href="http://www.appannie.com/app/ios/spell-a-word-lite/">http://www.appannie.com/app/ios/spell-a-word-lite/</a>	1,83
Aeir Talk - <a href="http://aeirtalk.com">http://aeirtalk.com</a>	2,83

### Conclusions

- all devices are suitable that work with such apps, best devices have bigger screens, important feature for apps is possibility to edit/ to change content
- There is a lack of information for parents
- There is a lack of knowledge about using AAC devices.

In reply to Leo Højsholt-Poulsen, David Lamas clarified that he refers to the knowledge of the speech therapist to use the app, not the student.

In reply to Silvia Panzavolta, he confirmed that by device he referred to a tablet, at least an iPad mini. One barrier to the use is that children are more interested in playing with the device than learning with it. The child should have access to it's own device, both at school and at home.

### **Rajaleidja (Pathfinder) centers and their role in supporting schools and families, Tiina Kivirand, Estonian Ministry of Education and Research**

- Pathfinders centers are new counsellor centres
- in Estonia, everything is based on teacher interest
- have educational portal with special part for students with SEN, with a lot of materials created by teachers concerning ICT, also with collected "travel well" materials from other countries
- for teachers who teach students with SEN, different networks exist, e.g. eTwinning and projects are carried out in the schools
- Ministries try to organise support, but people must come together to share knowledge about ICT and students' needs ('communication problem')

Jan de Craemer commented that bringing the right people together was never easy, as it was not only a matter of willingness but also time.

## Special education needs forum: developments and round table

### Italy

- we have seen that Ministry of Education should give funds to single schools do adapt teacher training to individual needs
- in the school selected for this year's Case Study, teachers organise on the job training sessions for a few hours
- crucial point is to train teachers to provide personalised learning, universal design for learning
- initial training course by INDIRE uses modules developed by DGE Portugal and adapts them to the national context
- in Italy, SEN issues are not part of initial teacher training but of continuous professional development (voluntary)

### Denmark

- inclusion in mainstream schools heavily debated in Denmark
- Ministry co-finances IT equipment at schools
- question is how to encourage the development of new resources
  - one way: support resources that include games
- question discussed if resources for students with SEN should be subsidized in particular
- already now, all learning resources must include speech
- there is little focus on SEN in teacher training, focus on basic ICT competences
- 5 major research projects in place with schools, will know more in 1, 2 years

### Turkey

- new directive prepared for SEN
- last year, president and prime minister, director changed
  - rapid change in all bureaucracy
- big Faith project: nearly 1 Mio students got tablets, evaluation end of the year
- special website (education informatics network): all books and information, audio books for blind students
- problem: special education takes mostly place in special schools, inclusive education happens more in primary school than elementary school, try to use tablets at least for blind students

## UK

- there is a new directive requiring all schools to publish on their website a statement of intent
- at the same time, less funding is available

## Austria

- pressure on Ministry of Education to abolish special schools because of UN convention
- In Austria, parents can still choose, in future only want to offer inclusion in mainstream schools
  - Ministry is hesitant: wants to offer both options
- eTwinning event on the topic special needs in Austria in preparation

## Portugal

- financial cuts in funding, trend to concentrate students in big schools with supposedly better resources but less teachers
- finance of ICT is always limited, more tablets this year
- ICT resources centre will be main tailors of teacher training
- will ask ICT resource centres to engage in a course on video producing

## Belgium Flanders

- as of 2015 step towards inclusion: will be more difficult for schools to send students with SEN to special schools, only possible if they proved that they used all other alternative means (=compensatory measures to follow same curriculum as others)
- if student is sent to special school, has to return to mainstream school after two years or it has to be substantiated why not
- project “innovative schools”: stopped because of budget cuts
- educational publishers developed app store: one platform for digital, central point for all publishers
- Ministry of Education sets final objectives, textbooks have to follow these, inspectorate looks if book is conform, very general way of evaluation

Visit to [Pelgulinna Gymnasium](#)

