

This profile is part of the EU Study on Supporting School Innovation Across Europe. It presents one of the 24 schools in the study, giving an overview of the changes and experiences in that school. Find the rest of the materials from the study at:

www.schooleducationgateway.eu/innovation

Promoting entrepreneurial values, student initiative and responsibility through integrated curriculum and real-life perspective of learning at the Kiviõli I Secondary School



About our school

- ◆ **Location:** Kiviõli, Idu-Vira County
- ◆ **Established:** 1950, when the school started functioning in its present form
- ◆ **Status:** Public school that provides primary and secondary education (grades 1-12)
- ◆ **Number of pupils:** 340 (in 2016)
- ◆ **Website:** <http://www.k1k.ee/>
- ◆ **Contact person:** Helena Kivestu



Why did we innovate?

The Kiviõli School is located in one of the most socioeconomically disadvantaged areas in Estonia, and has many students with a migrant/minority background. In order to engage students into active learning, prevent school drop-out, develop their social skills and creativity to help them break the cycle of disadvantage the school decided to promote entrepreneurship education as its main innovation. According to the head teacher, the trigger for change for the Kiviõli School was the educational programme “entrepreneurial school”, coordinated by the Entrepreneurship Centre of Ida-Virumaa county. It “helped to develop the school vision and direction how to implement it.



What were our innovations?

Since 2006 Kiviõli school has been known for promoting entrepreneurial values such as student initiative and responsibility through integrated curriculum and real-life perspective of learning. Since 2010, entrepreneurship has been one of the cross-curricular themes in the Estonian National

Curriculum (Government of Estonia, 2010a). Since 2006, the school has been a member of the network of entrepreneurial schools and has launched many projects, which include integration of subjects, active participation of students, parents, local municipality and youth centre. The school has appointed a special entrepreneurship coordinator, who is responsible for coordinating school-wide projects apart from her subject teaching responsibilities. The school leadership and coordinators plan the activities together and distribute tasks between teachers and classes, while helping with the implementation. The development of entrepreneurship takes place in the form of active learning methods and extracurricular activities¹.

The big part of the process constitutes teachers' collaboration and team work. The school has been piloting the 360° feedback system to teachers that includes peer-review. The school applies the open-door policy, which means that if a teacher has left the classroom door open, anyone can come and visit.

Currently, the school is offering several integrated courses. These courses are co-designed and co-taught by different subject teachers (e.g., history, art history, literature and practical Estonian language for grade 10; social studies with geography for grade 9). For instance, the school offers an integrated geography and mother tongue class for the 7th grade students, organised in cooperation by two teachers. In the first lesson, the students photograph, video and map the graffiti in the town, and in the second lesson they draw maps of the exact location of the graffiti while using a geographical map legend. All the work is done in small groups. In the next lessons, an orientation game takes place in the town and the sequence is supposed to end with the presentation of each groups' work in the form of a photo or video session during which students also analyse experiences of their group work.

Although the main instruction language is Estonian, the school also offers language immersion classes for students with a Russian minority background. In the upper secondary school, there are classes where Russian students study 60% of the subjects in Estonian and 40% in Russian.

According to the head teacher, the school's next big goal is to become a community school that involves the community more actively in school's events and practices. The first steps towards this goal have been taken. In the spring the school organised a day of cafés in the town's apple garden where all community members, citizens and town's institutions could visit. The school plans to continue this tradition outside of school and integrate it with the learning outcomes of the curriculum.



What have we achieved?

Pupils

The most visible change during the last five years is that school had no drop-outs. School leader noticed that students showed more enthusiasm, joy of learning and demonstrate a greater desire to participate in school governance. For example, the students suggested that none of the elective courses in upper secondary schools should be numerically graded.

The instructional leader had already noticed positive changes in the students' attitudes after the first year of being in the programme of entrepreneurial schools, developing a tighter cooperation with

¹ See: <http://www.k1k.ee/ettev%C3%B5tlik-kool>.

parents and implementing more real-life perspective on learning. Additionally, children started to offer ideas for extracurricular class evenings.

