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# Restorative Justice in Education

## 28/09/2020 Webinar

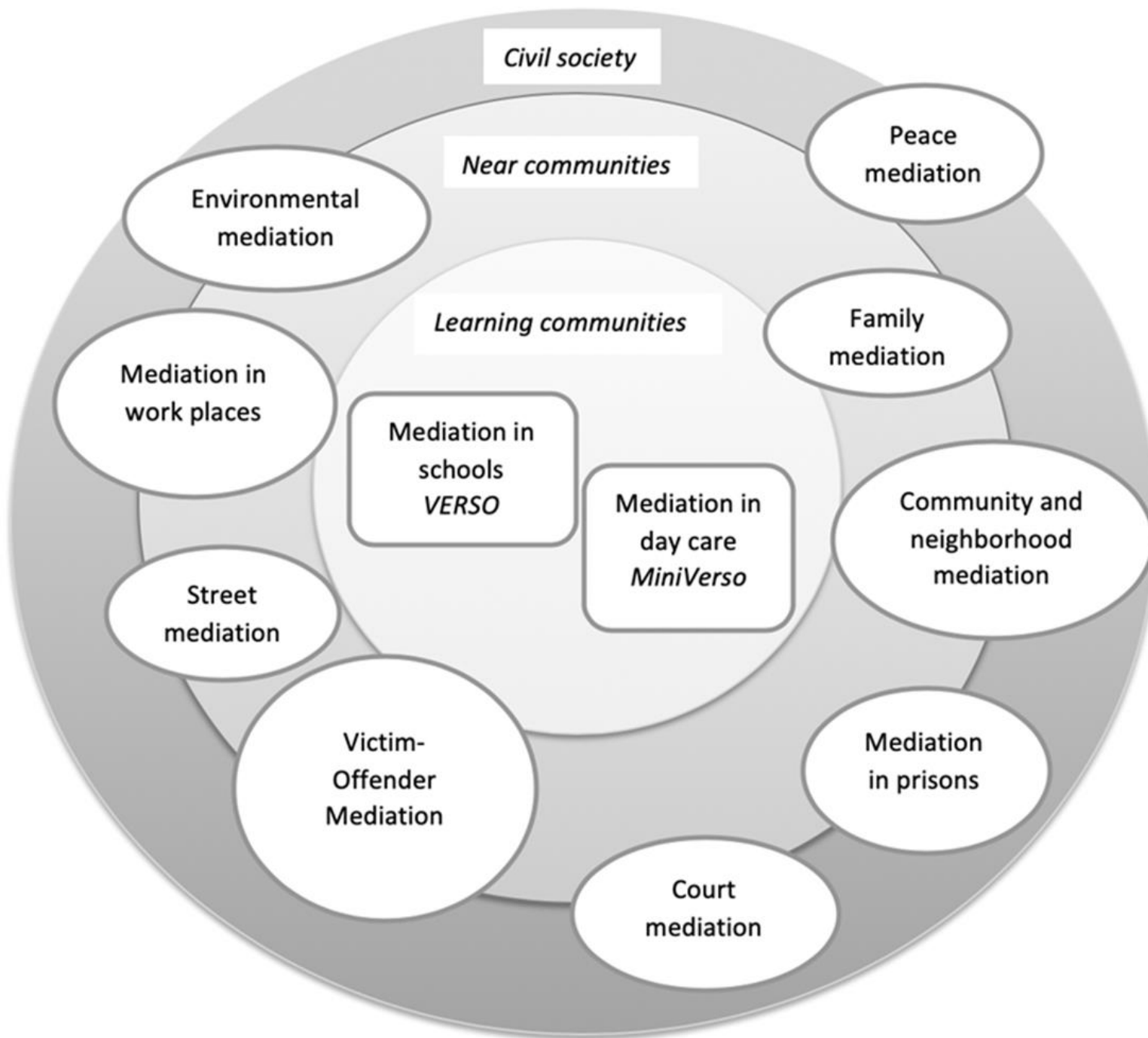
Dr. Maija Gellin  
Finnish Forum for Mediation

# Finnish Forum for Mediation

The Finnish Forum for Mediation (FFM), founded in 2003, is a voluntary and independent non-governmental organization aiming to participate in and influence societal development by reinforcing the civil society and bettering the society's well-being through restorative justice and mediation.

