

From investing to saving in education

Principals and educational savings

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ABSTRACT

In autumn 2015, it was announced that the government would execute massive budget cuts to education. This was due to the efforts of the new government to save money and balance the state economics. The amount of money that the state intended to save from the basic education, also known as primary and lower secondary schools nationwide was estimated to be around 40 million euros. 30 million euros out of 40 million euro savings was from group size money and 10 million of development money. Money directed to group sizes has been used by the schools to downsize the class and group sizes. The developing money on the other hand is for the development of the schools, for example to modernize equipment and learning spaces.

The topic of this research is the savings done from education in the context of changed educational politics and legally mandated tasks the school have. This study asked from the principals their views about these educational budget cuts and how they see those to affect to schools.

The research questions the most worrying aspects of saving from basic education and how the principals see diminishing resources to affect to their school. Second research question was the future Finnish basic education and how the principals viewed that. The research was conducted as qualitative research where the principals were interviewed and their answers to the interview question were analyzed with content analysis. In the interviews, the question were in specific order and the question were asked in same order from every participating principal.

Research questions were answered during the interviews so the findings are written down as principals answered to the question. These findings suggest that principals are concerned about the growth of the group and class sizes, the work load of their teachers, the quality of teaching and the diminishing resources to organize support service in schools. When asked about the future of the Finnish basic education in general the principals were positive and faith to the future of the basic education.

Key words: Education, principals, schools, education system.

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1.INTRODUCTION

The topic of school leadership is widely researched, in Finland and many other countries that have differing education systems. These differing education systems around the globe have in addition, varying ways financed. In Finland, education is publicly funded and there are no tuition fees, not even in higher education institutions, which is remarkable difference to many education systems. Finland also has 9-year basic education, which is compulsory to every child between the ages 7-16. This means that every child must gain the skills and knowledge that contemplate the basic education. Mostly children gain these skills and competencies when they attend to the school, for those nine years, in which time they achieve skills that allow them to apply to secondary education. This basic education is important building brick for children and youngsters. Hence, its importance to these children should not be underestimated.

Equality to education and in education is considered so important that it should be within in everyone's reach regardless of his or her place of living, their social or ethnic background or who their parents are. This thinking has guaranteed that differences in learning outcomes are not strictly related to the student's background due the economic or social related causes. (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 86.) The most important criteria for national education system is how well students learn the things they are expected to learn. (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 95.) This does not just refer how well students learn, but also what they learn and what they are expected to learn, in school and perhaps also outside the school.

However, currently the Finnish government is cutting from education nation-wide. Much is being cut from the higher education (from universities and universities of applied sciences), but also from secondary education and even from basic education. These budget cuts from education have awoken much discussion throughout the country. However, most of the discussion has dealt with the budget cuts that are directed to the universities. Less attention has gained the budget cuts that are hitting the secondary education not the mention the basic education. However, it is important to look into the basic education. It is important to research what it means to school to have fewer resources to do the things they are expected to do. These things include good education to every student and offering special support to the students who are not doing so well.

It is also worthwhile to notice that it is not just the pupils of the basic education, which these budget cuts hit; teachers are expected to do the same work as earlier with fewer resources than before. Headmasters do not get off any easier since they are the ones who struggle with the diminishing money at first hand when making an annual budget for their school and deciding how much money is reserved to what and to make the most of the diminishing cash flow. Headmasters have to also communicate the situation to their teachers and tell them how much there is to spend and to what. Headmasters might even have to lay off some of the teachers.

One of strengths of the Finnish education policy has been, for decades, that when planning and reforming education, national and/or on local level, the professionalism of the principals and teachers has been used in this planning. This can be viewed that there is a strong trust to the teachers and principals as educational professionals, who know their field and have ideas how to develop it (Pokka 2014, p. 64-65).

1.1. Finnish Basic Education

Basics of Finnish education system consist of basic education (9-years), secondary education (approximately 3 years) and tertiary education (5-6 years). There are doctoral programs in universities that are not included in the list above nor is the adult or any other educational institution listed above. The list written is somewhat of what one's education career might look like, if one is more academically orientated.

Finnish basic education, which is at the center of this research last for 9 years and consists of two parts: primary school (grades 1-6) and middle school/lower secondary school (grades 7-9). The law to begin his or her basic education on the year the child turn 7 years mandates every child. This means that some of the children are seven and some turn 7 during their first semester of grade 1. There is a tendency for all primary school classes to be in same building or in same building complex, meaning that is not unusual for kids from ages 6 or 7 to be play with or next to the kids that are 12 or 13 years old during the breaks.

Second part of the basic education system is called middle school or lower secondary school. These schools consist from students who are at grades 7-9. This means that students are usually between the ages 13-16 during their middle school years. After completing their basic education successfully to the end of ninth grade, they get their

diplomas. During the ninth grade, pupils are encouraged to, and most of the do, apply to one or more secondary education school in order to continue studying furthermore.

What one should note from basic education in Finland is that basic education is free for all children, there is no tuition fees in primary nor in middle schools and these schools are publicly funded. This means that most of the schools in Finland are, in a sense, public school, but this does not hold much of a value to parents, since there are not many private school in Finland.

Basic Education Act defines the extent and content of tuition-free compulsory education and teaching, as defined by the constitution. All basic education is legislated in Basic Education Act regardless of where the basic education is given. Application of Basic Education Act does not however concern only basic education. (Lahtinen & Lankinen, 2015, p. 46).

It is noteworthy that while the Finnish law says that child must complete 9-year basic education, a child does not attend school; she or he can be homeschooled if his or her parents decide. However, even when homeschooled a child must go to the school and take exams every occasionally to make sure that she or he is at same level of knowledge than other pupils. Authorities want to make sure this way that all children gain same level of knowledge at the end of each school year.

Other, perhaps interesting thing the law says about the school-aged children is that all children whose age somewhere from 7 to 16 years and who permanently live in Finland, even if they are not Finnish citizens, must attend to some form of basic education. (Lahtinen & Lankinen, 2015, p. 46). This is to guarantee that all children that live in Finland are in equal position when it comes to have opportunities to advance in their life and study to become whatever they want to be, regardless of their social or ethnic background. It is perhaps justified to call it equality in the broadest sense possible.

Other things that are in written down to law about education is that the state has to guarantee every citizen equal opportunity to receive education after basic education and chance to develop him/herself without being stopped by the lack of money. (Lahtinen & Lankinen, 2015. p. 33.) This is to guarantee every citizen a chance to study and develop him/herself throughout one's lifespan. This studying throughout the lifespan called lifelong learning is one of the keywords in Finnish educational legislation. (Lahtinen & Lankinen, 2015, p. 11).

It is also notable that while the Finnish law says that child must complete 9-year basic education, a child does not attend school she or he can be homeschooled if his or her parents decide. However, even when homeschooled a child must go to the school and take exams every occasionally to make sure that she or he is at same level of knowledge than other pupils. Authorities want to make sure this way that all children gain same level of knowledge at the end of each school year.

Secondary education in Finland is divided into two distinct pathways for youngsters, general upper secondary education and vocational education. Both education paths tend to last three years to complete and they both offer eligibility to apply to higher education. In 2009, from those who finished basic education 41% continued studying in vocational education after comprehensive school. Same year 50% of those who finished comprehensive school chose general upper secondary education, while 2% continued their studies in voluntary additional basic education and 7% did not continued their studies right after finishing basic education. (Finnish National Board of Education 2012, p. 10.) Mostly the youngsters who do not continue their studies right after comprehensive education are those who were not accepted to any educational institution. When international comparisons are made, the proportion of students in vocational education compared to the proportion of students' in general upper secondary school is high. Two out of three upper secondary students are in vocational education. For example, the proportion of secondary students in vocational training programs are less than quarter in Japan and Mexico. (Finnish National Board of Education 2012, p. 11.)

1.2. School Leadership in Finnish Schools

School leaders are called principals or headmasters. Different countries have different selection criteria for their school leaders. In some countries, selection of school leaders are based on party or government loyalty or as in the USA, principals can have business background. In Finland, however, school leaders are pedagogical leaders. This refers to the fact that principals have teachers training, meaning they are teachers and in most cases have worked as teachers before they became headmasters. Headmasters also have special training or education on school leadership that enhance their capacity to act as leaders for their teachers.

Pedagogical leadership is usually referred as something of combining pedagogy of the teacher or other education profession to leadership. In practice, this is manifested through headmaster's understanding of the teachers work and its demands and ability to support

the teachers in their daily work. Pedagogical leadership is possible to view through the lenses of leading the teaching and learning that takes place inside the school every day.

In Finland, school leaders are being chosen on the basis for their pedagogical qualifications and their work history. This does not mean that the person with the longest work history would automatically be chosen for the job, although extensive experience can be viewed as benefit. The idea, however is to have headmasters who knows and understand the core curriculum and have the skills and capacity to lead and support teachers in their daily work. From this expectation stems the requirement for principals to have experience in teaching and have teaching qualification.

Expectations for school leaders also include for example to plan an annual school budget plan for the entire school year. In upper secondary schools, this refers to the courses that is provided throughout the school year and in which slot in which period. In basic education, this means planning the timetable for different classes and for teachers. In primary school, pupils are mostly in one classroom with one teachers, but in middle school, pupils are moving from one classroom to the next according to the subject they are having. This movement also poses challenges for the teachers and to the principal when they are planning the school year.

Leadership is possible to view as good leadership, as a good leading of people when the leadership is manifested as shared leadership, as in leadership, and consecutively power, is shared and there is common and shared excitement to develop and improve the school and do thing differently and better. (Juuti, 2007, p. 212).

1.3. Economics of Education in Finland

Education is funded from public money, that is, the taxation money in Finland funds education. This means that most of the children and youngsters go to publicly funded schools, to public schools, not private schools. There are only handful of private schools in Finland, so going to so called, public school is very commonplace, more common than going to the private school.

The idea of publicly funded school, a school that has all kinds of children from different social backgrounds being in a same classroom has long roots in Finnish social and education history. It started after the events of 1918 when there was a need to unify to nation. In this attempt to heal the wounds and unify the Finnish people there, was an idea

about education being something to get different people together, children from different homes to the same classroom and hence unifying them as one nation. In this sense, public education and publicly funded schools have rather long tradition and mission in Finnish society. And although the unifying mission of education is not so topical than 1920s and 1930s it still has some very important mission to raise and give same opportunities to everyone in one classroom and in all classrooms across the country.

Finnish National Board of Education (2012, p. 5) states in its report that “provision of the formal education is mostly financed through public funding.” Every education provider in Finland, most of which are municipal, some rare private, get subsidies from the state. These subsidies are the same amount for all. Education that is provided by the local municipal authorities or joint municipal authorities is free of charge for kids and their parents at all level, from preschool to higher education. Free education also means that in Finland private expenditure, whether on amount of money or percentile is very small amount when compared to other countries, for example to United States, United Kingdom, Chile or Korea.

OECDs (2011, p. 232) report includes a figure where all the said countries are on left end of the picture showing those countries using high amounts of private money to education, both primary and secondary education but very much more to tertiary education. In the same picture, Finland is at the right end of the figure showing that very little private money goes to education aforementioned educations.

The total expenditure to education in 2008 was 5, 9% of the total GDP, which is OECD average. This might seem bigger or smaller surprise but truth be told Finland has had years when it has spent more on its GDP to education, for example 1995, which itself is interesting since Finland was in deep recession at that time. Finland was at least in 2008 far behind the country that spend the biggest relative educational expenditure, i.e. Iceland, which has the 7, 9% spend of its GDP to education. (Finnish National Board of Education 2012, p. 6).

In international comparisons, Finland has higher educational expenditure lower secondary and higher education levels, those levels exceeding the OECD average amount of educational expenditure. However, the amount of money spent was 15,400 US dollars per student in higher education, which is less than half what is, spend in the United States at the same level. That means that Finland educates its young people quite less money

than what the Americans are educating their youngsters. (Finnish National Board of Education 2012, p. 7).

Most of the educational expenditure consists of salaries of the teachers. Salaries consist so big part of the educational expenditure because the teachers in lower secondary school are subject teachers, not class teachers. Also the class size in lower secondary school affects, the average class size being around 20 students. That is relatively small and means that on average there are 10 pupils per teacher. It takes the educational expenditure higher than for example in primary schools where all, or most of the subjects are being taught by the same teacher to one and the same class of pupils. There are also the costs for one warm meal per day per student, instruction material and school transportations that are free of charge for the pupils in comprehensive education. Higher educational expenditure reflects educational policy level decision to invest to competence. Investments focus to universities and polytechnics where the educational expenditure per student is clearly above OECD average. (Finnish National Board of Education 2012, p. 7.)

2. Finnish education system and its governance

2.1 Finnish education system

Finnish education system can be divided to four different parts: early childhood education, basic education/comprehensive education, secondary education and tertiary education. Early childhood education in this context refers to the kindergarten system, so early childhood care that takes places at home and is not included to this paper. It should also be noted that basic education that is the corner stone for this inspection is referred to as comprehensive education instead of basic education. However, when comprehensive education is talked in relation to the legislation, then it is talked as basic education legislation or Basic Education Act, depending whether it is legislation or specific law. It should also be noted that in Finland they age when the children go to school in 7 years, in comparison to other countries where children begin school for example at the age of 5 or 6 years. Comprehensive education is mandatory for all children who permanently reside in Finland.

