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# Access to mediation services in Finland from child's perspective



# Nils Christie:

“Conflicts are part of our daily life. Conflicts should be seen as resources which could actively benefit our skills of living.”

- Conflicts between parties can only be solved by listening and discussing together
- Mediation is an opportunity to learn and take responsibility

*“We have learned good social skills for our coming marriages.”*

(mediator pupil 2009)

A child and childhood are valuable as such



Our responsibility is to support a child and child's development regardless of what position a child has in a conflict.

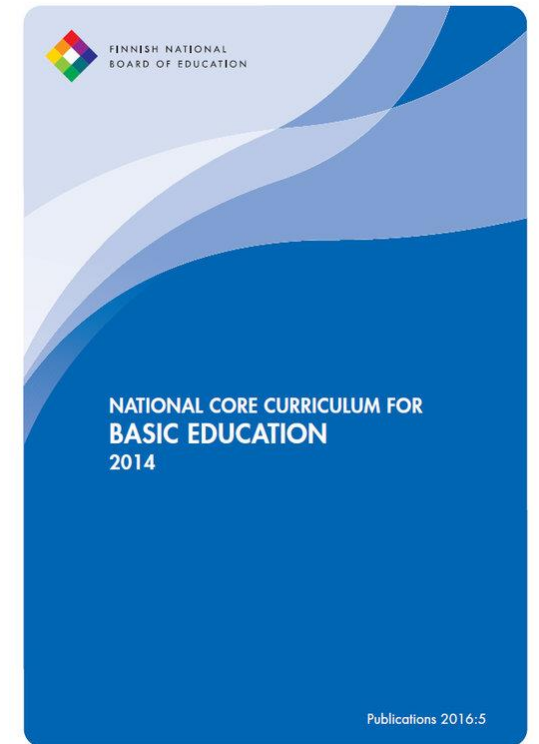
We can say NO to misbehaviour and criminal action, but we never say NO to a child.

When strengthening the access and participation to restorative practices the parties – both victim's and offenders – can reach the benefits that restorative justice and restorative approach can offer.

# Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014

## Implemented from the beginning of autumn period 2016

- the paragraph 3.3. addresses that pupils should learn to take responsibility, make decisions and keep agreements by experience. They learn the important role of rules, agreements and trust. They learn cooperation and they have opportunities to practice skills for negotiation, mediation and conflict management as well as critical thinking. Pupils are encouraged to see the other point of view when thinking of their own suggestions and especially notice equality, fairness and meaning of sustainable development of life.



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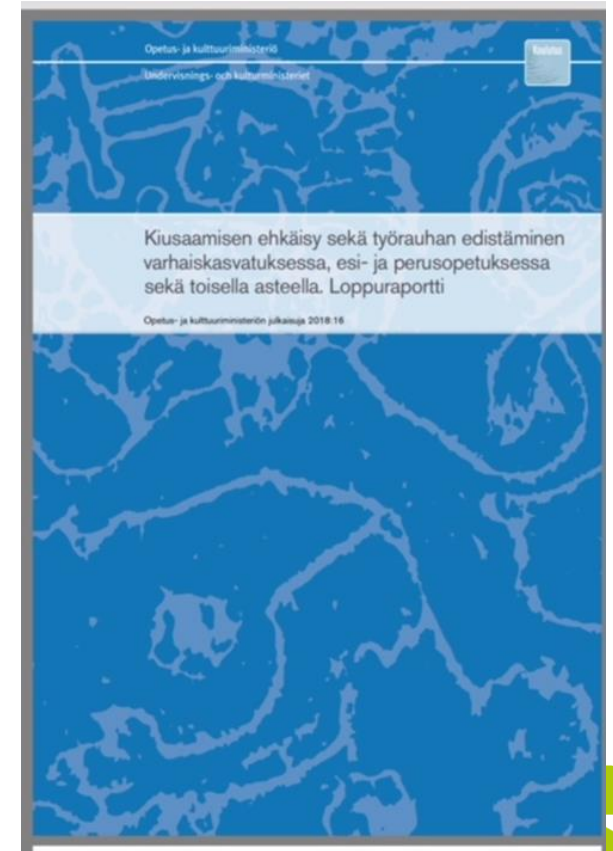


**Publications of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland 2018:16**  
**Prevention of school bullying and promotion of undisturbed conditions in early childhood education, pre-primary and primary education and secondary education.**