## Introduction

This popular community school, with 930 unselected students (but in a 'nice' catchment area) from age 7 to 19, has unrestricted wifi everywhere and a BYOD policy, because of the cost savings and the value of personally-owned devices in group work. 96 per cent of students have their own device but there are 20 tablets available on loan to students (and teachers) without their own device. "Kids don't have limitations; teachers do," according to our host, Birgy Lorenz (ICT Development Manager), who also said that their school aims to be ahead and that if teachers own a tablet "the world will change." Visitors sensed an atmosphere of quiet and freedom; the head teacher is 'very democratic' and all staff attach importance to children's rights. Any decisions are made together and the child is included in discussions. This school, as others, runs 'survival camps', where young people learn to shoot in forest camps. It also runs summer camps for students who have dropped behind to catch up. Many of the teachers were students at this school.

In a second grade (age 8) class, students were observed using their hands on a task to design a city. Music played as they worked.

There has been a private e-school system in Estonia for 8 years (ekool.ee), with an online grade book. It is useful when a school is in two separated buildings, gives parents access to information about their child's progress and activities. There is a 5pm deadline for completing homework, to encourage children not to work until late at night. One issue is deciding what teachers should upload (e.g. homework, personal information). If this school stops using ekool, others will follow.

A teacher demonstrated the system to visitors. It generates a lesson report so that parents can see what their child has been doing in school. Ten per cent of Estonia's 600 schools use it. "All our teachers are web developers", according to the teacher; they upload to a sharing portal pictures, games and files (e.g. a simplified version of a book for students with SEN). It takes 5-10 hours to develop a good online lesson. Often there are issues with copyright not respected. There is a lack of published 'in between' materials, i.e. resources for those with mild learning difficulties. Every school is different and there is some competition between them, producing pressure to keep up (We ask a lot of our teachers"). By 2018 all publishers' materials must be digital and online.

The SEN coordinator (Kärt Käesel) is a qualified psychologist who works in both the school and a special needs counselling centre, one of 18 in Estonia. She said that there are 200 students with SEN in the schools, of whom 120 receive some support and 80 students, mostly with learning difficulties, follow a simplified curriculum, with a maximum of 8 in any one class (in practice up to ten), those with severe learning difficulties being educated at home if they are violent. There is informal support via a committee to decide on needs, involving the student – each has a statement (stored in the cloud, in Microsoft One Drive).

Many schools do not recognise SEN resulting in 40% of students in one school identified as having SEN, 1% in another. Estonia has an inclusive education policy: overall 16.8% of children

in Estonia have SEN. Of those with severe difficulties, 31% are in mainstream and 69% in special schools. Some teachers risk burn out when they are alone in a class with six students with SEN. Many parents are away in the week or even month, working in Sweden or Finland. Teachers prefer working with the students and are not so interested in involving parents.

Teachers are not fully prepared for a new requirement providing equal access to education for all. There is no money for special needs software, e.g. text to speech. Some older teachers have left the profession because of technology. A new curriculum does away with grades and simply described a student's strengths and weaknesses and sets out next steps. Low pay is an ongoing issue. Schools are getting bigger and small ones are closing. This school does not need the services of a counselling centre because there is in-house expertise but this may not continue once project funding ends. The school prides itself on solving problems itself, with little outside help.

### Visit report



Birgy Lorenz, the ICT development manager of the school, welcomed the SENnet group at the Pegulinna Gymnasium. She gave an introduction and a guided tour through the building. The school is a big mainstream school in Tallinn with 930 students from grade 1 to 12. It is well-known in Estonia for its enthusiasm in ICT. Children start coding early, they use tablets in their learning activities and participate in the programme NutiLabor (SmartLab) where they create games and other apps with smart phones.

The general school philosophy is that fear is not a good motivation to learn. The school offers many extra-curricular activities, free lunch etc. 98% finish their grade successfully. Those with difficulties get extra work. All students with special needs can attend regular classes, unless they disturb the others. Some students with SEN also follow a simpler schedule. To educate students with SEN in mainstream classes is still a new challenge to Estonian schools.