Early childhood education is usually seen viewed to mean kindergarten and the kindergarten system. Kindergarten is early childhood education place where children are taken care and taught while child's parent(s) are at work during the day. Early childhood education in this regard in considered as a way to teach basic things needed in life to children and offer daily care for the child if his/her parents are at work and they need a place for the child during the day with activities that engage the child to play with other child.

However today preschool education is part of the basic education legislation which means that municipalities are obliged to organize preschool to the children of their respective areas in accordance of the Basic Education Act 4 § (Lahtinen & Lankinen, 2015, p. 91). And since the preschool is legislation every child is mandated to participate to the preschool education one year before they go to school. After one year of pre-school children begin school.

First six years of comprehensive school are called primary school. Primary school is defined, and in a sense differentiated from middle school in that, that students have one teacher who teachers most of the classes to them. In primary school there are class teachers who have their own students and who they teach usually for a year or two years. Class teachers do not however teach all subjects, for example woodwork and textile work classes are usually taught teacher who is not the class teacher to the

children. This teaching most but not all subject is called specialize. It means that teachers have one or two subjects which they take to teach to other students as well, not just their own students in their own classroom. In relation to this, primary school has one other dominant feature and that is, with most of the classes the students stay one and the same classroom, their own classroom with their own classroom teacher who teaches them in that specific classroom.

Last three years of comprehensive school are called middle school. In middle school children have one teacher who is responsible for their attendance and who they see at least once a week, although this teacher may not teach them anything. In middle school there are subject teachers who teacher 1-3 subjects of their own and students go around the school in different classrooms and meet different teachers. However, in middle school there is certain consistency because once a subject teacher has been given a class to teach, she or he will teach that class throughout the whole semester. So, even though there are different subjects with different teachers, the teachers inside that subject tend to stay the same during the semester.

After the middle school the comprehensive school is over, and student most choose where they want to go to continue their studies. Not everyone are accepted to the secondary education, but most of the student get accepted to the secondary education. In Finland, unlike many other western countries the general upper secondary school is not only institution of secondary education. Most of the students who finish their comprehensive education choose between general upper secondary school, which is more academic and vocational education, which is three-year education that gives readiness to certain profession, for example mechanic or plumber. These vocational educational professions can be seen as blue-collar jobs.

In general upper secondary schools the focus is in same academic subjects as in comprehensive school, but with no crafts and home and economics. There are also some academic subjects in upper secondary schools that are not in the curriculum in comprehensive education. Most of the student get their high school diploma in three year time, but general upper secondary school can be finished in 2 and ½ years, as well as in 3 and ½ or in 4 year time. This is because practically everyone who attend upper secondary school also participate to matriculation exams at the end of their time in school. These matriculation exams are organizes in every upper secondary school every semester, fall and spring semester. This in turn makes it possible for the student to graduate either at the end spring or fall semester.

Other form of secondary education is vocational education. Almost half of the students that end their comprehensive education choose vocational education. Vocational education lasts three to four years and there are separate lines for each job to which given vocational education prepares to. Vocational education includes some of the basic subjects that everyone might need in their later life, such as Finnish, English, Mathematics and other subjects. Beside these subjects there are a lot of studies that are in the core of the future job the student will do. There are also few periods of in-work training as part of the education. These trainings are designed to give the students practical experience of the work and the work life they are headed in their studies. These trainings are necessarily also to learn work contracts and other practical and legal matters that come with working life.

After the secondary education there opens up possibility to apply to tertiary education. In Finland tertiary education can be either university, university of technics or university of applied sciences. This system makes it possible that vocational educational students can apply to tertiary education if they choose so. Graduates from upper secondary schools can apply to any form of tertiary education they want. Getting in is another matter entirely. Vocational educational students can also apply to tertiary education.

Universities are in most fields of research and teaching academically focused. Of course there are certain practically focused fields such as medical and law school and teacher training programmes, which give qualifications to certain professions in the given professional field. Universities have, of course, programmes of study that are more theoretical and don't give any certain qualification to any particular profession.

Universities of technics offer more technical education, meaning more mathematical-science based studies in different fields. If someone graduates from universities of technics she or he might graduate from engineering programme.

Universities of applied sciences seem to be increasing their number of students. This may partly because young people want to have better chances at finding a job and universities of applied sciences educate people to certain line of work or to certain field of work, for example to hotel and restaurant business or to business administration and human resources.

2.2 Legislation of education

Legislation of education in Finland is quite specific and tells what is expected from the comprehensive education and from the party who organizes the comprehensive education. There are many points in the legislation that govern the comprehensive education and how and who can organize.

The aims of the comprehensive education are defined in legislation stating the following (the translations are write's own from Finnish law texts): "Aims of the teaching: Teaching that is regarded in this law aims to support the growth of the students to humanity and ethically responsible membership of society and give them necessary knowledge and skills they need in life. Also aim of the preschool is as part of the early childhood education improve children's preconditions to learn. Teaching is to further civilization and equality in society and preconditions of the students to participate to education and otherwise develop themselves during their life. Aim of the teaching is also to secure sufficient equity in education in entire country." (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, Perusopetuslaki, p. 1)

Chapter 1, 3§ (p. 1) defines the foundations of organizing the teaching saying: "In teaching there are nationally coherent principles that are to abide to as is in this law governed. Teaching is to be organized in accordance with the age and preconditions of the student's and so that it will further health growth and development of the students. (13.6.2003/477) Teaching is to be in co-operation with homes."

These two articles in Finnish educational legislation are the foundation to the comprehensive education and to the organizing the comprehensive education. Article 2 states the most profound principles of the comprehensive education and what is the overall point and aims of the comprehensive education. Growth and development, but at the same respecting the child and child's preconditions seems to be the key to unravel the underlying principles of comprehensive education. And while it may seem like a paradox to respect the precondition of the child and child's ability to learn while at the same time supporting the growth to the humanity and membership of the society these two are not as opposite as they seem. This is because when regarding the child's abilities and precondition for learning, it is mostly the starting point for the teaching and learning and which might give the ramifications as to what the child can learn in certain amount of time. This in turn makes it possible to adjust to teaching the needs of the child or children who need more time to learn than some of their peers. And even if the

child needs more time to learn, there are support services that are there for the children who have difficulties in learning and thriving in school.

So in a sense, the concept of human and what anyone can achieve is something that says that everyone can achieve certain skills and knowledge in order to be a full member of the modern society and operate in society.

One aim of the comprehensive education is also further equity in society and in education throughout the whole nation. This is noble but the question should be whether there are any conditions for that to happen in today's Finland. Education seems to be more and more inherited matter, which means, children whose parents have higher education background are more likely to pursue higher education and those children with less educated parents are less educated themselves than their aforementioned peers.

Chapter 2 in Basic Education Act, article 4 states that municipalities have duty to organize comprehensive education for those who are of that age that they have duty to take part to comprehensive education. Municipalities have also duty to organize pre-schooling to children one year prior to begin comprehensive education. Municipality can organize these education services by itself or together with other municipalities or acquire them from someone who organizes teaching services. (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö, 2016, Perusopetuslaki, p. 2.)

Articles 7 in the Basic Education Act states that registered settlement or foundation, if they have been granted permission by the council of state, to organize comprehensive education. This requires also that there exists special educational or civilizational need and that foundation and the municipality where the act of education takes place have agreement on the matter. Permission requires that the organizing facet have professional and economical qualification to organize the education in appropriate way. Article 7 1 moment also governs that education is not allowed to be organized in the pursuit of economic profit. Article 8 states that government can as well organize comprehensive education. In this case, the ministry in question decides on the matters of beginning and ending of the comprehensive education in question following the letter of law on applicable parts. (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, Perusopetuslaki, p.2-3.)

Chapter 4 of Basic Education Act governs the different aspects of comprehensive education in its articles. Article 9 dictates that the extent of comprehensive education is nine years and the preschool and additional teaching both last one year. Article 10 says that language of teaching in school and teaching that happens outside of school is either

Finnish or Swedish. Other possible teaching languages can be Saami, Romani or sign language. Article 10 also says that part of the teaching can be executed with other language other than students own language if it does not endanger the students possibilities to follow the teaching. Articles 10 moment 4 states that in separate teaching groups or in school teaching can be given mostly or entirely in some other language than that what was mentioned in moment 1 of the article 10. (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, Perusopetuslaki, p. 3).

Article 11 of Basic Education Act govern the content of the comprehensive education. Article 11 include list of all the subjects that are to be taught during the nine years of comprehensive education. Moment 2 of the article 11 states that if the curriculum so dictates then the student can receive teaching also in other subject than those that are mentioned in moment 1. (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, Perusopetuslaki, p. 3).

Article 12 governs the teaching of the native language of the student. Article 12 moment states that either Finnish, Swedish or Saami is taught as native language to the student, in accordance with the teaching language of the student. Moment 2 states that if the guardian of the student so chooses can Romani, sign language or other native language be taught to the student. (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, Perusopetuslaki, p. 3).

Article 13 of the Basic Education Act govern the teaching religion and non-religion subject. It states organizer of the comprehensive education is obliged to arrange teaching of that religion to which most of the pupils belongs to. So pupils that belong to the religion that is majority attend to the teaching of that religion. If the student does not belong to this religion can student after the notification from the guardian of the student attend to the teaching of this religion.. 2 moment of the article states that if there at least 3 students that are part of the Lutheran church or Orthodox church and they do not attend to the aforementioned religion teaching then there is to be organized the teaching of their own religion. 3 moment of the article 13 states that if there are at least three students who do not attend to the religion teaching that majority of the students attend to and they are not part of Lutheran or Orthodox churches then there can be arranged the teaching of their own religion if their guardian ask for it. A student that is not part any religious community can be arranged non-religious studies (this subject usually contains reflecting moral and ethical issues). (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, Perusopetuslaki, p. 3-4).

Article 14 deals with classes and curriculum. Article 14 moment 1 states that council of state decides those general and national goals and sharing of time between different subjects and subject groups and student guidance in comprehensive education. Moment 2 states that ministry of culture and education decides different subjects and theme entity, student guidance and other goals and central contents of comprehensive education and co-operation between home and school, central principals of student care and goals of the student care that are part of the educational function (13.6.2003/477). (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, Perusopetuslaki, p. 4).

Article 15 governs curriculum. Moment 1 forces the organizer of the teaching to accept the curriculum designed for the purposes of the Basic Education Act. Surprising thing is that curriculum is approved separately to purposes of teaching that will be giving in Finnish, Swedish or Saami. 2. Moment of article 15 says that basis of the curriculum should be planned together with social-and health care professionals and officials of the municipalities. Organizer of the education is also required to make decision about the way co-operation between home and school and student care are arranged. (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, Perusopetuslaki, p. 4.)

Article 16 covers support teaching and part-time special need education. Moments 1 and 2 define when can be viewed that the student needs special support and that the student has right to receive support teaching and part-time special education if she or he needs. Article 16a covers and defines when the student is entitled to optimized support. Article 17 in turn deals with special support, which is consisted special education and other support that is defined by this law. Article 17a is about the plan considering personal study plan which is related to the executing the decision to give special support to the student. Article 18 defines in what cases it is possible or necessary to organize the studying of the student in other ways that what previous articles govern. Article 19 states that comprehensive education is public and it is only well-founded reason that can restrict the right to enter to follow teaching. Article 20 deals with experimenting in school stating that in order to develop teaching or education it is possible to deviate from the curriculum and the deviation of the subjects in school. Permission to experiment grants Ministry of Education and Culture. The permission to experiment can be granted to three years maximum and it can be continued with two years maximum. In addition, it is required to use the experiment programme approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture by the facet to wants to execute the experiment. (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, Perusopetuslaki, p. 4-5.)

Chapter 5 of legislation of comprehensive education deals with evaluation. Article 21 (30.12.2013/1296) actually says defines the purpose of evaluation as ‘‘Evaluation of education. The purpose of the evaluation of education is to secure the execution of the purpose of this law and to support the development the education and enhance the conditions of learning. The organizer of the education is to evaluate the education he/she has given and participate to the external evaluation of his/her actions.’’ (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, Perusopetuslaki, p. 4-5.)

These two moments of article dictate there is to evaluation and that evaluation is to be directed to the enhancing the learning of the student. This is the way it is wanted to improve education and learning among the students in any and all forms of education institutions that are public and therefore publicly funded.

Article 22 deals with the evaluation of the student and it says the following: ‘‘ Evaluation of the student. By the evaluation of the student it is intended to guide and encourage studying and also the ability of the student to self-assessment. The learning, working and the behaviour of the student is to be evaluated with great variety.’’ (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, Perusopetuslaki, p. 6).

Article 22 is to designed to guide the teachers not only to get a rich understanding of the capabilities of the student but also at what the student is at his or her studies and where the student can continue and how to motivate the student if the student needs more motivation to study. It also helps the student, or at least should help the student to develop skills in self-assessment and evaluating self, meaning that student learns how to measure and assess his or her progress in school and maybe also other areas of life.

