

“Building restorative justice in Europe. Cooperation between  
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## **RESTORATIVE PRACTISES IN SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND AMONG JUVENILE**

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## **PEER MEDIATION IN FINLAND**

**The method of peer mediation** is developed to the use of pupils for the resolution of the conflicts between pupils. It is a structured process in which a pair of peer mediators in the role of neutral third party assists the voluntary participants to resolve their dispute. After having agreement there is a follow-up meeting, where the parties can acknowledge their success of keeping the solution. Peer mediators are usually one or two years older than the parties. There is always a team of teachers or other adults that facilitates the work of the peer mediators at school.

Peer mediation is used as a preventive method to solve the smaller conflicts before they turn to larger ones. The aim is to increase the social skills of the pupils to solve the conflicts now and in further life.

**The disputes mediated by peers** are mainly:

- smaller fights, brawls and pushing
- use of bad language and bad names, shouting, telling lies or making fun of somebody
- isolation, black mailing or forcing somebody to do something against ones own will
- the situations when somebody has taken something without permission from the owner

**The peer mediation method starts** in school with the trainings. It is very important to inform and train first teachers and other adults in school to use the method, because peer mediation method gives an alternative tool when handling conflicts in everyday life to whole school community.

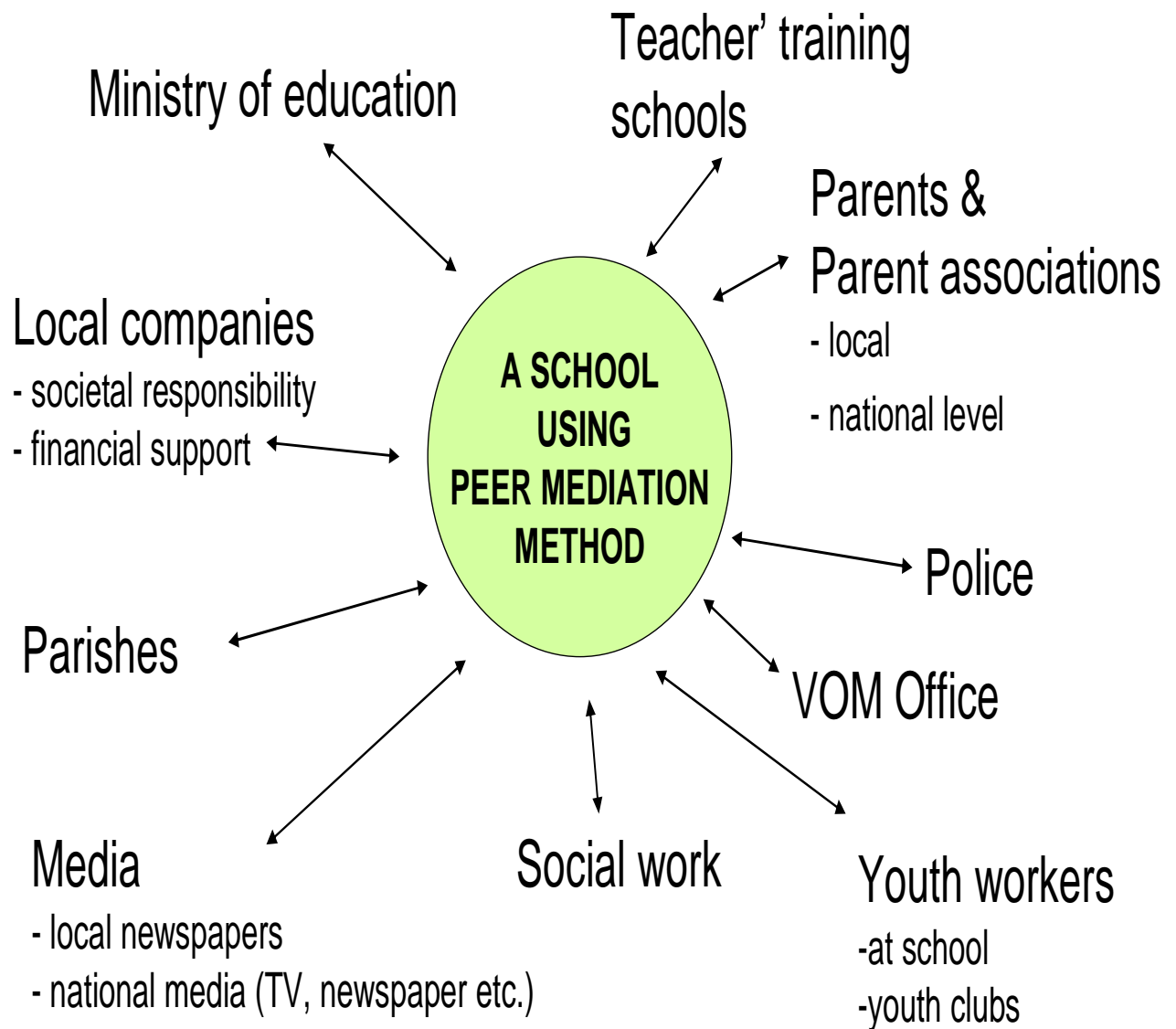
At spring 2005 the committee for school welfare was appointed by the **Ministry of Education**. The aim of the committee was to prepare proposals for action to create conditions and structures for the support of the welfare in schools. The final suggestions the committee found out were such important factors like support of early prevention, peer conciliation and prevention of bullying.