VERSO-programme started in 2000 to implement restorative approach to the field of education.

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# Access to mediation services in Finland

(Gellin M. 2019, 30-32)

By implementing restorative approach and mediation in a school culture, schools are connecting to the conflict management tradition and development in Finnish society

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## Child friendly justice: 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.

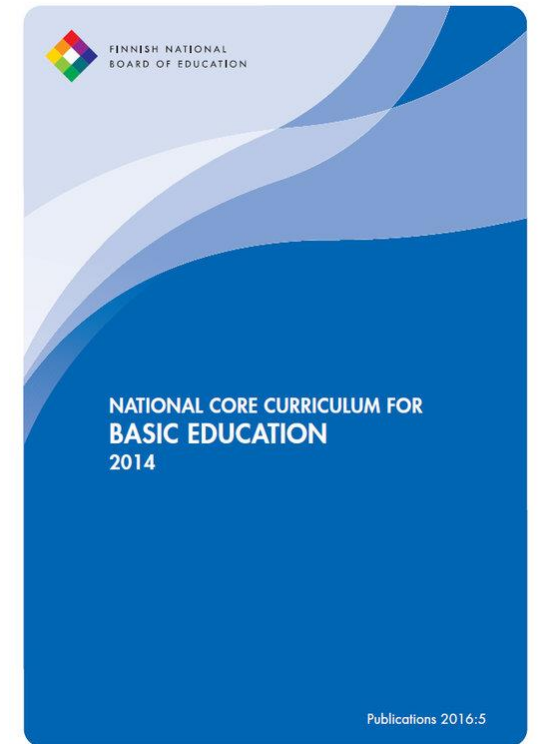
We can say NO to misbehaviour and criminal action, but we never say NO to a child.

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 are offering.

# 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

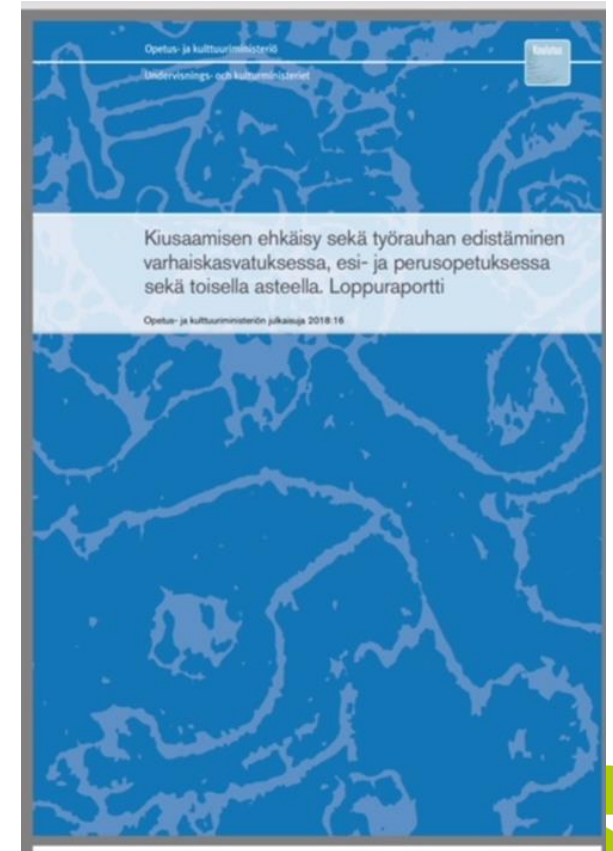
Prevention of school bullying and promotion of undisturbed conditions in early childhood education, pre-primary and primary education and secondary education.