Chapter 6, articles 23 and 24 are interesting because they essential deal with the working time of the students during the school. Article 23 says in moments 1 and 2 ‘‘In comprehensive education school year begins on the 1st day of August and ends of the 31st of July. School year has 190 working days. With the permission of the concerned ministry the number of working days can be for special reason be higher. From the number of working days of the school year will be reduced to other than weekday Independence Day, unless it is on Saturday, Epiphany and May Day. About the ending

of the working of the school year will be decreed with the setting.” (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, Perusopetuslaki, p. 6).

So there are 190 days of in any given school year, which leaves many days and weeks for vacation time for students and teachers. Although for teachers the vacations time in the summer is less than the students because they have to return to the school before the student come back from their vacation to plan the school year ahead of them.

Article 24 deals with the amount of work the student should be given by saying: “In comprehensive education the workload of the student can be at most such that the student will have, given the time for school, way to school and homework, sufficient time rest, recreation and hobbies. About the daily and weekly amount of the comprehensive education given to the student will be decreed with the setting.” (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, Perusopetuslaki, p. 6).

This article explains of a lot because it clearly states that the student cannot be given too much homework, which any student should have time for rest and recreational activities and hobbies after he or she has come from school and done the given homework. In many countries even the smallest children that go to school spend hour(s) doing their homework. And that is not healthy for the development of the child or a teenager. There would be good to have time for other activities other than homework, because the activities that one do outside of school are usually that give energy for the everyday life and can have beneficial gains considering physical and mental health of the individual.

Article 25 is also interesting because it is about what in Finland is called “oppivelvollisuus” which can be translated to compulsory education. That means that every child that lives in Finland permanently, has duty to attend to compulsory education. As previously stated, compulsory education lasts nine years in Finland. Article 25 says “Children who live in Finland permanently are mandated to attend to compulsory education. Compulsory education begins the year the child turns seven. Compulsory education ends upon the comprehensive education or after 10 years of beginning of the compulsory education. If the given goals for the comprehensive education cannot apparently be reached in nine years due to the invalidity or the sickness of the child begins the compulsory education one year earlier than set in moment 1 and begins 11 years.” (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, Perusopetuslaki, p. 6).

So the attendance to the comprehensive education is legally mandated because it has been ensured that every child despite their background. The law that made attendance to comprehensive education mandatory was also to set to protect children from the indifferent attitude of their parents towards education and make sure that all children would have access and obligation to go to school at least for given number of years.

Article 26 defines when the student has completed compulsory education. Article 26 goes: "Education mandated person must attend to the comprehensive education that is organized in accordance of this law or otherwise gain the knowledge that compares to the comprehensive education." This means that every child is mandated to get education of fairly same amount as the next child. Everyone are mandated to have completed comprehensive education in some form and have certain level of skills and knowledge that is necessary to survive in modern society and be full member, fully capable citizen of the society.

Second part from the whole legislations that governs comprehensive education is called Decree of Comprehensive Education (Perusopetusasetus 20.11.1998/852) and governs how the teaching and working hours of the students to the evaluation of the student and to the due process of the student and some other settings.

First Article and its first moment says that comprehensive education and teaching of the comprehensive education can be executed by the classroom teacher, different subject teachers, student guidance by the student instructors and as special education given by special education teacher. Second moment clarifies this by saying that unless otherwise said in the curriculum the teaching in grades 1-6 is mainly classroom teaching and in grades 7-9 mainly subject teaching. (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, p. 15)

So if there is any confusion the primary school students mainly have classroom teacher who teachers them all or almost all the subjects that are in their curriculum and the students are in one and the same classroom most of their classes. Grades 7-9 are what is called middle school and by then the students are considered big enough that they can move from one classroom to another and have different teachers for each subject.

Third article of the chapter 1 governs the annual and weekly teaching time that has to be given to the each year group. It says that in the first and second grade there has to be a minimum of 19 hours of teaching per week given to the students. On third grade weekly hours are approximately 22 hours of teaching, on the fourth grade approximately 24 hours per week and the fifth and sixth grade there has to be approximately minimum of

25 hours of teaching per week. In middle school which refers to the 7-9 grades, seventh and eighth graders are required to have approximately 29 hours of teaching per week and on the ninth grade the student have to have 30 hours of school per week. (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, p. 15)

In international comparisons these weekly hours of teaching may seem too small amount of teaching. But there is a reason behind these weekly working hours the children and young people have and that is what the Article 24 in Comprehensive Education Law said about the time that must be reserved for rest and recreational activities in the lives of the students after the school. And of course the overall realisation that the younger the children are the faster they get tired and when they get tired they are not capable of concentrating properly. So that is why, little by the weekly hours spent in school rise. Because when the children grow older so does their capacity to concentrate longer periods of time.

Article 4 of the Comprehensive Education Setting says that when it comes to daily amount of working hours, the maximum hours of teaching, are in preschool and first two grades of comprehensive education 5 hours per day. And in the following years maximum of 7 hours per day.

From international perspective it might seem weird that the hours of teaching and being in school are restricted and governed by the law but it is really mainly to benefit the student so that they have time for other activities other than school and homework. Children and young people are guided to have outside of school because that is where important learning happen. Policy makers who wrote these laws had realizes that kids do learn also outside of school, that learning itself does not restrict itself to school and time spend in school.

The national goals of comprehensive education are written down to the legislation. These goals are not specific but rather overall goals to grow to humanity. Goals that are in the law are growth to humanity and to the membership of society, necessary knowledge and skills and advancement of civilisation, equity and life-long learning. (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, p. 18-19.)

There are qualifications concerning principals in the law. These qualifications are: higher university degree, teacher's qualification of the school form in question and sufficient work experience and degree of educational administration approved by the Finnish National Agency for Education. These are fairly simplistic qualification because

most of the principals are former teachers and teachers have Master's Degree in Education which in itself is the higher university degree. (Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö 2016, p. 59.)

In summary, all the educational legislation is to benefit the student and to advance the well-being and healthy growth of the student. Those parts that concern the school and its teachers and principals set high expectations to the school about what it should accomplish and what teachers are expected to accomplish with their students and how the principals are expected to lead their school. The goals that was defined for the comprehensive education is wide and big for any school form to accomplish. Which leads to the question that concerning the mission of the comprehensive education, that is written to the law, why are politicians decreasing the funding of education when there mostly likely would be a need for more funding instead of less funding? How the comprehensive education is to meet its goals and how are the teachers and principals supposed to do their work properly if they don't have sufficient resources to do their job?

2.2.2 Educational Politics

Politics are interesting field of study, especially concerning the recent years in Finland and Finnish educational politics. Tervasmäki, Okkkolin and Kauppinen (2017, p. 233) write that it seems that the government is cleaning the perspective of equity from the development of education, because at least for there will be no document about development of education and research. This aforementioned document that has been done by KESU, has been the key document in developing education and research for 25 years, yet the present government seems more interested to develop education with leaps instead of long-term developing.

Tervasmäki, Okkkolin and Kauppinen (2017, p. 233) write how in Foundations of Comprehensive Education the values and norms are widely connected to social justice and cultural diversity whereas governmental politics education seems to be subjected to the work life and to the work markets in a sense that education can enhance Finland's ability to compete in global market with educated workforce. This view that seems to be dominant in current government reflects wider and more global discourse which seem to have some unwanted effects inside the common comprehensive education.

Tervasmäki, Okkolin and Kauppinen (2017, p. 233) write that present government and its programme concerning comprehensive education is so narrow that it bypasses most

of the elements and goals, that have been important in comprehensive education in the past. With this narrow focus or view of education government is not doing sufficiently to stop the current process and development of inequity in education which should be a priority when it comes to education, but rather they increase inequity in educational field.

From and others (2014, p. 553) have also noted that the trend seems to be away from the equity and nearest school and rather towards segregation by which they mean that school choices seem to be going toward school shopping, of sorts. What they are saying that currently school choices seem to have more to do with the socio-economical background of the child or with how well the child is doing in school than before.

Tervasmäki, Okkolin and Kauppinen (2017, p. 237-238) argue that with the current direction of educational politics is unbearable because government official are investing to education but only to the education of those who are already doing well in school and life. Instead they should invest in education directed to the children whose socio-economical background is poorer. This should be done because, according the authors, investing to the education of less fortunate children comes back with multiple times and hence produce economic growth which is top priority to the current Finnish government.

According to Tervasmäki (2016, p. 93-94) communicated values and value foundation of the national curriculum has some elements of that hint to the modern liberalism and the discourse of social democratic politics. There are values he found in his study that bring somewhat conflicting traits when talking about national curriculum. These conflicting elements are at first sight self-explanatory but closet look reveal them to be in conflict with the actual and outspoken values that are written to the national curriculum of comprehensive education.

In his analysis Tervamäki (2016, p. 94) noted that when, for example life-long learning and human capital are used in the discussion, there seems to be a movement towards articulating that individual and education of the individual are mere ends for means. And this end for means view is in conflict with the view that is expressed in document, which defines the foundations for the national curriculum in comprehensive education, such as every child reaching his or her full potential and having eco-social civilization.

Tervamäki (2016, p. 94) noted that when there is talk and debate about inclusion there are three paradigms that are not compatible to one another making these three

paradigms competing paradigms in education politics and in national curriculum.

Tervasmäki (2016, p. 94) also noted that while there was some unison in what inclusion is and what it means. However, when it came to integration and segregation there were articulation that challenged the common foundation of values with views that constrict the views about normal and humanity.

So in this regard educational politics is heavily influenced by who politician or what political parties are have a say in national curriculum and its foundations in any given time. This is important because when school is influenced, all the children in school system are influenced, some more than others. And then the parents of the children are influenced by the politics of education.

Tervamäki (2016, p. 96) says that value base of the national curriculum distracts the talk about life-long learning, human capital and inclusion and what lies behind these concepts about integration and segregation. This refers to the discourse of the new liberalism that sees education as means to end, as a way for the individual to get what he or she wants. The discourse that makes any individual mere tool of production contradicts to the view that every child should have chance to reach his or her fullest potential.

Tervasmäki, Okkolin and Kauppinen (2017, p. 237) say that educational politics and especially development of education seems like short-tempered and narrow minded because of the lack of plan for the development of education. And because the government is ignoring important points of equity and social justice, government's educational politics is greatly affected by new liberal thoughts that are in conflict with equity of opportunities what is mentioned in agenda of governmental programme.

Hellman, Monni and Alanko (2017, p. 11) see the current government as a government that is interested in strategic visionary programmes. By this they say that the current government introduce new conditions on the things that end to the political agency. In the talk of current government there are a lot of words that have to do with strategy, such as efficacy, flexibility, competition, competitiveness, productivity.

With these words that mostly come from corporate world the government now wants to take public sector in Finland to the direction of more accountability, where the public sector would preferably make profit instead of demanding the parliamentary money.

Hellman, Monni and Alanko (2017, p. 11) note that there has been political-structural changes that are even currently going on have obstructed flexible top-down governance because of the lengthy and too detailed. This in turn does not respect the public institutions and their autonomy nor does it allow changes to the programme, while the government that made the programme or platform is in the office. This makes the work more difficult for those public institutions that would benefit or would need to make adjustment to the programme or platform.

Hellman, Monni and Alanko (2017, p. 12) articulate that it would be better, more beneficial to government and the public institutions of executive power to have overall vision for the future instead of locked in of detailed programmes. This would leave room for making adjustments if needed during the time period the government is in office.

Rinne, Järvinen, Tikkanen and Aro (2012, p. 461) see new liberalistic educational politics to affect to the work and working environment of the principal's.

Kauppila (2002, p. 11) sees that turn in educational politics towards competitiveness started at the beginning of 1980s when individuality and freedom rose to challenge equity which had been the leading idea in development of society. Kauppila (2002, p. 11-12) sees the new millennium to underlie choices and alternatives that liberate people from to compete in who is better.

Kauppila (2002, p. 12-13) view shift in educational politics from governmental guidance to more work force discourse as something that forces the individual to learn faster than before. This also has created to lifelong learning politics that helps companies and individuals to cope in ever fasting pace of the world and economics where threats and possibilities are tightly interwoven to one another.

Ahonen (2003, p. 10) notes quite right that when it comes to the meaning and importance of education, good education can be a resource, both to society and to the individual. It is because of this resource aspect that education should not be overlooked and when talking and executing the share of education, the share of educational resources should be equal to everyone and everywhere in society. Ahonen (2003, p.10) notes that from historical point of view education has its own history of how it has been distributed among different groups of people.

On conceptual level educational equity has its roots and background in justice and equity in more broad sense. As already mentioned the content of educational equity has shifted and changed over time. The same change and shift applies to the content of justice. The preconditions for equity in society also change over time and are defined over and over again differently by different groups in society. (Ahonen 2003, p. 13.)

Ahonen (2003, p. 201-202) asks whether the whole concept of equity in education is falling apart since the preconditions of the equity in education have changed so much? Is there any equity in educational field anymore or is equity gone from education? Or is it just more obvious that the inequities between children are rising and no one cares enough to take a stance and do something to stop the growth of inequities in education?

