

Socially Innovative Interventions to Foster and to Advance Young Children's Inclusion and Agency in Society through Voice and Story

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Photo: the Sami Parliament



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Finland Case study

Drawings: Sami language distance teaching project, Municipality Utsjoki

Research questions

- 1) What kind of online learning environment supports Sámi pre-school and primary school age children's agency in their lives?
- 2) How storytelling, play and land-based pedagogies can be carried out in online Sámi language learning and teaching with preschool and primary school children?
- 3) What are the key features of successful pedagogical models in Sámi online learning for pre-school and primary school education?



Land-based education



Playful learning



Traditional storytelling



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Canada Case Study

In Canada, the research processes utilized artistic, visual and digital forms to enhance children's voices.

Research findings

Professional learning opportunities for teachers with community entrepreneurs such as artists and storytellers introduced new ways to re- envision teaching in ways for enhanced children's voices and agency in classrooms and community spaces

Artistic and digital expressions of culture such as a sharing of family artifacts and mapping narratives highlighted ways to enhance children's voice and agency in the classroom through on-line learning platforms and curated museum exhibits.

The enhancement of children's voice and agency was deeply dependent on the teachers building of relationships with family, communities, and stakeholders and lead to political and economical changes for schools.



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada



Trans-Atlantic Platform
Social Sciences and Humanities



UK Case Study

Research questions:

- 1) What principles of practice support teachers to work in ways that value, respect and include children from multiple cultural, ethnic, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds to be a member of the learning community of the classroom?
- 2) What benefits and challenges have the practitioners faced in implementing these principles?
- 3) In what ways have the children experienced having their voices heard during the project?

Methodology:

co-participatory (digital) classroom ethnography

Findings

- It is generally accepted that listening to children about their experiences of school is a good thing....but there is much still to learn.
- Addressing agency in addition to voice allows practitioners to explore collaborating with young children to enhance learning opportunities for all.
- Voice, agency, audience and influence all should be planned for.
- This activity is particularly important for diverse cohorts of students who make be at more risk of being vulnerable in educational settings.



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1. What is the upscaling potential of the innovation, and can it also apply to other fields and circumstances?

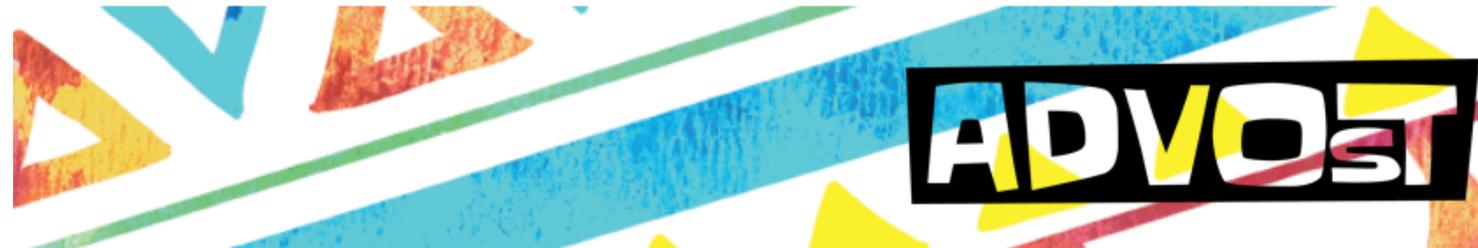
The transnational findings permitted deeper insight into:

- Culturally responsive practices with diverse communities
- Co-participatory in nature combining the expertise of children, families, teachers and academics with strong emphasis on rigorous ethical considerations
- Digital tools enabled new perspectives on children family and homes during a critical global time
- Situated in the North, but has relevance for other geographical areas, including the Global South



2. *What were the specific context conditions that led to the innovation, and how did the process from some creative act to a social innovation process unfold?*

- Carefully chosen research sites with distinct communities
- The co-participatory in nature of the methodology of the project invited innovative ways for community voices to influence the development of the project from the very onset. This ensured authentic participation by key stakeholders thus increasing potential relevance for similar communities in other contexts.
- Across society the pandemic appeared a challenge, but provided new creative approaches to data collection, analysis and dissemination across all three case studies.



3. What role did entrepreneurs (social, political, economic, cultural) play in bringing about the innovation?

- Whilst the project proposal acknowledged the need for stakeholder involvement the project permitted deeper understanding of community partnership.
- Project findings indicate that community partnership requires not only entrepreneurs but also engagement of teachers, community leaders, families, government and young people themselves to ensure education provision is both culturally responsive and relevant.
- Within the project, ongoing involvement of community partners highlighted the role of entrepreneurs in the field of education and their important contributions alongside the expertise from stakeholders.



4. What was the particular “social” aspect of the innovations we have just heard described, and what sets it apart from other kinds of innovations?

- All three case studies highlighted the importance of listening and responding to children and young people
- Whilst children are not considered experts or valid contributors of educational decision making, the project findings surfaced the children’s expertise and enthusiasm to make the decisions pertaining to their own learning, culture and experiences at school.
- Research findings also point out the importance of wide collaboration among families, learners, teachers, academics and stakeholders working collaboratively to enrich social innovation in cohesive ways for educational provision.



Conclusions

- Education is an integral part of communities and as such **can** contribute to social cohesion and inclusion of all voices when all stakeholder contribute and are part of the conversation.
- Whilst success in hearing the voices was achieved through the ADVOST project, there remains potential to further understand how these practices might be further developed effectively on global scale.