First, Birgy Lorenz showed the school library to the group. The school library provides



both books and internet access, teachers can borrow 4 tablets here. Some teachers are still afraid of using tablets and other technology; that would change if they had their own tablets. According to a survey among the students, 96% of them have internet access at home, the school can provide 20 tablets to students. Not all schools

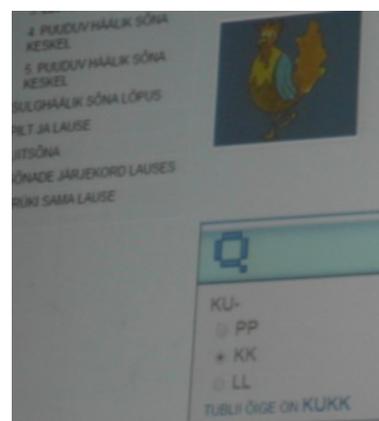
in Estonia are well equipped with ICT like this school, for which local funding has been made available. Students start using ICT from the first grade. There is no budget to purchase special software, so teachers use free software. Teachers are expected to be able to use ICT: some old teachers therefore left the school, other love using ICT to teach.

Next, the SENnet PLV group visited a robotics lessons of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students of 6/7 years. The students do simple robotic tasks (putting tasks in the right order) and have



the freedom to experiment with what they are interested in. Students with SEN are often very interested in technology and very active in these lessons.

Further, one of the teachers showed how she works with the schools “e-platform”.



The school uses the e-platform “e-school” to organise homework/tasks. This platform makes everybody talk more to each other. Teachers also simplify books for students with special needs and put them online. For experienced teachers it is easier to find the time for such extra work. It is up to every teacher to decide how much he uses the books provided or works with own materials. By 2018/20 all teaching materials should be available also online. One issue is that information about special needs of the students cannot be included to the “e-platform” the school uses, as the discussion is

still ongoing if all teachers should be able to access these information.

During the visit, the SENnet PLV group also got the occasion to talk to the SEN-coordinator Kärt Käesel who presented her work at the school.

### **Students with special needs**

According to the SEN-coordinator Kärt Käesel, students with special educational needs are students:

- whose learning difficulty, behavior, emotional health problem or disability create a need to make changes or adaptations in the contents or arrangements of their studies or in their learning environment
- talented and gifted students are not regarded as students with SEN, they study in different courses – art, dance, music, ICT, math
- Learning difficulties include speech, reading and writing difficulties, mathematical difficulties, behaviour problems (addiction problems), autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit problems and disorders, anxiety, school refusal problems and mental problems

20% of the students at this school are students with SEN, about 200 students. 80 are in a specific program, the other 120 only receive some guidance. For the school, it is not feasible to identify special needs of students, as required by the government. The reason is that it is difficult to get appointments with specialists like speech therapists.

### **Tasks of SEN-coordinator**

- supports and instructs a teacher in identifying special educational needs
- makes proposals to the teacher, parent and head of school regarding further educational work,
- applies measures offered by the school to support the development of the student
- conducts further investigations, together with teachers and support specialists

This description of tasks is not the reality in most schools, including this school. In her work, the SEN-coordinator tries to involve all stakeholders. As she needs to cooperate with parents, it can take 1 to 4 years to get a correct diagnosis for example for autism, as parents do not want to recognize the need for a diagnosis. The aim is always to include the child in all decisions as far as possible.

### **Numbers 2013**

- 16,8% all of students (7-18) are marked in Estonian Education Information System (EHIS) as students with SEN
- 76% of them studies in mainstream schools
- very specific educational needs SEN2 – 3060 students, 31% of them learn in mainstream schools and 69% in special schools (Ristiku Põhikool)
- about 20 % of the first grade students need special support and about one third of them are rather difficult cases

### **Inclusive education**

According to the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, Estonia has an inclusive education policy:

- Every child has the right to attend a school in their residential area or study in a mainstream school with an adapted curriculum and to receive support.
- It is not always easy to provide the parents with an effective choice between mainstream and special schools.
- It is possible to open classes for students with disabilities in mainstream schools. For classes for students with disabilities, a maximum number of students with special needs applies, e.g. 8 students in a class with emotional and behavioral disorders.

In this school, those classes are not opened. The school does not have the resources to open classes with only a few students. New support centers opened in Estonia, but the SEN-coordinator would not send a child there yet (the new centers first have to prove themselves). It is problematic that such support is organized project-based and thus lacks continuity.