Simola (2015, p. 139) says that discourse about market forces in education has been reluctantly accepted and this market discourse would seem to define education in a way that produces new kind of social exclusion. He sees that education that talks in terms of the market is goes beyond national borders, it could be said that it is global turn in educational politics. However, Simola (2015) is concerned that while certain national characteristics of education have remained it is still so far and this too might change over time.

When it comes to educational politics and school changed Simola sees that it is more important to observe how the schools change the innovations than it is to see how the schools are changed by the innovation. This first mention is far more likely to happen than the second one because those who work at the grass root level have the final say, always. That is because they put possible new practices into action and adjust those changes and innovations to fit more properly to the school they work in and to fit to the purposes of their own and their students more properly. Which why those who put a change or order the change can never really see how the change takes place and in what form in school and in classroom. Because it changes along the way and is modified by teachers and principals for better to suit their own needs and to the needs of their students.

Simola (2015, p. 387-388) sees the educational politics as sea aquarium that has partly permeable shades. The forms and grounds, ocean current and winds of the seafloor are comparison to the national contexts in educational politics, they produce differences to education and educational systems. In the space (global or national or local or regional) and chronological time and different levels of action (macro, micro, meso) the actors of

the field and institutions are in various relation to one another and to the educational politics.

2.2.3 National Curriculum

When we talk about national curriculum in Finland we talk about actually what can translated to “The Foundations of Curriculum in Comprehensive Education.” These kinds of books or documents, as someone might call these things are not thin. Latest of these documents came out to open inspection in 2014 and it is 473. In the final page of the document it says that “Foundations of curriculum in comprehensive education is directive given by Finnish National Agency for Education by which local curriculums are drawn up. The task of the foundations of the curriculum is the give common groundwork to the local curricula and hence further coequal fulfilment of the teaching and students right across the country. Foundations support and guide the organization and execution of the teaching.” (Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet, 2014, p. 473).

So despite the national curriculum being quite directive, it still leaves some spaces for cities, towns and municipalities to draw their own, local curriculum which is based on that of national one. Why there is national curriculum and why it takes 473 A4 pages to explain what the teachers are supposed to do in their classrooms. Because despite over 400 hundred pages of how to teach, there are still regional differences between different parts of Finland that might affect to the teaching and how the school work is organized. The national curriculum tells the teachers what they are expected to teach and what are the necessary skill and knowledge the school should taught to its student. One of the mains functions of the national curricula is to ensure that across country children and youngsters receive education that is the same as their peers in other parts of the country. One can consider national curricula as a way to ensure that all children in all parts of the country learn the same things and get the same knowledge and skills than their peers in other parts of the country.

“Foundations of the curriculum of comprehensive education include alignments regarding the starting points of the teaching as well as goals of the teaching and central points. Foundations also handle developing the culture of operation and co-operation, execution of upbringing, teaching and guiding, the support of learning and going to school, student care and the evaluation of learning. For the support of the organizer of the education foundations include references to the legislation of education and instructions to develop local curriculum.” (Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2014, 2014 p. 473.)

This citation explains, at least partly, why the foundation of national curriculum is over 400 pages long. There are more to the national curriculum than just what subjects a teacher should teach in each grade and how to teach. The foundations for national curriculum tell the teacher what he or she should take into account when teaching and what are the goals of the teaching altogether. These instructions also tell what are central, the main points that the students are expected to know and master once they have completed given school year.

But it is not just about teaching different subject, students are expected to have know-how of working together with different people. National curriculum also tells what kind of culture there should be in schools and what kind of culture of operation there should be in any and all schools. There are also instruction about student care which is a central aspect of keeping school. The main goal of the student care in to ensure that students of the school are well and there are no harmful aspects that could endanger their school work. Knowing the legislation of education can be of help when designing the support action and support system in school and action of which would be best in helping student to achieve their goals of learning and to thrive in school.

So national curriculum is not just list of subject nor a book for the teacher how to do their job. It is a guide how to keep school and how to evaluate as objectively as possible and what values should be part of the everyday life of the school. It tells what should be important for the children to learn. And learning goes deeper than the traditional academia and academic subject. It is learning to respect others and knowing that despite someone being different, person still earns other people's respect. Learning includes necessary co-operating skills, skills and know-how about how to work together with other people.

National curriculum that was published in 2014 was brought to bear in August 2016 in primary school and it will be brought to bear step by step in middle schools during the years 2017-2020. This means that some students who are currently in middle school will complete their comprehensive education following the old curricula and others following them will complete their comprehensive education following the new curricula.

2.3 What is changing in education and how?

Tervasmäki, Okkolin and Kauppinen (2017, p. 236) pose a question that, when it is talked about school and that school must open to the world and to the society, that school has to prove its authority of knowledge, on whose terms this opening to society happens and how this happens?

It does seem quite a bit that the school opens up to the society but it might just be that terms of this co-operation between school and the work life come from officials so it is top-down sort of thing instead of that schools would have more independence of choosing their own paths on this matter. It would also be beneficial to think just how much does the school have to have co-operation and projects with companies and such? Of course if we think of the students they might get inspiration and realization of what they want to do when they are adults. Older student, teenagers might also get an idea where they could apply for summer job and that way gain important work experience and hence get on track how things work in so called real life and work life especially.

More interesting question is that how teachers and principals combine school work that is mostly more or less academic to the skills and knowledge that is needed in work life now and especially in the future? Of course schools have computers and some schools might even have some sort of clubs that teaches children to code which is probably very helpful skill when considering the future and the technology that might come to be during the next generation.

Mathematics and science can probably be of help in the future, because the future is somewhat uncertain and science can help make sense of the things that are happening around the world, especially when there are all sorts of natural disasters that require understanding of the science, physics and geography for anyone to understand how for example hurricanes develop.

Does school open up to society and to the world? Has it already done so and if it has, should it open up even more? Should school open up to the surrounding society and if it should, to what extent? Should school be more connected to the companies and other possible places of employment around it? Should it be more connected to the third sector, in order to make its students more conscious about the surrounding society and how the society in whole works?

3. PRINCIPALS AND THEIR POSITION IN EDUCATION SYSTEM

3.1 Why principals matter?

Rinne, Järvinen, Tikkanen and Aro (2012, p. 461-462) see new liberalistic educational politics to affect to the work and working environment of the principal's. They also view principals as actors who see the changes of educational politics and the effects of that politics closely. They are also there to see everyday life of the schools. In addition, since principal's role has changed and their power to act has increased so has the importance of listening their opinions. Not only because they can tell how some educational politic can affect to the school but also because their opinions and values are building the school environment where children and young people build their future.

Principals have many responsibilities and during the recent years, the workload and job description of principals has widened making the work of the principal less appealing than before. Now there are also great number of principals who are going to retire in upcoming years that creates need to recruit new principals. In 2010, there were 1307 principals in comprehensive education, out of which 98, 6% were official qualified for their job. Moreover, over half, 56, 2% of comprehensive education principals were over 50 years old. Therefore, many principals will retire over the next 10-year period. (Honkanen, 2012, p. 7-8.)

Vuohijoki (2007, p. 175) notes that there are need for principals that have chosen to work as principals because there are great number of principals in Finland who are more or less just received the office of the principal. In addition, schools, all schools deserve a principal that is willing to work as a principal, lead the school, and take responsibility for the everyday life of the school.

The work of principal is demanding which means it would be good if the principals would be someone who is willing to do the hard work. There is legislation that affects to the work of the principal as well as guidance from the governmental level, in Finland that means the baseline for the curriculum, which determines what subject's school must teach and what values the school is to promote in its actions. In addition, the resources at dispose have an effect to the working of the school and to the work of the principal.

Duties of the principals is to deliver information to all parties and stakeholders of the school. This means informing parents, students, teachers and other possible parties. Principal is required to inform about the activities of the school and the instructions and

other rules concerning the school. Principals are also expected to keep in touch with other school and school officials and other relevant officials, local and national ones. (Mustonen, 2003, p. 101.)

Principals are required to be in loop about everything that happens in their school and also supervise that work inside the house gets done without major hiccups. Principals are expected to create positive climate in his or her school and support the development of each teacher while also to encourage teachers to raise the quality of the teaching. (Honkanen, 2012, p. 15.)

Because of the duty of teaching and required qualification of teacher, the hierarchy is low in Finnish schools. This has led principals not to think themselves as bosses, as in many other countries. This has also affected the teachers not to see principal as boss per se, but rather as coworker. Sometimes it might actually be challenging to differentiate teachers from principals. (Hartgreavers and others, 2008, p. 83.)

Honkanen (2012, p. 19- 26) goes through answers of the principals to the survey called TALIS, conducted by the OECD. The results seemed little bit different than the results in other OECD countries on average which gives some insight what principals deem important in their work. Two claims that dealt with principals and teachers, one with situation when teachers had trouble in their classroom and other with informing teacher on possibilities to update their professional expertise. When teacher has problems in classroom and they talk about it to the principal, the principals in Finland seem either quite often or very often solve the problem together with the teachers. This can be due to the background of the principals as teachers that makes them wanting to help their teachers. Other question dealt with chances to update their knowledge which something Finnish principals seem to do quite often. (Honkanen, 2012, p. 23.)

Honkanen (2012, p. 26) also notes that principals do not lead on the basis of results, which is evident in that principals do not usually inspect the guiding in classrooms nor do they make improvement suggestions to the teachers concerning practices of classrooms. It is also quite rare that exam results would have an effect to the planning of the curriculum.

Nordenbo and others (2010, p. 108) study suggests that teachers appreciate principals who are available to them and who supports them on their endeavors' of strengthen their professional skills and knowledge. Their study suggest that principals should co-

operate with parents and teachers when doing decisions that affect the school and support a lot and restrict only very little.

Hämäläinen, Taipale, Salonen, Nieminen and Ahonen (2002, p. 120-122) view principal as professional whose main tasks are not just about education. There are altogether five areas that principals need to have professional knowledge and understanding to be an excellent principal. Qualified principals have expert knowledge about education and upbringing, administration and economics and leading people. Excellent principals are experts not only those three aforementioned areas but they are also developers of culture and they are also symbolic figures for the school they are working in.

Ahonen (2008, p. 73-74) notes that one way for principals to build their leadership is in interaction with other members of the (working) community in situations when other expect them to act because they have the authority and means to act, especially in situations when teachers do not have enough authority to control the situation.

Ahonen (2008, p. 79-83) also writes about how actors of the community in schools and educational institutions tend to use social space (by which she refers to the approach that allows to understand positions and dispositions of actors in educational institutions environment), as means to build proper leadership for themselves. In this process of building leadership teachers and other staff member are engaged and principal is one among other actors who use the social space for leadership and building it.

Ahonen (2008, p. 104-132) categorized different roles in which principals act as leaders in school community. First role as a principal that Ahonen differentiated was principal as definer and controller of work. By this she means that principals uses power over others when principals for example makes lists of work shifts and who is on vacation and when. (Ahonen, 2008, p. 104-112.)

Second role of the principals that Ahonen (2008, p. 113- 119) identified was bureaucrat in the office making administrative decision and using power when doing so. Third role of the principal was builder of the communities by which Ahonen (2008, p. 119-126) meant that principals build the culture of their school and values that are held in high regard in their school by actively working towards building a culture that is healthy and has healthy values in high regard.

This actually resembles quite a lot as what Hämäläinen, Taipale, Salonen, Nieminen and Ahonen (2002, p. 120-122) made when they talked about how excellent principals build culture and works in the benefit of the culture of the school she or he works in.

Fourth role that principals that Ahonen (2008, p. 127-130) presented is fighter, protector and the protector. In this capacity the principal might fight for the school, the staff or one particular member of the staff for or for the certain student or other staff members. In this capacity the principal is seen as someone how should defend his or her school and make sacrifices for the school so that the working in school may continue without any disturbance from the outside.

Fifth role of the principal according to Ahonen (2008, p. 130-132) is listener and care keeper of the small things. This role is the most informal role out these five roles, that serve as way to have informal talks and giving of advices but at the same time it is a role where other members of the school community expects the principal to lead people and they might even communicate that they see the principal as a leader.

Mäkelä's (2007) doctoral dissertation supports the view that principals have many duties and that many of those duties or areas that principals are expected to be an expert are not pedagogical in nature. Mäkelä (2007, p. 184) sums up the areas of work of the principal, with slightly different words than authors mentioned above. He names these areas as: 1) Administration and decision-making 2) Leading the organizing the teaching arrangements 3) Personnel and leading 4) Education of personnel and professionalism 5) Leading co-operation and interaction.

Raasumaa (2010, p. 258) found in his research that most of his participants saw principals as actors who need to have education, experience and professionalism of leadership. By this he means that there are expectations that knowledge and insight as to how to lead school and knowledge about the past of school as well as the future of the school. There are also prerequisites that principal attends to the school and its activities and action with great variety.

As to characteristics that define the work of the principal Raasumaa (2010, p. 259) mentions honesty and authenticity as well as self-confidence and trust to other members of the staff and very well positive when it comes to education. There are also expectations and requirements to principal being acting fair, understandingly and equally meaning that the word of the principal can be trusted. There is also demand for courage and daring because principals can get into the situations that require quick

decision-making and dare to make decision with less than perfect information. Knowing and being interested people, own employees is crucial to the success of principal as well as mental strength. (Raasumaa, 2010, p. 259).