**The results of the surveys** have been encouraging. The method has been used successfully for the smaller conflicts as an early intervention, as we aimed. About 95% of disputes mediated by peers results in lasting agreements. Over 86% of the comments of the peer mediators have been positive. And 75% of the comments of teachers have told us in different ways that the method works, including also the wishes for further training. Almost 90% of the parties has told us that it is good that there is a method where pupils can solve their problems themselves in schools. And 88% of the parties told that they has kept the promises they have given in peer mediation. The main thing that needs to be improved is how to increase the use of this alternative tool, especially among the pupils who actually see much more the conflicts and disputes between their peers than the adults can see or notice. There has also been a lot of interest to extend the use of the method to conflicts between teachers and pupils. We have already started to point out these issues when teaching the peer mediators and their supportive adults and other teachers.

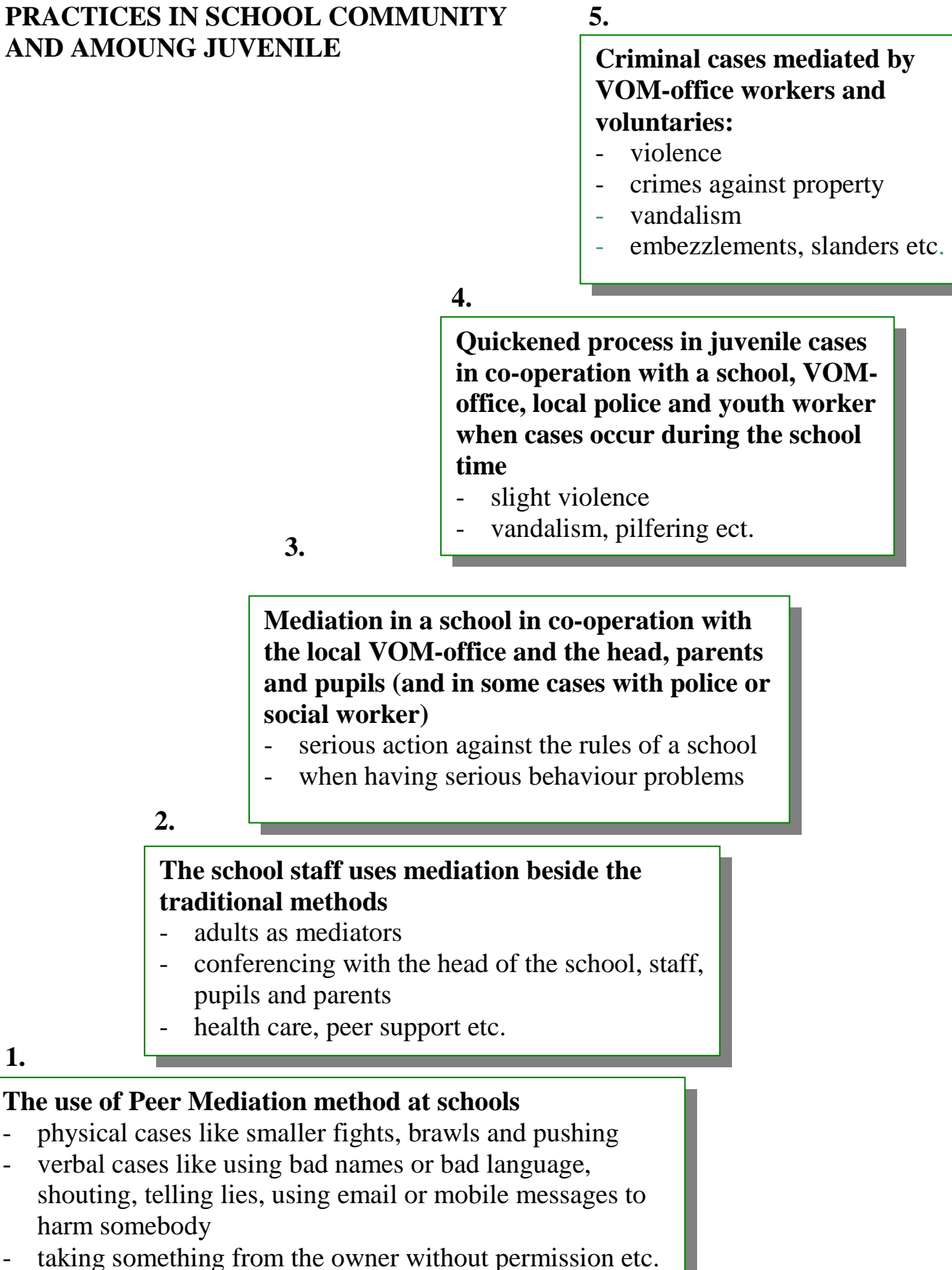
**The Finnish Forum for Mediation** has got economical support of the Ministry of Education (years 2006-2007) and **the Finland's Slot Machine Association** (years 2008-2009) to organise and to develop the method and trainings of peer mediation.