Development Proposal 9 c:

*Strengthening the culture of mediation in the field of early education and education. Increasing the use of mediation services by sharing information to kindergartens, schools and educational establishments, as well as their near communities so that mediation activities and services can be actively used in conflict situations. p. 24-26*

*Mediation is based on restorative justice, p. 66-67.*

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



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

## **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

## **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

## **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

## **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 and/or trained youth workers

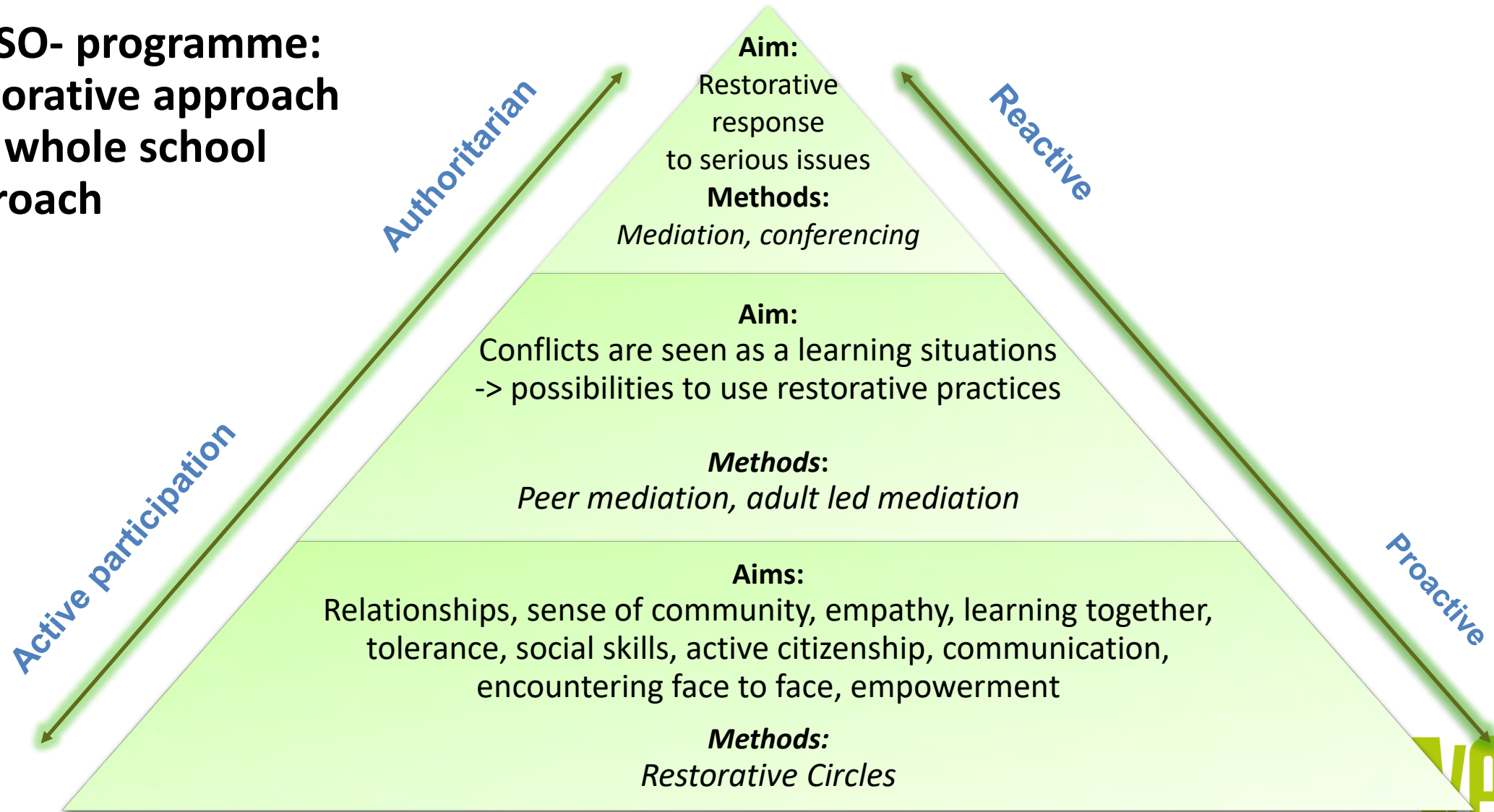
## **5. Mediation in civil and criminal cases in collaboration with VOM-offices, police and prosecutor**