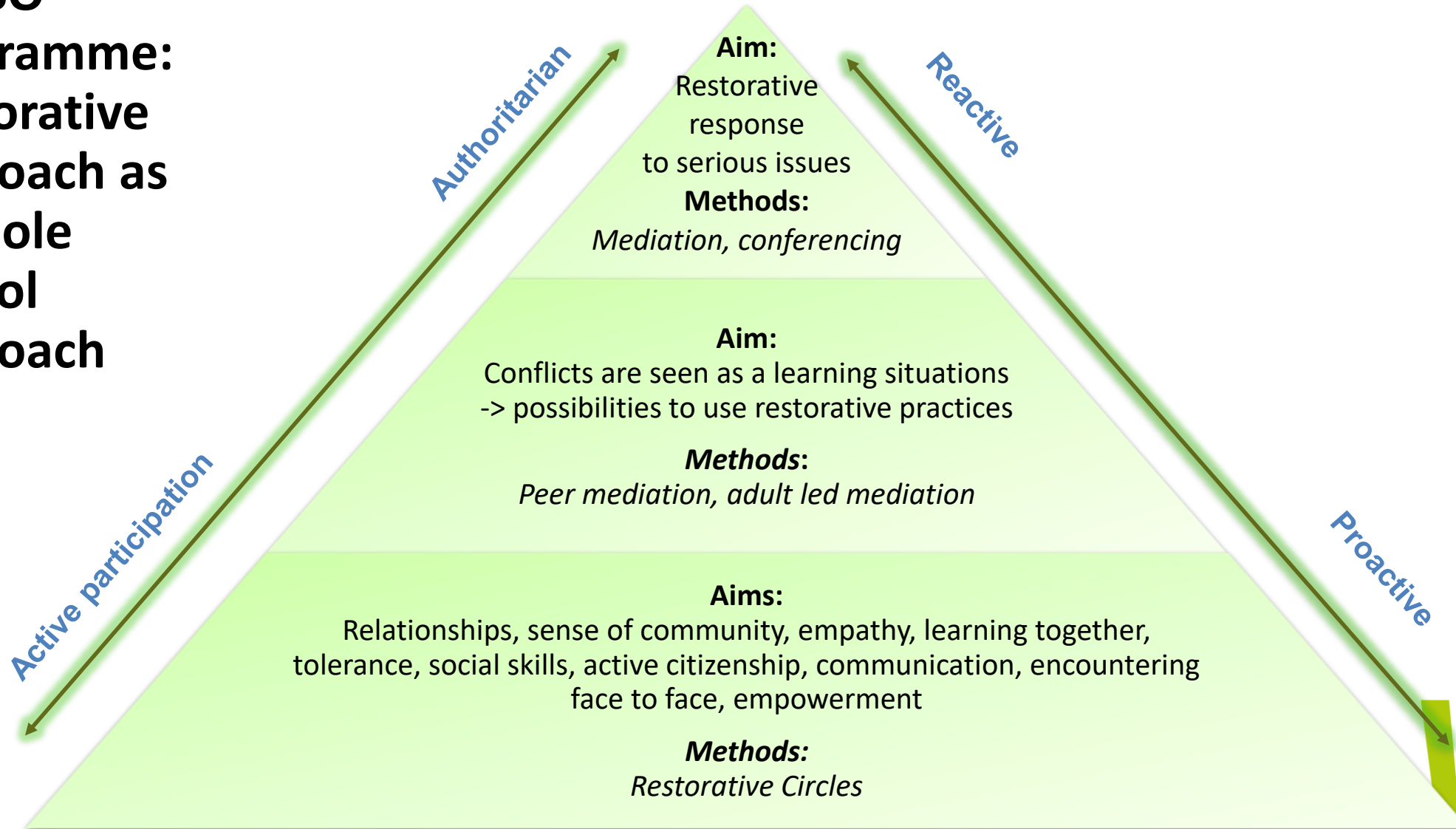
Development Proposal 9 c:

*Strengthen the culture of mediation in the field of early education and education and the use of mediation services by sharing this information with kindergartens, schools and educational establishments, as well as their near communities so that mediation activities and services can be actively used in conflict situations.*

*Raising the awareness of child's rights among staff members, parents, children and young people in everyday life is addressed.*



# VERSO- programme: Restorative approach as a whole school approach



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# VERSO-programme contains now:

- **PEER MEDIATION in schools:**
  - Trained Pupils are mediating conflicts between other pupils
- **ADULT-LED MEDIATION in schools:**
  - Trained school staff members mediate conflicts between pupils or between a pupil and a staff member
- **MEDIATION IN DAY CARE**
  - Trained staff member are using mediation in daily practice
- **LOCAL MENTORING GROUPS**
  - Trained staff members are having peer groups to support activity in their communities
- **CO-OPERATION WITH LOCAL VOM-OFFICE:**
  - In a more serious cases, like conflicts between parents, school staff and pupils, school can contact a local VOM-office

*"We have learned good social skills for our coming marriages."*

(peer mediator pupil 2009)

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# **We started with peer mediation 2000**

Peer mediation is a solution oriented and voluntary method, where pupil mediators help the parties of the conflict to find a solution to their conflict by themselves and thus change their behaviour. The purpose of the method is to decrease the misbehaviour in the school by improving pupils' participation, social skills and active citizenship.

# Peer mediation gives the possibility for active participation when strengthening relationships and safe environment in schools



*“In peer mediation you can learn to understand what hurts others”*

*(a party in mediation)*

*“Mediation improves school’s atmosphere”*

*(a teacher)*

*“Through mediating, I have grown as a person”*

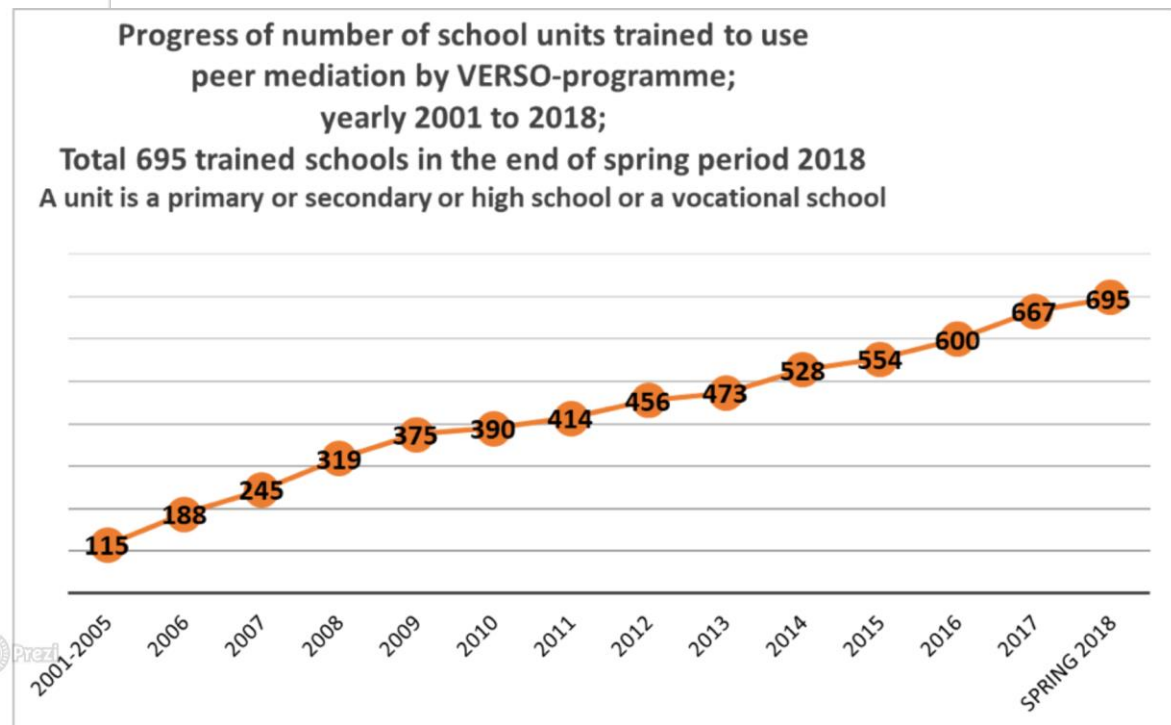
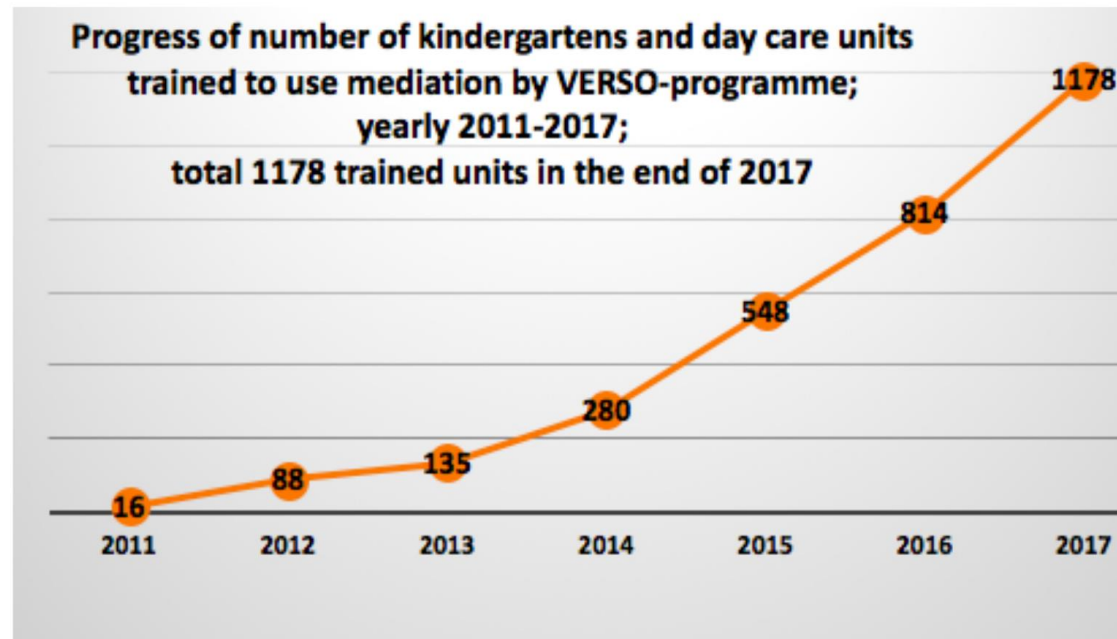
*(a peer mediator)*