- counselling and instruction of a special education teacher, social educator and psychologist must be made available to students
- in case no such specialists are employed by the school, these services must be ordered from regional study counselling centres
- since 01.09.2014 Rajaleidja / Pathfinder in place – career planning and counselling
  - 18 study counselling centres have been created all over Estonia, the task of which is to counsel and support students, teachers and parents in organization of studies for children with special educational needs

Schools must implement the following support measures regardless of whether the children with special educational needs are taught in mainstream classes or specialized classes:

- supporting education in groups or individually

- implementing of special education methodology and assistance
- implementing of a curriculum that corresponds to the students' abilities
- ensuring availability of technical facilities for students with special needs
- adaptation of the physical learning environment according to the special needs
- drawing up and implementing an individual curriculum if required
- ensuring availability of services provided for in the rehabilitation plan
- surveillance of students' achievements and assessment which supports and directs the development of the students

### Levels of support

- 1. level** – classroom, classmates and one teacher, few resources, teacher connects with family (special conversation) and opens the progress report
- 2. level** - school level, SEN coordinator gathers up the supportive network and makes it work, roundups and feedback as much as possible
- 3. level** – out of school level, wider network / specialist of child welfare, medicine, Pathfinder specialists and committee

One issue is that some teachers do not see it as their responsibility to also interact with parents. Last year, a newly graduated teacher had difficulties managing her class, with 4/5 students with different special needs. As a support, this teacher has to teach less lessons this year.

### Questions and discussion

Ida Brandao commented that schools in Estonia seemed to have a lot of flexibility in how they would like to implement measures. In Portugal, mainly students with severe disabilities receive support. On the choice between mainstream and special schools, she added that it was possible to give parents both options but guide their decision.

Silvia Panzavolta added that she was surprised that only the SEN teacher had access to the information about the special needs of the students.

Pille Tina-Kuusik replied that data privacy was an issue. The parents of one student did not even tell the teachers that their child was epileptic, the doctor is not allowed to share that information.

Ida Brandao added that medical reports were always restricted data in Portugal.

In reply to the question of Leo Højsholt-Poulsen in how far this school was typical of Estonian schools, Elo Allemann said that it was a typical school, as it had to accept all students. The school is getting more and more popular.

Jochen Vrancken commented that he had the impression that this school had a lot of very motivated teachers.

Further, Silvia Panzavolta commented that the fact that support structures/ centers were changing seemed to be a problem.

Pille Tina-Kuusik replied that there had been a working system in place which now has been replaced by a new European funded one. Pathfinder is a very new initiative and there is still a problem with communicating it to the schools.

Roger Blamire added that solutions can often also be found in an open, democratic way at school level.

## ANNEX: Programme

### Programme

#### TUESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2014

14.30 Registration, coffee

15.00 Welcome

15.10-16.10 Overview of Estonian education system and SEN policies. Tiina Kivirand, Estonian Ministry of Education and Research

16.10-16.45 Rajaleidja (Pathfinder) centers and their role in supporting schools and families. Robert Lippin, Foundation Innove.

16.45-17.00 Coffee break

17.00-18.00 Apps improving speech and language development, Argo Ilves, HITSA

19.00 Guided tour in the old town of Tallinn. Karel Zova, HITSA

20.00 Working dinner

#### WEDNESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER

09.00 Transportation to Pelgulinna Gymnasium

(<http://www.pelgulinna.tln.edu.ee>) (Mulla 7, Tallinn)

09.30-11.30 Overview of the SEN-activities and using technology in Pelgulinna Gymnasium. Visiting classrooms.

*Pelgulinna Gymnasium is a big mainstream school in Tallinn, there are children from 1st to 12th grade. In Estonia it is well-known because of their enthusiasm towards ICT. Children start coding early, they use tablets in the learning activities, they also participate in the program NutiLabor (SmartLab) where they create games and other apps with smart phones etc. You will meet Birgy Lorenz (ICT development manager) and Kärt Käesel (SEN-coordinator).*

12.00-13.00 Lunch

13.00-16.00 Special education needs forum: developments and round table