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

Mediated by VOM-mediators



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



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## Access to participation for all members of a school community



## MiniVerso in day care:

- \* Day care staff as restorative encounters and mediators
- \* Staff and children to take advantage of mediation



## Verso in schools:

- \* Students as peer mediators
- \* Adults as instructors of Verso activities
- \* Staff and students to benefit from peer mediation



## Restorative approach and adult led mediation:

Day care staff and  
school educators to  
work as restorative  
encounters and  
mediators



## Mentoring:

Day care staff and teachers to maintain and develop the activities launched by the VERSO program in their area

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# The restorative approach frees up to support the learning of social skills



**Restorative thinking and supporting restorative participation** have strengthened an understanding of the value of each member of the community when increasing the well-being of the community.

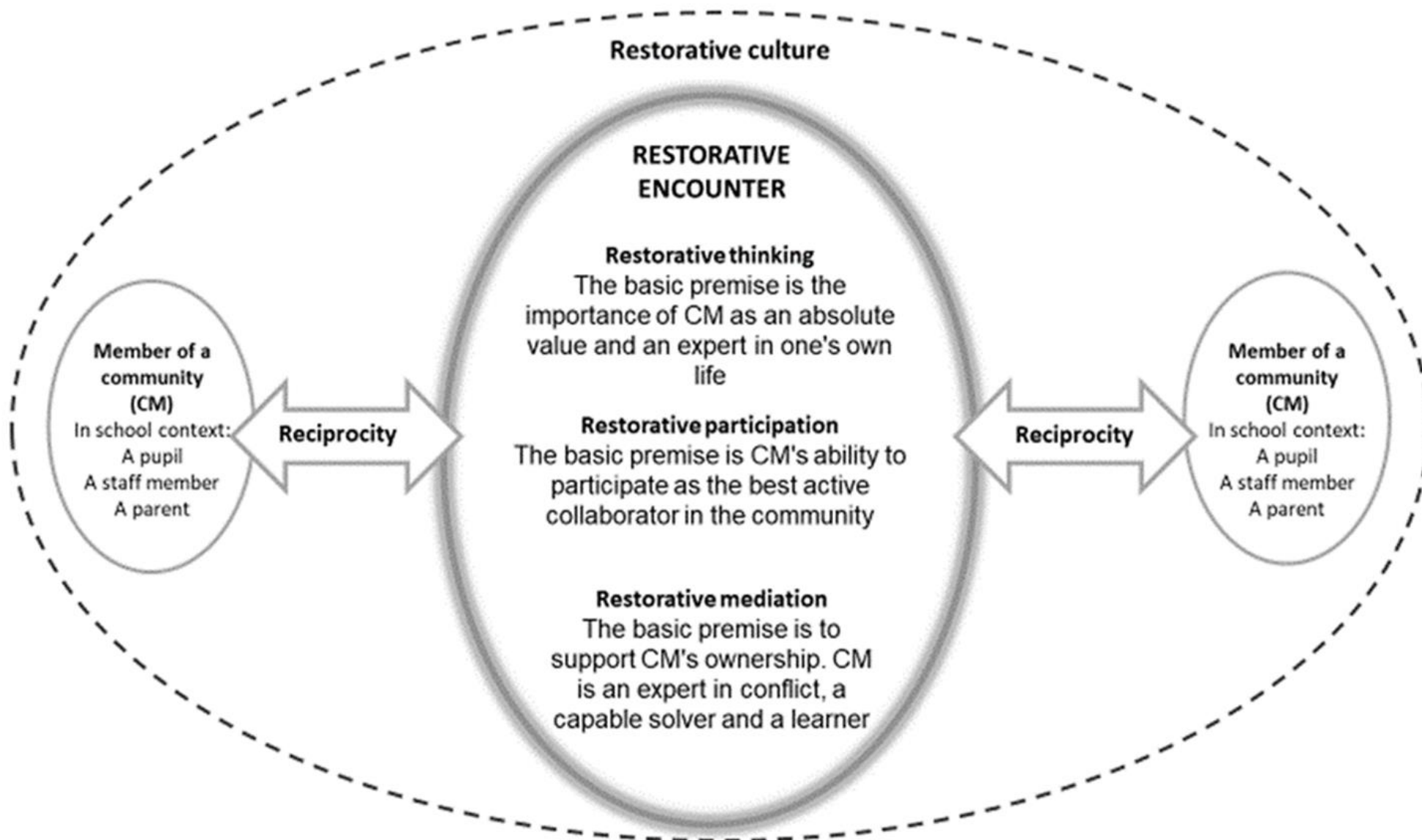
It is possible to shift the focus from a culture of sanctions to a positive attitude towards conflict prevention. **The skill of restorative encounter** has freed up teachers to support for pupil's ability to learn to interact, take responsibility, and change behavior