*“In mediation you learn to look things from new and different viewpoints”*

*(a party in mediation)*

Children are learning doing justice already in schools with the support of adults!

Statistics are showing strongly growing interest to implementing restorative approach in day care and education



VERSO-programme under Finnis Forum for Mediation, is a non profit national wide programme to train and support mediation and restorative practices in the field of day care and education in Finland

[www.sovittelu.com/vertaissovittelu](http://www.sovittelu.com/vertaissovittelu)

# VERSO-programme on video

In our web side

<http://sovittelu.com/vertaissovittelu/in-english/>





*“.. so, first mediation makes  
our school more peaceful,  
then our city more peaceful,  
and finally the whole country  
more peaceful!  
It starts like expanding all the  
time...”*

(peer mediator pupil 2009)

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## Restorative approach and mediation when working with pupils at schools



Restorative practises used in schools:  
Circles, Mediation, Conferencing

*"This approach has opened a new  
world for me"*

*(a teacher mediator)*

*"It has been so releasing to learn to  
trust for children's capability when  
solving conflicts – they really know the  
right solutions"*

*(a teacher mediator)*

-> *PhD Thesis by Maija Gellin 2019*

-> <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-337-173-6>

(in Finnish with english abstract)

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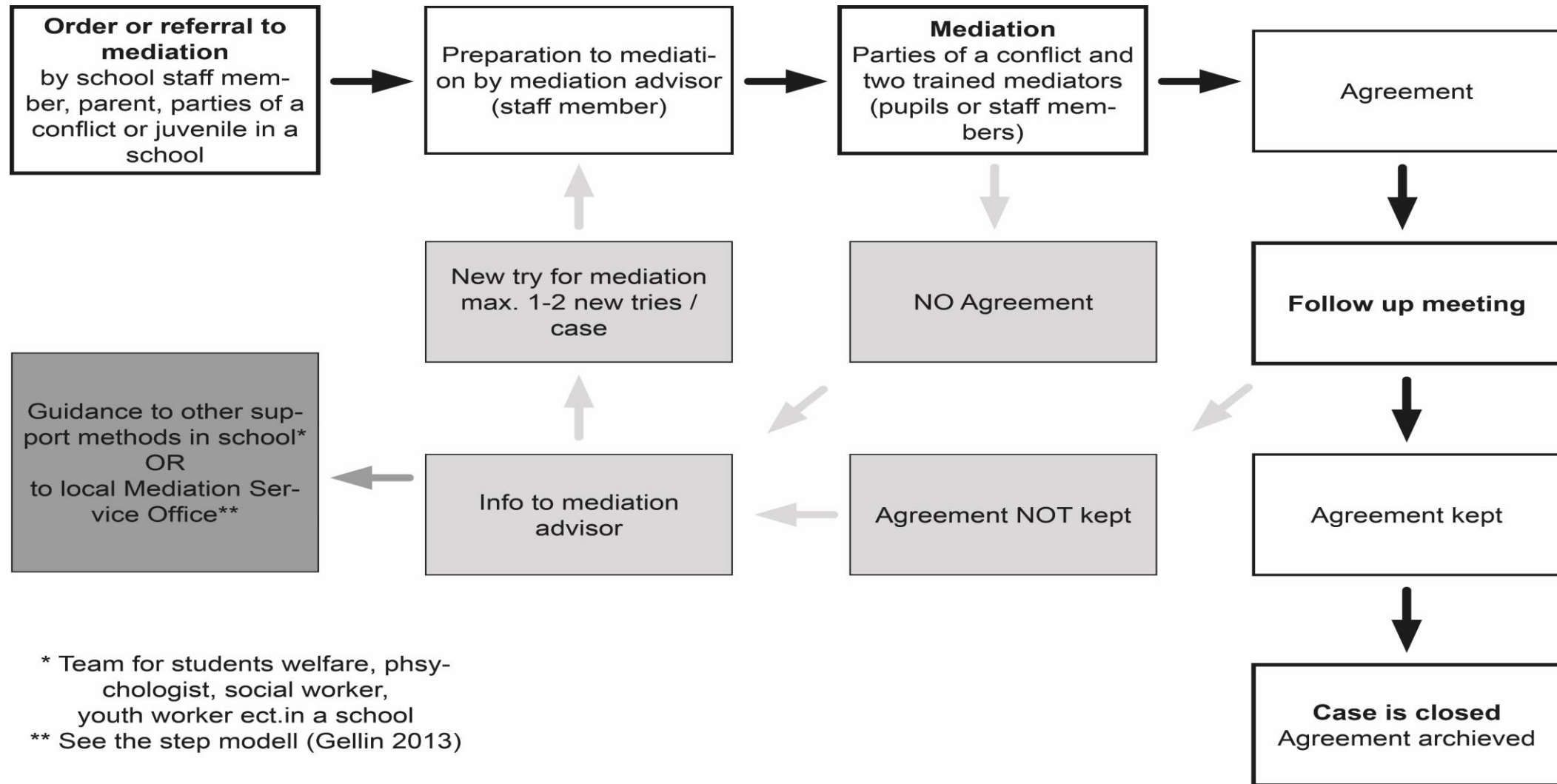
# Typical cases in mediation in schools

- Bad name calling, gossip