School as a whole

Indirect effects for the school include tighter cooperation between the institutions and businesses in the area. According to the school leader, the local centre for adventure tourism and a local museum have approached the school with the request to help design educational programmes that would interest students.



The process of change: what helped us succeed?

School level

According to the entrepreneurship coordinator, the school has many young and innovative teachers, which support the school transformation.

In 2006, the school leader had the chance to visit an entrepreneurial school in Scotland which gave her new ideas for her school development. The initiators of applying the principles of entrepreneurial schools were the school leadership and a group of interested teachers.

Municipal level

The trigger for change for the Kiviõli school was the educational programme “entrepreneurial school”, coordinated by the Entrepreneurship Centre of Ida-Virumaa county. It also assists other schools in the area, by providing know-how and material support.

* The school received financial support from the Entrepreneurship Centre of Ida-Virumaa to buy equipment for their projects, such as the photo camera and colour printer. In addition, the local municipality helped to pay the participation fee in the network of entrepreneurial schools. The membership has enabled the teachers to visit other entrepreneurial schools in Finland, Sweden and Latvia to get acquainted with the system elsewhere.

National level

The school has been part of the “Noored kooli” (Young people to school) programme, an NGO initiative which promotes a modern learner-centred paradigm to teaching, encouraging and preparing university graduates from different fields to teach in public schools. Over the years, the school has had many young, enthusiastic teachers from this programme contributing to active learning methods with integration of subjects.



The process of change: what limited us?

School level

The main barrier was the teachers’ fear of applying new techniques and covering all topics prescribed in the curriculum in case they spent too much time on project-based, entrepreneurial learning. This issue eventually was at least partly solved by integrated learning and teacher collaboration practices.

Another issue is the lack of skills and know-how among current teachers. More effort could have been dedicated to managing fears and equipping teachers with the necessary tools, although sometimes the lack of tools forced the teachers to be creative.



Sustainability of change

Gradually, the school has managed to embed entrepreneurship education ideas into its teaching and learning process, overcoming staff's resistance and changing their mindsets, which is seen by the school as a sustainable innovation process.

To learn from its processes, the school conducts self-evaluation every three years that is based on the entrepreneurship standard developed by the network of entrepreneurial schools. There are three levels of the standard: basic, silver and gold. At the moment, the school has reached the silver standard and is striving for the gold standard in the next evaluation.

The key role in mainstreaming innovation is currently held by the initiative "Interesting school" implemented by the Ministry of Education and Research. It is a blog where schools and other education stakeholders can share their best practices and ideas. Additionally, the network of entrepreneurial schools is a good platform for exchanging current practices and learning new approaches. The network of language immersion schools also includes schools that are examples for others.

Since the school has gained a reputation for being a successful implementer of the integrated curriculum, active learning methods and real-life perspective on learning, it often receives guests from other schools who want to observe their practices. According to the instructional leader, the school has also given workshops for other schools about integrated curriculum in cooperation with Tallinn University, the network of "Interesting school" and during the Education festival.



What did we learn in the process? Key messages

Innovations need strong support from the school leadership and a group of motivated and committed teachers.

Changes in the teaching and learning paradigm are sustainable as they become a daily part of the teachers' work and students' experience.

Every innovation needs well-prepared and confident teachers. Therefore, every change process should be accompanied by teacher professional development. The providers of teachers' in-service education, besides universities, can also be local NGOs such as the Entrepreneurship Centre of Ida-Virumaa. School autonomy is key, but schools also need guidance, training and other types of support to be able to exercise their autonomy effectively.

School networks and exchange are a good way to promote innovations and encourage learning process and reflection beyond the wall of one institution.

Further reading

- **A full report** 'Supporting School Innovation across Europe' explores the conditions in the school education system that can enable or constrain positive change in schools.
- **12 case studies** explore the national approaches and individual school innovations. They include the perspectives of key national education experts and stakeholders who were interviewed and took part in workshops.
- **24 individual profiles** give a quick view of the changes and experiences in each school.

Available here:

www.schooleducationgateway.eu/innovation

- The school profiles also feature as part of the [European Toolkit for Schools](#), alongside a range of materials and many other inspiring examples of practice from European countries.

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