In conflict situations, **restorative mediation** has decreased prejudices, increased understanding and responsibility, and brought respect between community members despite differing views.

Gellin M. 2019. PhD dissertation:  
<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-337-173-6>

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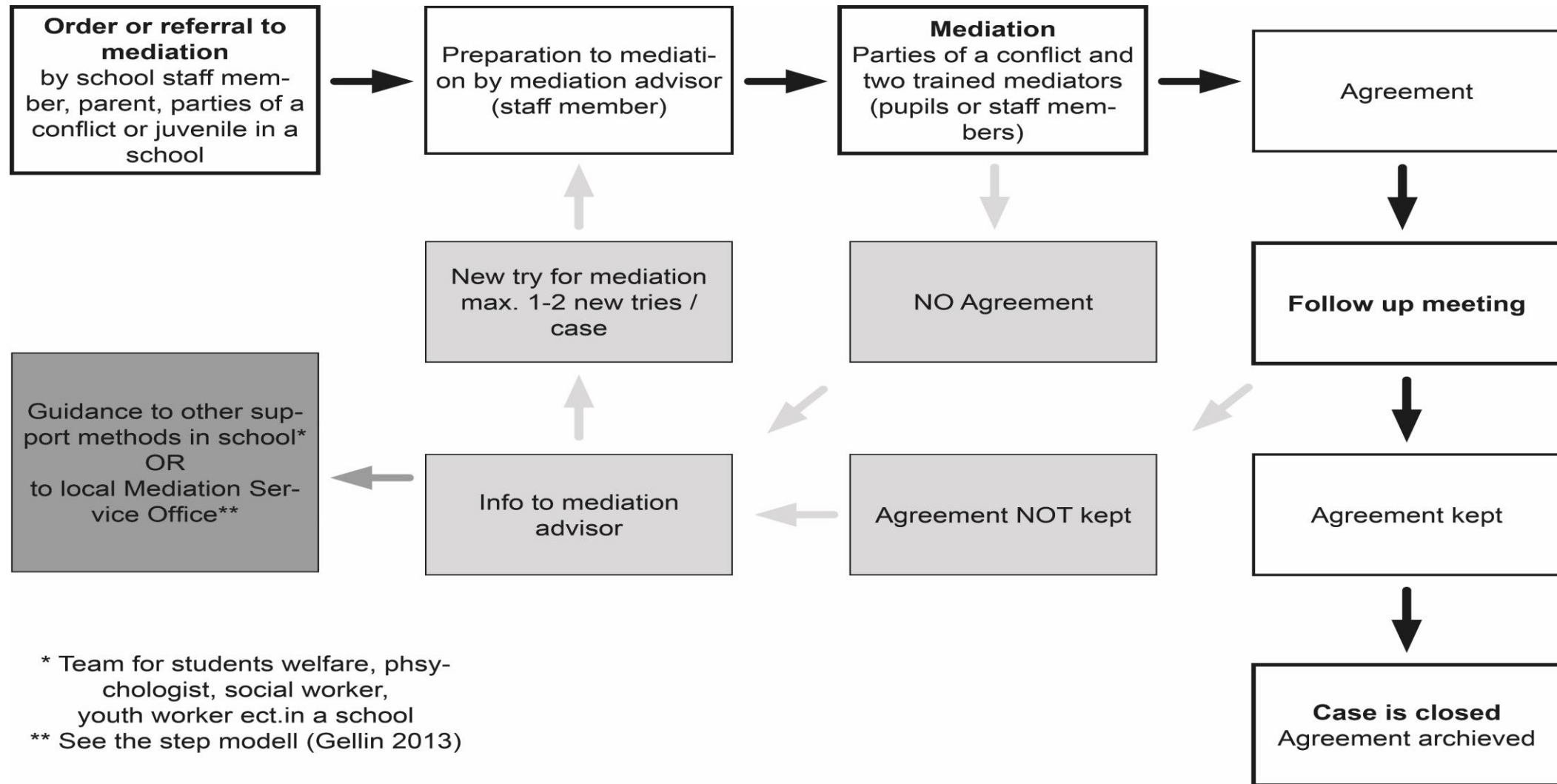