**The Finnish Forum for Mediation (FFM / SSF)** is a cooperation forum for people working in the field of mediation and conflict management in Finland. In the board of the Forum there are professionals of victim-offender mediation, peer mediation, family mediation, workplace mediation, court mediation and peace mediation as well as mediation method of the Finnish Bar Association. The Forum was initiated in 2003 and has since then taken part in various projects within mediation. With the peer mediation, the other important development areas are workplace mediation and family mediation.

# PEER MEDIATION NETWORKING IN FINLAND



**THE STEP MODEL FOR RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND AMONG JUVENILE**



## **PEER MEDIATION TRAINING MODULES 2008**

Training coordination is centralized to Finnish Forum for Mediation (FFM), the only official peer mediation training provider in Finland. A school aiming to start peer mediation system contacts and orders training from FFM training system. Trainings actualize school by school. Training in a school begins with a school staff module. Most training happens in Finnish or in Swedish, but some also in English.

### **A) BASIC STARTING MODULES FOR A SCHOOL:**

#### **Part A1. School staff training module**

- 4 hours, in school's premises, one/two FFM trainer(s)
- Themes:
  - communicating & drawing a common map of the pupils' conflicts in the own school
  - gaining basic understanding of Restorative Justice and mediation
  - getting information of peer mediation as early intervention in conflicts and bullying
  - getting started to consider the select process of peer mediators in the own school
- Participants: all staff members (teachers, principals, school social/youth workers, house master, school assistants, cafeteria staff etc.)
- Material: brochures, articles, slides and other material for every participant
- Training methods: We aim at creative, participative and positive atmosphere. Lectures & questioning. Mental images. Small group work. Drawing a common conflict map. Discussion. DVD-film. Drama.

#### **Part A2. Training module for peer mediators & their guiding adult group**

- One day training, two FFM trainers
- Away from school (in a youth house/parish house/hobby house/municipal centre etc.)
- Participants: selected peer mediators' group (20 pupils) & their mediation guiding adult group from school (4-10 staff members)
- Themes:
  - peer mediator's role: "getting now started and then learning all the time"
  - guiding adult group: tailoring peer mediation everyday practices for the own school
- Large material package for school's use & handbook for every peer mediation pupil
- Training certificate for every peer mediation pupil
- Training methods: We aim at creative, participative and positive atmosphere. Small group work. Drama & role play. Drawing a common conflict map. Discussion & questioning. DVD-film.

**B) ADVANCED TRAINING MODULES:**

**B1. Further training module**

- One day training, two FFM trainers
- Scheduled usually after about one year from starting point
- Participants: peer mediation pupils (“old” ones & new candidates) & 2-3 persons from their mediation guiding adult group
- Themes:
  - training new peer mediators: experienced peer mediators help to teach new ones
  - repetition, updated information and deepened knowledge for experienced peer mediators and for adults
  - includes one hour updating module for the whole school staff
- Material: updated material and latest information from RJ field
- Training certificate for every peer mediation pupil

**B2. Consultation module**

- One or two hours
- Participants as agreed
- Themes as agreed, for example:
  - peer mediation practices update
  - common update of mediation & RJ knowledge

**C) ADDITIONAL TRAINING MODULES, ALWAYS TAILORED:**

- Parents’ evenings
- Regional seminars for all peer mediation guiding adults in that area
- Training module for new peer mediation trainers
- Drama workshops
- Peer mediation pupils’ get-together happenings
- Exhibitions, fairs
- etc..

**Further information in Finnish Forum for Mediation (FFM):**

**[www.ssf-ffm.com](http://www.ssf-ffm.com)**

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! Find an article on the results of peer mediation program surveys in English from our  
homepage