Principal has also responsibility and position in school as the highest authority for the students and setter of boundaries. Principal is also viewed as in-school justice department for the student and someone who offers a chance to the student to practice necessary skills of interaction with peers and adults. Principal has also responsibilities towards working community of the school to support the work and well-being of the community that works in school. Principal is also expected to show direction and strengthen the common core values of the school and carry the overall responsibility given to him or her. (Raasumaa, 2010, p. 259- 260).

Raasumaa (2010, p. 261) writes about how leading skilfulness develops over time with learning and human growth and is thus impossible to write about unless without tackling the question of leading learning first. Raasuma (2010, p. 261) says that: “With greatly generalized one can claim that leading of skilfulness in comprehensive education is leading the learning of different actors in diverse contexts of leading.” Afore translated citation sums up quite well just what is in the core of the principal’s work. It is combination of many different aspects about how to keep the school together and plan ahead and make the learning possible for everyone, students and staff members alike while leading everyone and their learning.

Raasumaa (2010, p. 271) sees pedagogical leadership as a wide concept that has many definitions. However, he sees work of the comprehensive principal as leader of teachers learning and know-how something that fits in the definition of pedagogical leadership because in this capacity the principal functions as support person for the learning and as a person who designs structures that enable learning to the school and helps teacher in decision-making as well as in learning and human growth.

Finnish law defines the responsibilities of principal loosely. However the tasks and responsibilities of the principal are more strictly defined on municipal level in directorial rules. When the comprehensive education system was formed principals did not have much power over their schools, but when the law was changed and new law came to power in 1985 it gave more power to the principals to decide over their school and how to run things in their school. (Karikoski, 2009, p. 55).

During the 1990s there were legislation became more free which transferred decision-making and responsibilities to the municipalities and to schools. These changes affected to the work of the principals so that they had to start to co-operate more with educational officials in the municipality. Changes in curriculum and taking lesson frame system into use changes the job description of the principals as well as teachers and demanded more co-operation between schools. These changes created situation where principals build network of schools that co-operated with one another. (Mäkelä, 2007, 192).

There is a change from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s as growth in numbers of parents contacting to school and in number of children who were transferred to special education. The change in society affects to the behaviour of parents and children and hence creates need for networked co-operation between different schools. Mäkelä (2007, p. 192-193) noted in his research that principals conducted networking via keeping in touch with officials of the municipality, family homes, to the health services of children and families, hospitals, other schools, congregation and other stakeholders.

Taipale (2000, p. 26) writes how most of the principals that are recruited to the comprehensive school have a long history being a teachers. Related to this, the statement given by the teachers of the school has long had heavy influence to the choosing the new principal to any given school. That is because the teachers have viewed to have insight into what kind of principal the school needs and who would fit in to the existing culture of the school best. This also gives some power to teachers to say to the people who make the decision what they think about the candidates and why or why not someone should or should not be appointed to principal.

Lehkonen (2009, p. 84) writes that successful leading is, in fact, shared leadership, shared enthusiasm. Leader should see the potential everyone has and help them to develop who they can be. It is this part of the principal's job that is one of the most challenging and demanding out of all the other parts of the job.

Hargreaves (2004, p. 22) paints a more philosophical picture about the job and the influence of the principal to school. He sees that what principals don't realize is that their own work is influenced by their predecessors who laid the groundwork for their leadership and thus have impact to the way staff of the school will see them. And that their legacy is influence by their successor because their successors work will determine the legacy they leave behind when they left the school. So the people who principals

might have never met actually do influence to their work and to the legacy, for better or for worse.

Hargraves (2004, p. 22) also writes that it is important to measure the contribution of the principal over many years and over many principalships instead of just current or the former principal. This will tell what capacities they have created among the people of the school, is it sensible to build on this principals achievements? These question are central when determined the succession of leadership over long period of time.

When the school organisation is in turning point the role of the principal comes to be very demanding and challenging. Principal in current times should be able to work and act in insecure situations when the future is uncertain and blurry. Despite these challenges principal should be able to keep the direction of action and take into account different factors from inside and outside of the school. (Lehkonen, 2009, p. 84-85).

Finland has been divided into local authorities that areas that are either called municipality, town or city. The autonomy of the residents is safeguarded in the constitution. The Basic Education Act (628/1998) mandates municipalities to organize the basic education for the children who are compulsory school aged and who live in the area of municipality, and in Finland, permanently. This makes the municipalities very important environments for the principals, because most if not all operating the principals do, happens inside the municipality where the principal works in. Decisions made municipality level are considered very important regarding their workload by the principals. This can also explained by the fact that the municipalities are the main providers of the education, so the principals work, and answer to, to the municipality officials. So in this regard, municipalities have certain importance when talking about the work of the principals. In addition, of course one cannot forget that municipality officials, or in most cases municipality's education committee chooses the new principal to the school in the municipality in question. (Alava, Halttunen & Risku, 2012, p. 18.)

Locality is reflected to the principals and their work in way that is more concrete. Local authorities tend to have too small number of support staff for directors of culture and education, and principals. This in turn means that directors of culture and education delegate some of their work to the principals, who in turn, due to the lack of time, delegate some of their duties to teachers. (Alava, Halttunen & Risku, 2012, p. 19.)

This unreasonable amount of work and related duties seems to take time away from the core tasks of school and education and supporting the teachers, who seem to expect more pedagogical leadership from the principal. This is to say that municipalities make it quite difficult for the principals to concentrate to their core work, which lies in pedagogical leadership instead of administrative duties. There does not seem being enough boundaries regarding the formal status of the principal. (Alava, Halttunen & Risku, 2012, p. 20.)

3.2 Educational leadership

Educational leadership is, at least in part, pedagogical leadership in schools, because the principals are also teachers, they are required to be qualified teachers. Principals have a work history of being a teacher and nowadays studies in educational leadership before they can become a principal. In this regard, it is possible to say that principals in Finnish schools understand their teachers and are therefore able to be leaders for them. This pedagogical leadership is one of the trumps of the Finnish schools and education system. (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 172-173.) These demands are also, what differentiates the Finnish schools to some other school in the world. Finnish principals are professionals in educational field, whereas in some other countries principals might not have any training, education or experience in educational field.

Pedagogical leadership comes from the idea that no one leader is enough to successfully manage and lead school and its daily work. It was rooted to the community of the principals when principals were assigned even more and more demanding tasks and duties including finances, administration, human resources and variety of pedagogical development and implementation tasks. And all while it became clear (in 1990s) that principals needed help, that they could not do and decide all by themselves, became the principles of distributed leadership to put into practice. This was also a challenge to the principals in the 1990s since there had long been a single leader approach to the leading and leadership. (Alava, Halttunen & Risku, 2012, p. 24.

Rinne, Järvinen, Tikkanen and Aro (2012, p. 461-462) see new liberalistic educational politics to affect to the work and working environment of the principal's. They also view principals as actors who see the changes of educational politics and the effects of that politics closely. They are also there to see everyday life of the schools.

Vuohijoki (2007, p. 173) on the other hand views leadership as something that is important in order to create circumstances where everyone can thrive and so make sure that the common goals will be met. One cannot emphasize the importance of commitment

in change or desire to implement vision/strategy of change in school. If the core group is committed to the change then there is chance the change takes place and roots to the organization. But if the core group of the organization is not committed to the change, then the attempts to make change will fail, the implementation of change will not happen and the organization where the change process was to be implemented stays to same as it was.

In terms of leadership, there are certain characteristics that are associated to leadership in academic literature. These characteristic, traits or behavioral aspects vary from author to author. Some of these writings are about the leader's behavior, some of are about their mindsets and thinking and some of the writings deal leadership from organization or some other aspect. Wayne K. Hoy (2015, p. 1) for example deals leadership from the point of view thinking, deciding and leading, which all three he sees as “critical features of leading”. Hoy (2015, p. 11.) also says that leading, to be a leader requires certain skills, which include taking the initiative, interpersonal skills, competence, creativity. Hoy’s (2015, p. 11) list also include organization (where the leading can happen) and hard work.

Academic literature deals with leadership and with educational leadership in number of books. Yet, at least to some degree there can be detected some agreement that leadership does matter, mostly because it affects how any given organization performs in its tasks and goal attainment. (Ogawa and Bossert, 2000, p. 38-39.) This means that leadership is important part of any given organization. Good leadership can make a huge difference inside an organization. A good leader is someone who cares about the people that work in organization but also makes sure that goals being met and the tasks are done properly.

There are two important purposes of leadership. The first is to make sure that the organization reaches its goals and second is maintain and secure the preconditions of the activity. When talking about school this means that school reaches its goal, for example to provide quality education to children. Second part can be assuring that everyone has enough peace to study and no one disturbs or break the school rules. (Ojala, 2007, p. 131).

4. RESEARCH PROBLEM/RESEARCH TASKS

The research task in this research is to find out the perspectives of the principals to the budget cuts aimed to the basic education. Research task is hereby find out the opinions of the principals, what they think about budget cuts of basic education and how they see these to affect to their school and schools overall in matters of learning and teaching.

Research task in this research is to give voice to the principals in their possible concern when it comes to the diminishing funds aimed to education, especially to basic education, which is the context of this research.

The research questions in this research are the following:

1. To what extend the principals are concerned about educational budget cuts, when it comes to concern their own school.
2. What aspects do principals view as most concerning with these budget cuts?
3. In what way do the principals see the future of basic education system as a whole?

The first question was formed in an interest to what Pasi Sahlberg (2015, p.) wrote about how certain, economically not so good situations, can create better than average solutions to very critical and topical problems. Two other questions are more inclined to be more descriptive and deal on the question: In what way do principals see ongoing decreasing funding and following less money to spend to their school and how they view the decreasing resources and the effects of less resources but the same amount of work? Third question was interested about how the principals, when facing down the difficult and challenging times in their work and in the whole basic education sector, how in that situation do they see the future of Finnish basic education?

The research question aimed go from something of a general to more specific and to the future concerns. This was done to cover more than one aspect of the topic and angle of the school budget cuts and from what perspectives one can view the topic.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

5.1 The Research Topic and the Context of the Study

The approach of this research is qualitative. This qualitative approach is apparent not only in the number of interviews conducted but this study is also somewhat bound to the time and place, meaning it has roots where and when it was conducted. (Hakala, 2015, p. 19). This qualitative quality also shows in that there are not so many interviews that embody the data for this research but the analysis conducted from these interviews has its own significance.

This research is interest about the opinions and views of the principals of the basic education. This focus to the basic education was chosen because of the meaning the basic education has had since it started as it is today, in the 1970s. The current basic education was established because equal education was seen something of great importance and something that gave everyone equal chances to choose the educational path she or he wanted and could accomplish. The modern 9-year basic education that is common to all children who live in Finland has been the foundation for the rising numbers highly educated people in Finland.

This study is not concerned about the number as such, although the topic is about the budget cuts to basic education. The number are what they are, and these numbers can mean different things to different schools and hence to different principals. So no, the number are not in the center of this study, although there is some significance in how much is has being cut and how much there will be cut from basic education in near future with these cuts striking hard, and possibly even painfully to the schools all across the country.

The context of the study is the current situation and how the principals see this situation as educational professionals. How they see it to affect to their school and their work? What they can do and cannot do with diminishing money they are given and how they cope with this current situation?

5.2 The Participants

For the participants I recruited, with help from the head of our Master's Degree Program, principals from different schools in Jyväskylä area. Initially the aim was to interview six headmasters, but with one principal being too busy and one not answering to emails there

was settling for four interviews with four principals. The recruitment of the participants happened via email, initially sent by the Program director, because he knows and is in good terms with most of the principals of the area. The principals the original email was sent, answered to it with varying response time. In some cases additional e-mail from the researcher was needed to have, an actual response in order for the interview time and place could be arranged. This was due their busy schedules and amount e-mail they receive every day in their work.

Three of these principals had decades of experience in educational field as teachers and principals. One interviewee was slightly younger and hence did not have as much working experience as teacher or principals as others, but this principal had also opinions about the current situation. Moreover, what future might hold for Finnish education?

The age of the participant varied between what I estimated from thirties to late fifties. Hence making it possible and likely that some of the participants had very professional and wide perspective on how these budget cuts might affect to the children and youngsters in their school and to the functioning of their school and its staff, learning, and teaching that takes place inside the school.

All participant were interviewed in his or her schools, with no interruptions and all of participants answered to all the questions asked from them. Some of the answers were longer than others. Interviews lasted from 17-18 minutes to little over an hour. Different lengths do not mean that there would be less content in a shorter interview than longer interview. Some of the participants of the study talked in a more compact way than others, but not any less business, as those who talked longer in the interview.

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, p. 74) note that participants or informants can be chosen people who possess experience and/or knowledge about the matter of the interview. So choosing principals to talk about education budget cuts is rather informative and logical solution. It is also logical in a sense that principals are between the municipality authorities and teachers.

In Finland, the principals are those who make most of the decisions about the school they lead, so they are in challenging position when education resources are cut. They have less money and other resources that they need to execute their work as educational professional. They have to make most the scarce resources to offer best possible education to the pupils in their school. Principal's position is challenging also because the teachers

are aware of the situation and might be stressed by the lack of resources that might do harm in their profession. It poses new challenges to the principals to support their teachers at their work and day-to-day life of the school.