**Restorative approach is a part of daily profession, which creates the restorative culture**

**The dimensions of the restorative encounter**

(Gellin M. 2019: 156.)

# The process of mediation practice in schools in Finland

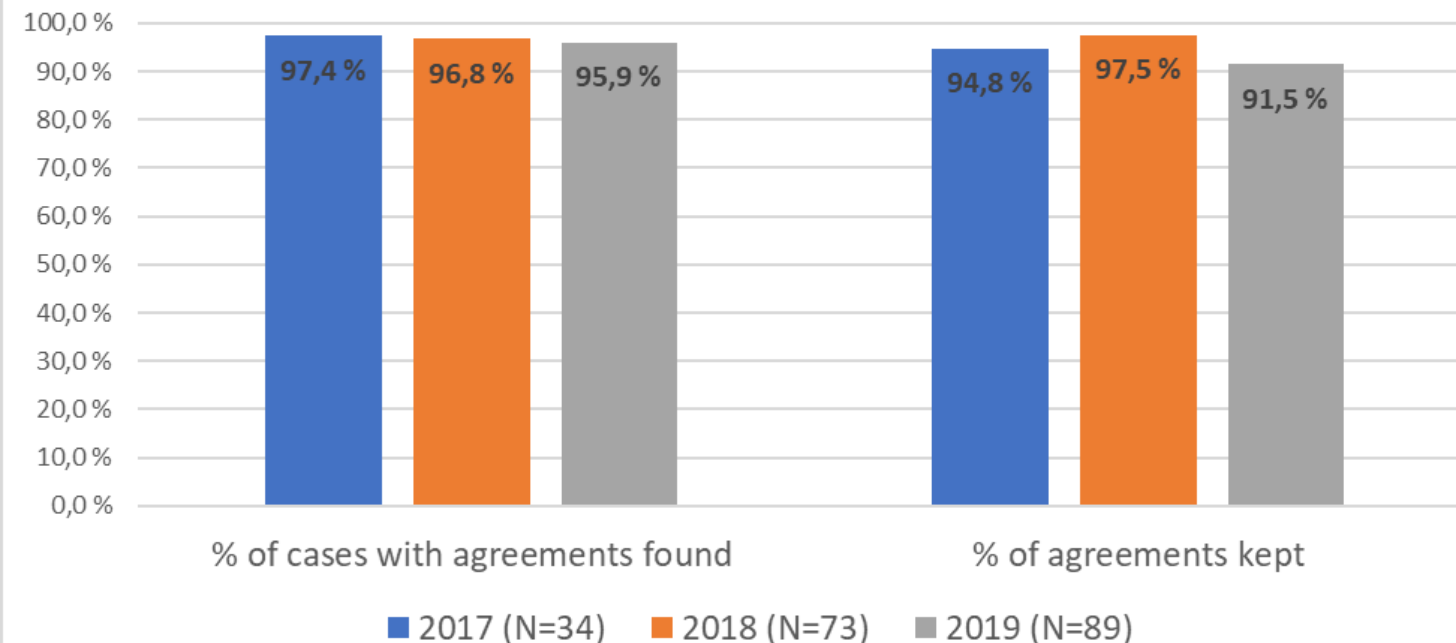


# Evaluation is an important part of developing the approach

- Numbers and statistics for decision makers
- Experiences and tools for reflection to practitioners

We have 12 different ways to collect data -> annual reports published in homepage in Finnish

Agreements found and kept in peer mediation  
Comparing 2017-2019  
(N=number of schools answered to sampling)



*"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)