- Pushing, kicking, fights
- Isolation, discrimination
- Threats and blackmailing
- Bullying in cyberspace
- Catching and hiding other's property etc.

*“In peer mediation you can learn to understand what hurts others”*

(peer mediator pupil 2009)

# The process of mediation practice in schools in Finland



# The Step Model for Access to Mediation with Children and Young People in Finland (Gellin 2013)

## **5. Mediation in civil and criminal cases in collaboration with VOM-offices, police and prosecutor**

Cases against law: assaults, abuse and defamation, vandalism, violence, property violence, thefts, misbehaviour against law

Mediated by VOM-mediators

## **4. A fast intervention model for young offenders in co-operation with local VOM-offices and police, social work and/or programmes of Neighbourhood Mediation or Street Mediation**

Cases: assaults, property violence, thefts, serious misbehaviour against the rules of near community

Mediated by VOM-mediators or mediators from programmes mentioned

## **3. School mediation in collaboration with the principal, parties and parents, and when needed police and social worker**

Cases: serious breaking of school's rules, serious violence of other disturbing behaviour reported to the principal, pupil counsellors, members of staff or parents

Mediated by trained principals and/or other trained staff members

## **2. School mediation in collaboration with parties, mediation advisors, and if needed parents and staff members of a school**

Cases: cases not solved in peer mediation, repeating misbehaviour against the rules of a school, repeating social misbehaviour.