5.3 Research Methods.

When talking about the research methods, and by this referring to data gathering and analysis methods, one should have some knowledge about the basics of research methodology and the solutions in methodology in one's own field of study. (Hakala, 2015, p. 15.)

In this research, I used partially structured interview, meaning that questions were the same to all the participants, but the participants answered to the questions with their own words, not according to premeditated alternatives. (Eskola & Vastamäki, 2015, p. 29).

When conducting an interview, it does matter where the interview takes place as well to as to acknowledge that the interview situation itself interaction situation, that has begun on the request of the interviewer. (Eskola & Vastamäki, 2015, p. 30, 32.)

Eskola and Vastamäki (2015, p. 35) also note that when thinking and concluding the interview questions, it is important to remember what is the actual research problem. This research problem binds to questions together, it binds the research itself together, gives justification to ask different kinds of questions.

There are some advantages of an interview, in comparison for example to a survey, has. One advantage is flexibility, the interview situation gives the researcher a chance to ask more, clear up questions and misunderstandings and have a dialogue with the informant. Second advantage that an interview as a research method possesses is the flexibility in asking questions, meaning that researchers do not need to ask questions in a same order with every informant, there can be some changes made during the interview to the order the questions are asked from the informant. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 73.)

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, p. 73.) also note that an interview is not a quiz or a competition of who knows the most about the matter at hand. The main aim of the interview is to get as much data from the informant about the research topic as possible. So, in this regard it is argued that it is wise to give the themes or the questions to the informant beforehand so that the informant knows what the interview is about and can answer the questions the best way possible. To tell about the content of the interview has also an ethical basis as to

let know what the participants are agreeing to get involved to and what they can expect from the interview they are taking part. It also gives the opportunity to the participant to think what they know about the topic. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 73.)

5.4 Data Analysis

In my analysis of the data I decided to use content analysis, as described and meant by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, p. 103-106.) They note that content analysis is one way to make sense and organize the data to sensible order, which enables the researcher to draw conclusions from the data and the following data analysis.

Content analysis was chosen as the method for data analysis. More precisely the form of content analysis was databased content analysis. This method was chosen because

The first part of the analysis that was done was listening and transcribing the interviews to the paper (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 109). Transcribing of the interviews was done so that no words, except repeating filling words were occasionally left out and no pauses were marked. Nevertheless, everything else, the information was transcribed to the letter.

Second step, to read the transcribed interviews and make oneself familiar with the content, was done after the entire interview were transcribed. Reading through was simple, but to get familiar with content of the interview in order to start the analysis took little bit more time than simple reading or skimming through. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 109.)

The third step was to read through and look for simplified expressions and mark those expressions. This meant in practice looking for expressions that could be simplify and put under certain category and mark those expression in order to find those more easily. This step required some sort of understanding and idea what was looked from the text at this point.

Phase 4 included listing the expressions that could be labeled or simplified under certain categories. This phase included merely writing down to a list what expression were used by the informants and categorizing them to.

Phase 5 was about finding the similarities and differences from the expressions used by the informants. This part of the analysis was little bit challenging because one has to have some sort of understanding of what one can consider as similar and what is difference

between the different expressions of the spoken word, because there simply are two people who would use exactly same expressions.

The next step, phase six was to combine the simplified expression and to create sub-categories for these expressions. This phase had its own challenges for the researcher. This phase can produce quite a lot work in term of writing and deciding and categorizing and defining the expressions to cover various things the informants have said during their interview.

Phase seven in analysis was to combine sub-categories and form upper-categories from those sub-categories, meaning that smaller classes were combined and labeled under bigger category or umbrella. These combined categories went under the one umbrella and other sub-categories that had something in common formed the next upper-category.

Phase 8 was to combine these higher classes in order to form a concept from the data. This was done so that all the classes were put under the same umbrella, which in this case refers to one concept and so formed this concept and gave many angles to this concept.

5.5 Reliability.

Reliability of study depends from certain factors. One of the biggest is the size of the sampling. The size of this sample and whether it is sufficient depend on the whether the study is qualitative or quantitative. If the research is quantitative, then the bigger sample, the better because there it is more likely to get good data and get more answers to the research question or questions. More data also means more answers and possible more reliable than statistical analysis is. Statistical analysis is commonly used in quantitative studies.

In qualitative research, it is not as straightforward as in quantitative studies. To some extent, it is good to aim to collect bigger sampling rather than small sampling. Bigger does not necessarily mean twenty interviews, it just means that researcher should aim for example to interview 6 people instead just four, or 10 instead of 8 people. This aims to say that in qualitative study the size of the data is not the criteria but rather the quality of the analysis. (Hakala, 2015, p. 20.)

Reliability is estimated, in scientific community, in two ways. First, one is the inner reliability of the study, meaning that how well the data describes the things and phenomena your study is supposed to describe. Second way is the external reliability,

referring to the question whether it is possible deduce something overall from the data? These two measures of reliability are commonly looked from the scientific study. (Hakala, 2015, p. 23-24.)

Reliability can also be look from different point of view, from the researcher's point of view. This measure of reliability is called saturation and it refers to the point in data gathering and/or in analyzing the data, when the researcher notes that the interviews start repeat the same things. That is when there are enough interviews, enough data, when new data does not add anything new to the study, does not bring any new perspectives to what is already known about the research topic. That is one way to determine whether there is reliability in the research. One can argue that the researcher has gathered enough data that one can generalize from the data (Eskola & Vastamäki, 2015, p. 41.)

There are certain key points that a researcher should write explicitly to his or her research report to ensure the reliability of the research. These include the target of the research, commitment of the researcher, how data was gathered and how thoroughly it is written down in research report. Informants and how they were chosen and upon what basis there was to their selection to informants, what was the relationship between the informants and the researcher. The duration of the research, on what basis there is to say that the research and the research report are reliable. And the how the research has been reported and how the data has been analyzed. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 140-141.)

The duration of this research was about a year. The first idea about the topic of this research came to be in the spring 2016. The reviewing of the literature took place in the autumn of 2016 and partly in spring 2017. The interview were conducted in the late fall, in November and December 2016. The research was completed and submitted for evaluation in spring 2016.

One of the aspects that increase the reliability of the qualitative research is the comprehensive analysis and whether the amount of data is sufficient. In qualitative research, there are no ways to really say what amount data is enough or adequate. One way to see whether the data is sufficient is saturation, where the data starts to repeat itself. (Eskola & Suoranta, 1996, p. 215.)

Whether the analysis of data is comprehensive is another question. It can be said that analysis is not comprehensive when the analysis is based to random samples of data. Data can be, for the researcher, a catalysis for working hypothesis rather than prove a

hypothesis, which can be seen as a heuristic mission of the data. This can be seen in a way to speed up the thinking process of the researcher. (Eskola & Suoranta, 2008, p. 215.)

From the reliability point of view, there is third aspect to assess when assessing the reliability of the research. This is the evaluative nature and the repeatable of the study. The former refers to whether the reader can follow the argumentation of the researcher. The repeatable nature refers to the presentation and analysis methods are presented to the reader so clearly that some other researcher can conduct same interpretations from data as the writer. (Eskola & Suoranta, 2008, p. 115-116.)

5.6 Ethical Solutions (*qualitative*)

Ethical solutions are always an important part in any research. Making ethical solution should considered an integral part of any research. Ethical solutions should be done so that participants are always respected as individuals and ensure that the study does not inflict any pain or discomfort to participants (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 140).

In this research the participant were asked permission to record the interview in which they were informant by phone in order to transcribe the interview later to the text form. The recording policy was told in the e-mail between the researcher and the informant and informants were asked on the scene for their consent to record the interview. The recording included only audio, no image. This too was communicated to the participants. Participants were told that recording would take place, if they would be okay with it and it would only include the audio recording. All the participants were okay with this procedure of recording.

Other ethical solution that was considered during the study was to offer to send the research question beforehand to the participant via e-mail, if they wanted to get to seen and read the questions before the actual interview took place. This was to guarantee that there were no uncomfortable questions that might go unanswered by the participant in question. It was also done in order to ensure the trust between the researcher and the participant and inform the participant what the research was about.

Anonymity was also ethical solution that was important; it is recommended that participant's anonymity is guaranteed to the participants by the researcher. This is done in order to prevent any recognition from the study based on age, place of residence, profession or any other factor that is mentioned in the study. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009,

p. 140-141.) This was also the goal in this research and maybe achieved. When talking about anonymity it is also talk about right to privacy and to say one's opinion in the matter without having to worry about possibly losing a job, a career or reputation or social status. Anonymity guarantees that participants can attend to the research without any fear of repercussions to their working or private life.

From the ethics point of view it is important to make it explicitly clear any possible prior connections between the researcher and the participants. In this case there were none. There were no prior connections between any participant and the researcher. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 141.) Interviewing someone a researcher knows already can be prove to be suspicious at least, unless the friend or acquaintance of the researcher is helping the researcher, for example in formulating the interview questions or to help gather the themes of the interview in more precise or more meaningful way. This kind of help, or testing the interview question can be called as piloting the study, which refers to the pre-research nature of these kinds of experiments or modifications.

6 RESULTS.

Results indicate that headmasters are worried about the educational budget cuts and the effects these budget cuts have on children and students of their schools. They are worried that these budget cuts create inequality between the students based on their school achievements and that those who need additional support will lack the support they would need in order to thrive and reach the learning goals the curriculum for the whole basic education sets. They are also worried about their teachers and teacher's workload and wellbeing of the teachers. Also the quality of teaching that might diminish if the resources are not sufficient for the teachers and principals to organize the teaching and learning in schools in sufficient way that would support the learning of students.

The citations of the principals that were interviewed for this study are here in English, even though the interviews were done in Finnish language. The translations are done by the researcher and aim to provide as accurate picture of what was said by the principal as possible, in both content and the language. However, due to the differences in English and Finnish language, the order of words might have been altered in order for the citations be as clear to read in English as possible. It is also noteworthy that some things might have been very difficult or impossible to be translated into English language as such so the possible differences between the original Finnish citations and English citations are because of the language differences.

All translations were made by the researcher in order to preserve the confidentiality of the answers of the participants. The translations aim to be as accurate as possible but if they fail to be as accurate as it would be hoped then it is on researcher and only on researcher.

6.1 Worrying aspect of the budget cuts

Headmasters seemed most worried about equity in education (between the students and their learning possibilities), the quality of teaching and education as well as the reduction of support services in schools. They were also worried about the growing sizes of classes and teaching groups and following with that the growth of workload of teachers, when the staff is reduced and the number of students in one class or group is increased. Wellbeing of the students were also a matter of concern among the principals.

“And that way people discuss about those things already when the plans are being made. For example class sizes which are economical, resources of the teachers that teachers share between subject groups. Or substances and accessories that are something school can decide. In transportation planning we are cooperating with nearby schools so that we could make it as cheaply as possible. Economical matter is significant matter, positive matter. But then again savings are in relation to the situation in society and to the economic situation of administrator so school savings are not unattached thing from society.” Principal B.

“Well then think about for example that in Jyväskylä education and school services have combined together with early childhood education services and comprehensive education is really the only part of education that is funded by the city, from the point of view of the city’s economics, because secondary education is leased to the educational consortium. And savings are happening there too or that there has been story about the savings in vocational education in Keski-suomalainen newspaper. So in this our district school savings are in a way wider than in my area of comprehensive education. And then if we think about here in this area that we have small schools and two big combined schools and also one big primary school so there are certain student care and special support services are under discussion due to the resources and savings, as to how we share to our students of the eastern region for example special support services, so in every level of action it would seem that values, appraisals, currencies, decision have not in many years like in accordance with the tasks and to extent and depth of objectives. So that, this is not just this school years matter but this has been in Finnish school system for the past ten years.” Principal B.

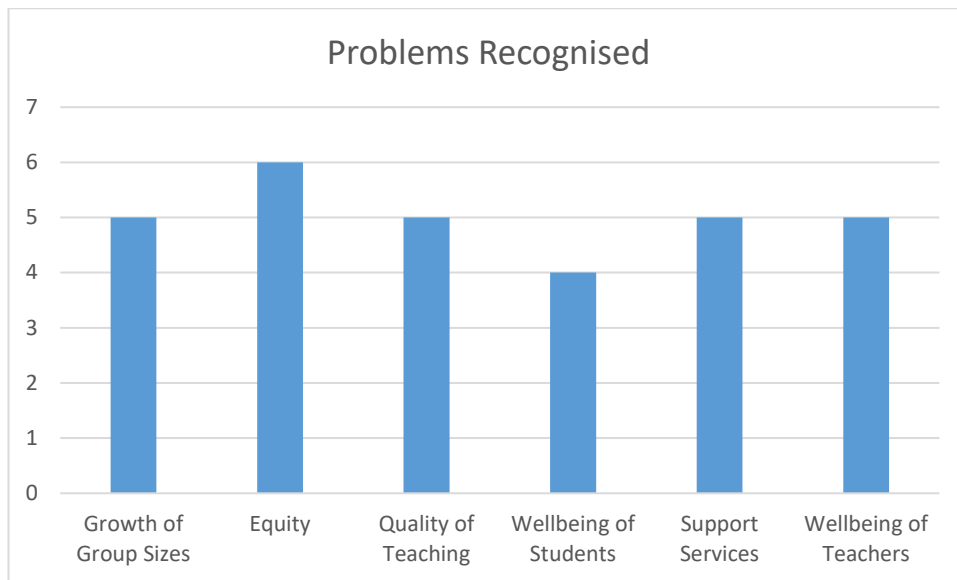


Figure. 1. Summary of Problems Recognized

6.1.1 Equity

The equity point of view was mentioned in six different occasions during the four interviews. This tells that the headmasters of schools value equity in education and are worried about, in different ways, due to the unique situation of the school they are charge in. The equity was mentioned in connection with the inequity of different parts of Finland as well inequity between boys and girls, referring boys might suffer from educational budget cuts more than girls.