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# Learning is an essential value and result of RA (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



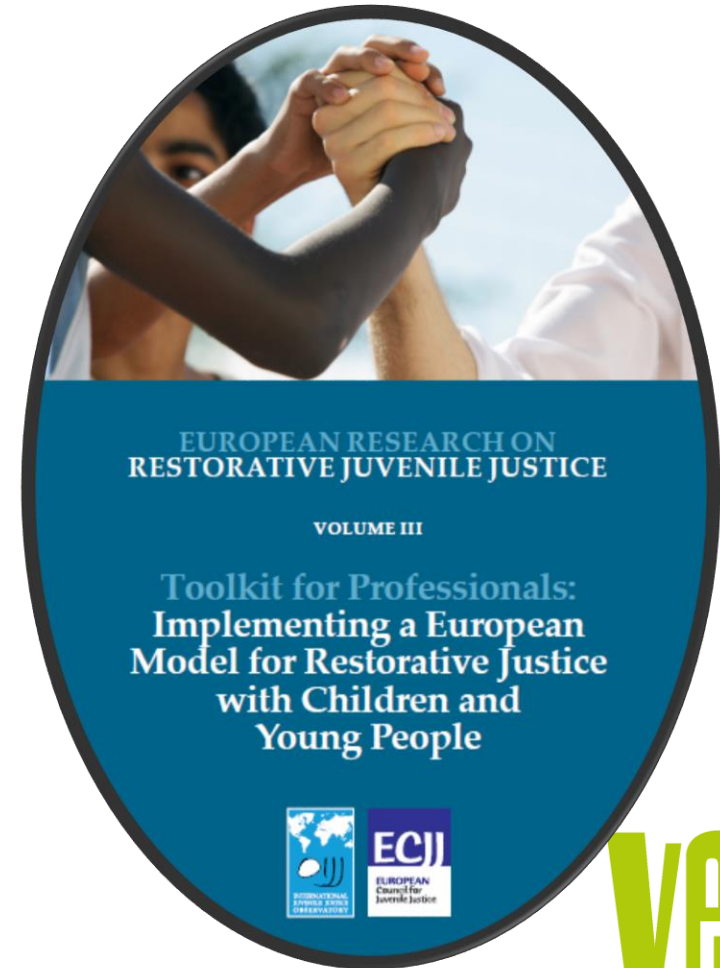


*“.. so, first mediation makes  
our school more peaceful,  
then our city more peaceful,  
and finally the whole country  
more peaceful!  
It starts like expanding all the  
time...”*

(peer mediator pupil 2009)

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# Restorative approach 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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Available in English in bookstore: <https://verkkokauppa.oph.fi/EN/>