Mediated by trained staff members of a school

## **1. Peer mediation in kindergartens and schools**

Cases: bad name calling, pushing and kicking, smaller fights, isolation, threats and blackmail, bullying in cyberspace, hiding someone's property; these cases in early stage after assessment of mediation advisor

Mediated by trained peer mediators in schools or staff members in kindergartens

# Restorative learning in mediation

(Gellin 2011)

<b>Where to learn:</b> <i>The elements of restorative environment</i>	<b>How to learn:</b> <i>The social elements of restorative learning</i>	<b>What to learn:</b> <i>The results produced by restorative learning</i>
Participation Encounter face to face Cooperation Resolution	Listening Respect Dialogue Interaction Reflection Understanding Impression of Thoughts, Feelings, Actions, Needs	Empathy Social skills Sense of responsibility Capability Active citizenship



*“When I grow up, and in my workplace there appears bullying between my workmates, I can help them by mediating and they do not need to fight anymore”*

*(a primary school's peer mediator pupil)*

# Trainings of VERSO-programme

## A. STARTING MODULE

A1. Training to whole school staff in schools and day care

A2. Training to selected peer mediator pupils and advisor adults in schools

A3. Training with puppets for children in day care

## B. ADVANCED TRAINING MODULES

B1. Further training (whole day)

B2. Consultation

## C. ADVANCED TRAINING FOR SCHOOL STAFF (135 h)

## D. TRAINING FOR MENTORS

## E. ADDITIONAL TRAINING MODULES

Parent's evenings, seminars, workshops



# VERSO goes Africa, Uganda 2013-

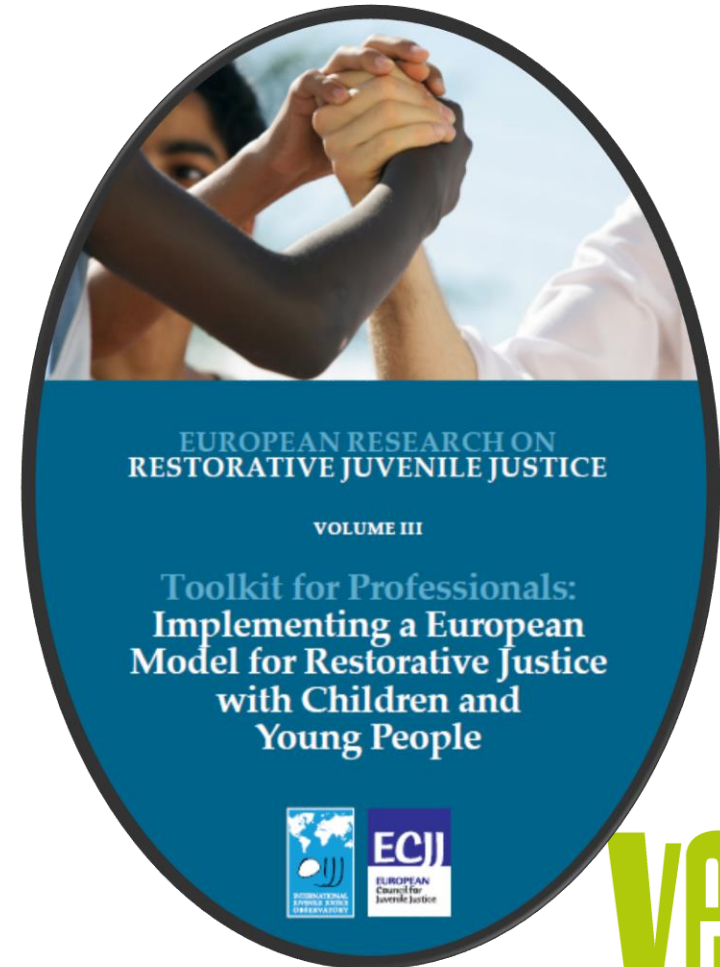


In co-operation with  
PLAN International

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# Restorative approach in schools is a part of European model for Restorative Juvenile Justice.



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Read: <http://www.ejjc.org/eumodel>

# **Finnish Forum for Mediation FFM**

## **Mediation in Education**

### **VERSO-programme**

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**[www.sovittelu.com/vertaissovittelu/in-english](http://www.sovittelu.com/vertaissovittelu/in-english)**

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