Equity in education and equity because of the education has long been one of the cornerstones of Finnish education. Education has been seen to give equal opportunities to everyone despite differing social and economic backgrounds. Today education seems to be a pathway to many people to the profession they want to do later in life.

“In my opinion that equity approach as we talked earlier is possibilities of families to take care the most basic needs of the student.” Principal B.

“From the point of view of equity this attitude, intervene on absences, coming late, bullying is very important. In this is delimited things that affect to atmosphere and well-being. And in these cases these psychological matters are situations where equity is build, even though we cannot affect to stabilize every child family situation, health at home and other things.” Principal B.

Inequity was also mentioned when it came to talk about support services in school and outside of school for students who need special support for successful learning. The reduction of support services was viewed as an action that creates inequity since those who would need the support might not get it and their learning suffers from the lack of support services and hence creates chasm between those students who do well and those who struggle with their basic education and learning the necessary skills and knowledge.

“So if you want to go there where the bar is in the lowest you can do that and that is bad if we think that your education depends where you live, what part of the country you live in so that has an effect on your education after basic education and education in overall, it becomes inequity. So when there is this equity of the students, it reminds me of this boys and girls. I somehow think that if there are more budget cuts and other things, I’ve been thinking that boys will suffer more from it, from that thing when they are still on this stage of middle school there occur this kind of tinder headiness and so on, they become good men but it will always some time” Principal D.

“I still strongly believe to this equity, to equity and to certain transparency in this comprehensive education. And that everyone has a chance that is our trump. Small country and that is when no lost none.” Principal A.

“And then I am somehow that kind of comprehensive school person so that ‘equal opportunities’, that kind of the statement, internationally, so in Finland that is the comprehensive school’s interpretation – so two school systems and forms were put together and then that this is public, publicly funded, public, executed by the society’s money so that brings within itself that kind of saving, old fashion dichotomy about that the economical basis crumbles especially on the part of those people who don’t have sufficient support to education by their basis, family background or family’s employment or even in the current family educational level part, so if there is no sufficient support coming from that direction for studying, learning in school, then comprehensive school and this whole education system has that kind of societal effect that different baselines of the families to support the student past the point the school can support the student are very different.” Principal B.

“Equity, equity in a certain way there if it is about the equity between the students then how does staff experience justice and equity and empowerment and have energy. Despite

all that I think that too is significant matter. And what they, what kind of interpretation they interpret to the children in classroom.’’ Principal B.

6.1.2 Quality of teaching

Second aspect that caused worry was the quality of teaching. By this the headmasters referred to the lack of resources of the teachers have to properly organize the learning situation for their students. This was also mentioned when they spoke about the growing size of classes and groups causing the situation where the teachers have less time for each individual student. This was expressed as concern of the students, the children and teenagers who may not get enough interaction and attention from the adults in school, which may cause different kinds of problems in school and outside of school. It was also mentioned that lack of attention and interaction can cause problems later in child’s life.

‘‘And then the school must or gets or it has to take a stance to that the third article of comprehensive education says that: ‘‘Teaching will be organized in accordance of the precondition of the student, without endangering the health or development.’’ So it is profound and all-round and beautiful and graceful debt to education. And those preconditions leave from home with the child to school and if our student care lacks from the point of view of public health, if we lack in support to build three tier support, if we have situation where these two already mentioned aspect are being saved from and the situation in teacher’s job is considered merely as guiding the cognitive processes and that student care and the three tier support, social services and child protection services help in that corner stone of the education and keeping of the school in a way that the student is first school feasible and school capable. We, more school feasible are everybody abut school capable are not, in some classes several has difficulties in school capability, mental health, emotional skills, social skills, perceiving, meta skills. And if the interpretation about the school is that they just teach in there then that is inadequate interpretation to survive from the task the school and the comprehensive education has. Principal B.

‘‘It will decay (teaching and learning), there is a big risk that if these budget cuts get advantage then it will affect to the quality of teaching. And it will affect also to that, that students will not get anything from the teaching so the learning results will decay and then if we think about that it may affect to the motivation of the teachers to teach then you know how it will turn out.’’ Principal D.

“But the school is, comprehensive school is in future in its time. And children are nevertheless ancient when they are born, alike. They need warm and care and cloths and food and water and things enough to keep them on up to date. But the child’s needs, needs of safety, needs of presence, healthy principal and high fives. So the principal is not in his/her ivory tower, in that way being adult in school is important. That teachers remember to be adults and near the child. And develop together that kind teaching methods that are interactive...” Principal B.

“But of course if as the energy of the teachers then as well the energy of the students and amount of the attention in there that it is good if we accustom them in some places to the idea that they are independent learners, if we think about the future. But then we are talking about kids after all, 15-16 year old is not that independent yet, not that mature either. We can coach them to that kind of life and give examples to that and of course demand those from them, that independence in some form but that we should remember that we as adult should make the child feel that she/he is being met. And that she/he matters, what she/he does, how he/she treats others. So it worries me that how youngsters handle that they have less and less contact to adult.” Principal C.

“And then of course savings affect to that, researchers think that, not only how many students there are in classroom but what methods, how to make participate, how much students participate to the planning of the teaching. How close they feel their own learning project anytime? And what do they think about themselves as learners? So that is central in a way.” Principal B.

6.1.3 Well-being of the teachers

Third aspects that caused worry in principals was the increasing workload of the teachers. This is because when the workload increases teachers get tired and when the teachers are tired they may not have the energy to give attention to every student in their class and they may not notice possible problems and need for support if they are tired. In addition, tiredness can lead to increased number of sick leaves of teachers, which in turn causes problems for the principals because they have to get substitute teacher.

“And then of course that the workload of the teachers grow to senseless. Then teachers get tired and don’t have the energy and then there will be these sick leaves and these

things. So this is the general concern about that, overall work well-being, the energy of the work community.’’ Principal A.

‘... especially if groups sizes grow and if the teachers get tired, principals get tired, people get tired then it brings annoyance and poor quality of work.’’ Principal A.

‘‘The more the teacher has these processes at the same time going on and runs and human multiply the less time the teacher has ping and deeply know any one student. And even with this, the skill the experience, the knowledge of the teacher. I receive a lot of messages to Wilma, where I am part of the chain of recipient in which teacher tells some student’s, observations of the student’s progress of learning process or the dangers of the learning process. (...)And now there are in teacher’s minds questions like about these school savings like is this important? How society will value his/her work? That is this future work life and making it’s new, teacher’s work and in there guiding the learning process of the student modernly and using current methods and appliances, it that important and fashionable. Is that a good thing? Or is the school just container? And is it teaching and guiding the whole person, support for the learning? Or is that the container for certain aged people of the society?’’ Principal B.

‘‘But the concern is in that we can do, savings if they are targeted to the personnel it is like in companies it is not just personnel that is getting off, to which it feels that it is difficult to draw the line that what is the leaving personnel, so the well-being of personnel that stays behind because it automatically increases their workload and if that workload is already quite high then especially there is a conflict that we think, or what we have been talking is that the conflict is that we should take more care from the individuals and we should have more equipment and time to do that and then we would have, in practice the savings force us to cut down the personnel.’’ Principal C.

‘‘ And then there is keeping teachers in tune. That is quite hard thing for principals but you always get to think about it that principal is in between when the teachers are down and administration is up.’’ Principal D.

6.1.4 Diminishing support services

The fourth thing that worried the headmasters of schools was the decrease in resources to organize support services in schools for the students. Support services are three-tiers in

Finnish schools, first one being little additional support and the third being basically special education class, full-time or part-time. Therefore, the decrease in the special support services is worrying because it creates a gap between those who do not need any support and those who need more support in order to reach the learning goals. This decrease in support services also means that those who do not do well in school might do even more weak in school in near future. This in turn reflects as question of equal possibilities to learn. In addition, that those with learning difficulties are being taken care of. Headmasters seem to see support for those who need it as a way to increase and ensure the equality between the students.

Pär Stenbäck (2015) writes in World Economic Forum how the slogan “leave no child behind” was implemented in Finnish school long before it was ever thought or implemented in United States. And while the USA goes on about leaving no child behind Finnish school have actually done something, setting up three-tier special support system that employed in every school across the country to ensure that no child is indeed not left behind his or her peers. With the help of special education teachers and assistants, these pupils are taken care of. And it is exactly this special support system and its diminishing funding that worries the principles. They know that no student should be lost.

“...if there are cuts from support services then those who are already doing poorly (in school), they will do even more poorly.” Principal A.

“Sometimes it is like this that if the most least and feeble are being taken care of well, it tells about that high morale. That the things are okay.” Principal D.

“And then if from all of these processes, student care, three tier support services, school study mentor services, social services, child protect services, student care services are saved from, then the school’s processes of cognitive work, learning, guidance and teaching processes does not actualize. And from my point of view these support services would be central time, respect and attention in our society to families so that children could overall, as it was said in comprehensive school, through overall defragment and learning to build up.” Principal B.

6.1.5 Growing group sizes in school

Principals were concerned about the group and class sizes in their schools. More importantly the increasing size of the students in classrooms in any given time. By this they refer to the demand that savings set for them. When they have the save money or

they have less money to use, it is logical to put more people in single classroom with one or two teacher and save money that way. Principals do see the problems that come with too big group and class sizes but since they are more or less between the rock and a hard place they have little option when it comes to the group and class sizes.

“...and the concern is especially what will happen with the group sizes. ... and so on this if we are forced to squeeze group sizes or group sizes grow and then of course the workload of the teachers grow. And all this workload will grow.” Principal A.

“Yes, that what might not be realized when circuiting numbers is that in certain places it does not matter whether there are 20 or 30 students for example. ... But then for example other than school challenges then the 30 students, perceiving and supporting in some situation is nearly impossible if there are a lot of students and especially when their whole outside of school life comes with them to here. That what has happened on free time, what has happened at home, what has happened among their friends, hobbies, weekend overall. So living with those things because the children live, it is their everyday life so if that contact vanishes then vanishes certain aspect from this job. And then we are not able to early enough to prevent. We might see in the future when challenges rise, problems rise we see the end result. Now is and everyone hope we would do preventive work. ... If we have too many who we must observe then it can or I say that it will go to the worse.” Principal C.

“People ask why there are so big groups and (comprehensive) education get difficult when there are so many people that they don’t almost fit to the classroom.” Principal D.

6.1.6 Student well-being

Well-being of the student in their school was one of the worrying aspects of these school budget cuts for principals. They were worried about how they and their teachers are going to be able to care for the students if group and class sizes grow, support services in school decrease and overall if they simply don’t have the resources to intervene and prevent problems to grow too big for school to handle.

“ And maybe that more, more than like that worries this development, how we are able to take care of these students, how we can take them forward,” Principal A.

“So in a way there is always this future aspect related to this pedagogical action and it is from its baseline planned and executed and evaluated and planned and executed and

evaluated. It has this idea of circle of success as its starting point. And then those difficulties are not so much cognitive from the point of view of success of teaching and learning but rather if the student has for example difficulties to perceive the student can proceed by compensating it after receiving different kinds of clues of what kind of operations you can do to overcome your actual learning difficult. But if it is connected at the same time this genre of not taking care of the families, social services and other preventive services genre, that these fall apart then the pure cognitive process of the student will also become disturbed.’’ Principal B.

6.2 The future of Finnish comprehensive school

Second research question that this research studied was the point of view the principals had about the future sights of Finnish comprehensive school, referring to the primary and middle school that together form the basic education and hence the comprehensive school. It was interesting to note that while the principals were concerned about the situation of the today, they do, at least most, believe that comprehensive school will survive. None of the principals that were interviewed for this research seemed to think that the comprehensive school would not last or would cease to exist in the future.

Overall the principals were positive and confident about the future of comprehensive school as a whole. While they expressed concern about current budget cuts the main message was that economically challenging times will pass, that these hard and difficult times won't last forever.

‘‘In general there is a good balance in this, as far it has been, in this basic education. So I think the direction is good but of course the economy always poses its challenges. I strongly believe to this equity, equity and sort of transparency in basic education. And that everyone has a chance, that is our trump. Small country, so then you don't lose anybody.’’ Principal A.

‘‘It is natural resource that must be carefully protected.(...) And in that way the principle of equity and societal resource does not disappear but we chose wise decision-makers to our team. Populism is one phase in democracy and other one is quick instant-decisions in societal decision-making. But in a way they probably won't derogate democracy that much that we could afford to give up publicly-funded school that is tightly committed to society and embodies the change in society. I don't think we are going to fall down from

this. I just trust that eventually the wisdom will always win and that there are different phases.’’ Principal B.

‘‘But I have done teaching related jobs and studies and research over 40 years I have always seen, on education’s part to what is connected in society through this economics and physicality and learning environment, so I think it is to people’s normal life and conditions of life outside the school.’’ Principal B.

‘‘Well we have to remember how much we do good work. But for the future we have a lot to learn from other places. We can’t turn too much to our own learning but also share and participate internationally to the developing and planning of learning. If we aim to stay quality, as quality as we are now, as facility or institution, then I think we should look more to the outside world, to what are done in other countries, in Europe as well as outside of Europe. We can’t stay to that feeling of satisfaction that we do some things well. We should turn our heads to other directions too. Of course it is so but even more so and it does not suffice that our highest lead goes and see ‘oh they are guiding very well in here’ and they task here working committees or others to find out how this would be possible in Finland, but rather we actors should go and see alternatives. And that will keep us on the top in the future, and we could be braver when it comes to saying that things are very good in here and it is not a question... Question is more about from appreciation of education, here is the paradox that we generally speaking we do appreciate education or so far have appreciated education almost uncritically. It is not needed to appreciate uncritically but the idea that since we have research based teacher training we should appreciate it and uphold the profession and its reputation. But and maybe if there are saving made then answer to that with quality, with quality and show what we can do.’’ Principal C.

7. DISCUSSION

Now that we have dwelt to the world of education, principals and educational politics it is time to sum up what has been dealt with in this study. First of all we have dealt and examined education system of Finland. While it is going through rough times it just might survive and rise stronger from these changes and decreases directed at it.

Principals that were interview for this study seemed, if not hopeful then at least they had not thrown away their positive attitude towards to future of Finnish education system and most of all, comprehensive education and all that it stands for in terms of equity and possibilities for every child that goes through the comprehensive education.

Second issue that should be addressed here is the political climate in Finland that seems to lack of appreciation towards comprehensive education and education in overall.

Political decision makers seem to lack also determination and will to develop education in terms of longevity and taking account of the future generations. When talking about the future generations, taking account all children, even those who come from the poorest families. Policy makers seemed to have forgotten that children that go to school now, and in future, come from various social, cultural and economic backgrounds and this should be taking into account in school and education, but most of all in when making educational policies that affect to these children and young people.

Equity of opportunities has long been one of the most important elements of comprehensive education. When comprehensive education was formed, and when it got its current form and primary and middle school in the 1960s and 1970s, education was viewed as something that could lead a student to having a better life than his or her parents. That what was important and something that children were encouraged to go after. Education system had also function to produce civilisation among the nation. Civilisation was deemed to be important because without civilisation we are bound to repeat the history over and over again.

Giving same opportunities does not necessarily suffice in itself, but it requires that the schools have sufficient professional staff that can help those who are at risk of being dropping behind their peers. One of the most central elements that has being part of the Finnish school system is that there has being no child left behind-policy long before the US launched one. In Finland this no child left behind has meant that if the child or young person is doing poorly then school will organize additional teaching or support to that child. There is three-tier support system in school for those who need additional

support in order to learn what they are supposed to. First tier is little additional support, second is heavier support and third is special education. This special support system has helped many children and youngsters over the years of its existence.

It is necessary to note that if there are not enough teachers in school the students are the first ones to suffer from it. If teachers don't have enough time to meet the students then the well-being and the learning process of the student is endangered. So in this regard the sufficient number of teachers is essential for the future success of Finland in the global market where the competition is merciless and maybe even cruel. It is necessary to pack generations that are in school now, and in the future, with as good social and other skills that they can manage their life and work with various people because that's what their future looks like. And good baseline civilisation is also necessary because how else would they understand how their own society not to mention the world works and how they can make a difference to the world.

Having enough teachers also increases the well-being of the teachers that was one of the concerns of the principals in this study. When there are too few teachers and one teacher has too much work it can lead to sick leaves which increase the work load of the other teachers who too are already on overtime. So, having enough teachers with enough time to recoup from work so that they can be present to their students and give them the teaching and attention they need. And when there is enough teachers' stress of the teachers decreases and they have time for the developmental work of their teaching and be creative and come up with something new that they can try at their classroom with their students.

Growing groups and class sizes were also on the list of major worries that principals were concerned. This is one of the biggest things that affect not only the teachers, although to the teachers too, but most of all to the students. With too big group sizes in the schools the student can get enough interaction with the teacher and that can have a highly negative impact on them. Especially those students who are struggling in school and can't get any extra help from the teacher have it very poorly and possibly catastrophically. But also those students who are not doing poorly but who still would benefit from extra attention suffer. For example if there would be a student who is doing very well in school and needs more challenges, but the teacher is too busy in helping those who are not doing so great in school, they get bored and their interest in school diminishes.

All above mentioned things come down to the student well-being. Well-being of the students is one of the most important things that school should be concerned because teachers and principals alike are working in school not only to teach the student but also because they care about the well-being of the students and are doing their work because of the students. There are a lot of reasons why students might not be well but school has duty to intervene when a member of school staff sees that the student is not doing well in life and is in bad path. And albeit it might be difficult to intervene and it take time it just might be worth it, because it just might set the student to a better path than what she or he was and maybe even change his or her life. Of course it cannot be said what the long term affect are but there is hope that when intervened there are adults who are willing to help. And while the student well-being does not always, in most cases it does not mean foster children and children replaced outside of home, it still is important part of the job description for teachers' and principals to make sure that their students are doing okay.

Second bigger question in this study was the future of Finnish comprehensive education and how the principals viewed the future. While being mostly surprisingly positive about the future in that time of the diminishing school budget won't last forever there were asked how much can be cut from education and from the funding of education in a time when it seems like the government is trying to save from education until there are nothing left to save. It is this combination of positive view about the future and the worry about the present that was surprising. There were also thought about globalisation that might play part in the future of the Finnish education as well as dreams about what the school could look like and what the future school will look like. But in overall level the principals were confident that comprehensive education system will survive and maybe even thrive in the future and raise confident and aware citizens who are able to do great things.

In this sense it would be shame and disgrace from our politician if they would dismantle our education system and unique support system in schools that have helped so many and has raised so many generations. It would be sad to see politicians to chance the tune in national curriculum and chance humanistic values to those of corporate world where education is seen mere means to get more work force. Because shouldn't everyone have right to find his or her own path by going to school and wondering in time what she or he would like do for a living? Wouldn't that be something that would more beneficial to all than unhappy people who switch jobs and careers and are never happy? Wouldn't be

more sensible that every child would have enough time to think what she or he wants to do with his or her life and then go after that dream or ambition?

If we look back in time in terms of comprehensive education, the goal of the law about compulsory education, that was first set in 1921, was to make sure that every child would go to school and would get learn to read and write. These were two most important tasks for education. Another one was teaching basic of mathematics.

Things changed when the modern comprehensive education was formed in 1960s and the Basic Education Act came to power 1968, it said that every child are to be treated equally and in the same manner. The unified curriculum that was also put together for the comprehensive education. This curriculum instructed the teachers and principals to homologous actions and treating everyone alike very strictly. Comprehensive education system was created to make sure that everyone would get at least basic education and that everyone would get the basic skills and knowledge concerning the society and the world they lived in (Karikoski, 2009, p. 54).

From the perspective of the present day the school change has paid off. Finland is one of the few countries in the world with compulsory education. Compulsory education has also made Finland one of the most educated countries in the world. The big question is now the direction of the comprehensive education in the future? Does it take the best practices from other countries so that it can develop its own new best practices for the next generations? Or does the lack of resource drive comprehensive education to the graveyard?

Earlier in this study it was mentioned the liberalistic politics that seem to be rise in educational politics. And if it was clearly enough stated earlier liberalistic thinking is very much in conflict with educational thinking that has been in power in educational policy making for the past five decades. Liberalistic thinking sees every person as means of production whereas the main focus in educational thinking and official policy documents that have being published are have more humanistic approach. In this context, context of educational policy, humanistic view of children and young people means that education has being view as meant to end for young people to realize their potential and find the way to fulfil their potential in a way that is meaningful.

How can these goals be met in today's world, if so many has to struggle to keep up with his or her peers and need additional support to succeed in school and may not get that

much needed support? How can these kids who need support survive if they don't get support for going and studying in school when they most need it?

Feeling of meaning is important for everyone to feel. In schools it is important too that everyone feel welcome and invited. It is important for the teachers feel that the work they do has meaning and that what they say and do is meaningful for themselves and to their students. It is important that students feel that they matter and what they say and do matter for someone, in school this might be and probably is the teacher. For principals the importance and meaning can come from the well-being teachers and the trust they show toward the principal. It may also come from the students who show trust toward the principal and feel that they can come and talk to the principal about anything. It might be all of these aforementioned things.

Meaning and feeling that what you do is meaningful is important for any education system to thrive and making it possible that all those young people who graduate, whether from comprehensive education or high school or university, know and are eager to learn more and more over the years of their life and over their life span. Because the moment someone thinks he or she knows everything that person needs to know, then there is a real danger that that person becomes arrogant towards others and can lead serious troubles, for example to hubris.

Nowadays the comprehensive education is still alive and at least on governmental level, legislation level, everyone are to be treated equally. However, what should be the theme of the concern in today's comprehensive education is the growing number of students who do not continue studying after they graduate from middle school. And what is even more alarming is that from those who complete comprehensive education there are growing number of students who do not read or write well, some may not even have skills in reading and writing that they would survive the society sufficiently.

If we look back we can see that different generations have had differing view about importance and function of the education (Kauppila, 2002, p. 7-12). So it can, and probably should be asked, what is it that is important in education and in school system for the generations that are in the system currently and in the future? How do the children and teenagers see their education and what functions they give to the education? Do they see education as a tool to get to the job they want to have as adults? Or is the school, or does the school hold some other functions and meaning to the future generations.

Lehkonen (2009, p. 39-41) sees education as part of democratic system. She sees education as something that can lead to good life because via learning person gets equal chances of increase his or her own resources. Lehkonen sees that good life is something that comes to be in social situations because those moments and situations because those moments tell whether the school succeeded in its mission to tell and actually put to practise values of the democratic system.

When we talk about values it should be noted that school are expected to deliver and promote the values that are written to the national curriculum. However, as previously noted in chapter two when talked about the national curriculum, values written to the national curriculum for school to follow are result of political compromise. So when talked about values in schools, it should be noted that some values can be truly school's own idea but it just as easily be that values the school is promoting are from national curriculum. And the national curriculum is the end result from politics and political compromise. And in this sense it would be good to ask who have being involved in the process of writing and constructing of national curriculum? And whose values and ideas have being written down to the curriculum? Whose were there when the value part of the national curriculum was written to its published form?

The view that Lehkonen (2009, 40) presents is interesting because values, norms and morals are less talked and written in academic literature that deals with school and education system. It is noteworthy that she has brought together democracy and school and education system. But when thought thoroughly it does make sense. Because where else would children would be taught what is democracy and everything that comes with it. And values the democracy are viewed to represent.

It is also interesting because democracies are not all alike, there are different kinds of democracies in the world. In the USA democracy is linked to the liberalistic view, which in practice means low taxation and minimum interference from the state to the lives of its citizens. Whereas in Nordic countries democracy is, or at least has been linked to the idea of welfare state which means high taxation and social support system so that everyone has some kind of safe net if some kind of major life change happens, for example unemployment.

From these thought we should ask how do to prepare future generation to the work life ahead of them. How to tell them that yes, life is uncertain and that you might end up unemployed at some point in your life and if it had nothing to do with what you did or

did not then you have nothing to be ashamed of. That when you work hard you will succeed. Success does not come in a day or in a week, but through long and hard work.

Talking about hard and diligent studying and working might be challenging or even difficult in the world of the today because young people may not realize that some things take long. Of course there are smart kids who have some understanding that life is not a sprint, but that life is more a marathon. For example success and respect in any given field of work, true and deep respect comes from not giving up and doing your work well over many years so that everyone can see that you are good at what you do. One example about how some things are very much more like a marathon than sprint is the medical education. It takes six years to graduate from medical school and additional five to six years of specialisation education, in practice working in a hospital(s) to get the rights of a specialist (doctor).

How can these goals be met in today's world, if so many has to struggle to keep up with his or her peers and need additional support to succeed in school and may not get that much needed support? How can these kids who need support survive if they don't get support for going and studying in school when they most need it? Should the bar be lowered for some students in order for them to so that they can meet the goals or should they go toward the goal but fail the reach it by inch or two?

This leads to the question of meeting of goals and to the question who sets the goals for whom. How to make sure the goals are enough far for everyone but not too far to reach? And how to teach children to handle disappointment when they don't meet their goals even if when they have studied or worked so toward that goal? What are those goals that everyone should at least try to reach and what can be left to some to try to reach? And how gets to determine those goals? Educational official in government level or teachers and principals?

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