

The Advanced Support Systems/Structure

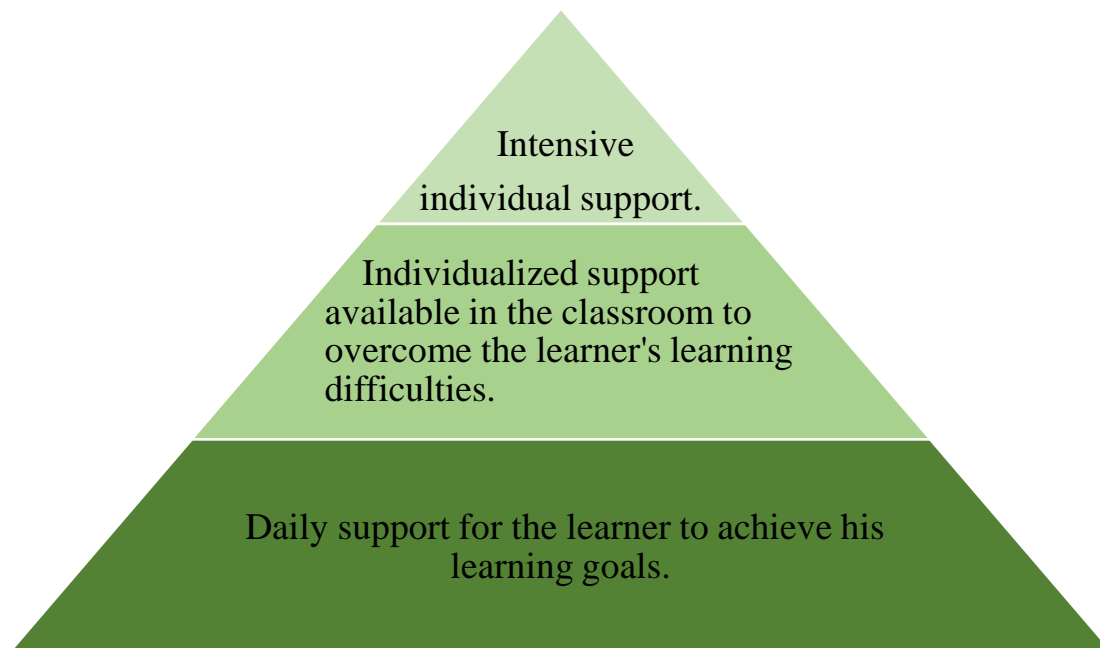
The project Breaking Barriers aimed to find ways to implement real changes in inclusive education, looking for opportunities and cooperation partners from Finland and Estonia.

The implementation of inclusive education and improved accessibility and quality of inclusive education in our project's partner countries were the main results of the project idea.

System-level policies and structural characteristics of education systems can be seen as preconditions for school-level improvement policies that schools need to adapt.

School-level policies and improvement efforts should focus on creating, facilitating, and stimulating the conditions for effective instruction in the inclusive classroom.

As a result of the implementation of this project a multi-tiered support system (Picture 1) has been established in the educational institution(s), which promotes the healthy development of each student in an inclusive and positive learning environment, meets the needs of each student, and provides systematic pedagogical, psychological, and social support:



Picture 1

The ultimate goal is to ensure that a student is placed in the least restrictive environment for learning. A child must be in the most inclusive setting. This simply means that we do

not isolate students because they have a learning disability or special need. Each student has the right to be educated in a safe, non-threatening, enriching classroom.

Students, who are mainstreamed, are placed in the regular education classroom with peers of the same age/grade. Accommodations (support) will be in place to ensure the student has the tools for success within the classroom. When the student is generally in the mainstream and needs additional help with a certain subject, the resource room can be used. In such a case, a special education teacher can assist with helpful strategies and additional help for students with specific special needs or learning disabilities. For some of the day or some difficult subjects, the student has an opportunity to move to the resource room.

- 1) Inclusive services in all general education subjects and activities with no support from the special education teacher.
- 2) Inclusive services in some general education services and activities with support from special education teachers. The collaborative model allows general education and special education teachers to work together. Small group instructions within the classroom.
- 3) Few inclusive services in general education. Activities with special education support, and academic instruction occur primarily in the special education setting.
- 4) Most restrictive – education in a special education classroom that is self-contained. Likely using a modified curriculum.

Productive and inclusive school environments are developed:

Positive classroom and school environments:

- Shaped positive student behaviors.
- Used educative and restorative approaches to discipline.
- Provided support for student motivation and learning.
- Created multi-tiered system of support to address all student needs.

Developing and assessing positive learning environments:

- Diagnosed school needs using school microclimate data.
- Improved school climate and culture.
- Rates of exclusionary discipline reduced.
- Provided a multi-tiered system of student support.
- Investments in educator training and professional development.

The educational institution has a professional support team at all levels, and all specialists are provided (see Appendix 1, 2).

The support team has developed regulations, defined areas of responsibility, and clear work priorities. The support team meets in regular meetings. Decisions are communicated to all parties involved.

The support team provides parents with pedagogical, psychological, and social support. Parents regularly and timely receive information about available support and accommodations; feedback is provided about the child's performance and difficulties; educational activities are offered.

Teachers are provided with the necessary professional development and any kind of career growth support. It is critically important that teachers receive comprehensive training that enables them to understand pupils/students well, develop productive relationships and curriculum in their classrooms, and feel competent and confident so that they can communicate a sense of efficacy to their students and provide students with the stability they need.

In solving problems, the school management closely cooperates with the support team and, if necessary, with the responsible institutions of the municipality.

To achieve the planned outcomes of this project, teacher training includes a strong clinical component, where trainee teaching staff apply what they learn under the guidance of experienced and effective teachers/lecturers.

To ensure the use of project results after the completion of the project, a learning community has been created in educational institutions where everyone learns. In an educational institution, it is clear to everyone that support is a system that works to achieve a common goal. All those involved have systemic thinking skills - they look at the system as a whole, focus on the process, are based on the identification of causes/effects, and see the big picture.

The educational institution follows the principle of Educating the whole child. It means – to support student success in academic, cognitive, ethical, physical, and social-emotional. Systems of support contribute to healthy development, meet child/student needs, and address learning barriers. The educational institution must implement various educational programs, modern environmental accessibility solutions must be implemented, and the educational achievements of the students must be regularly evaluated, as well as the necessary and provided support. Regular data on the institution's microclimate should be collected, comparative analysis should be carried out.

The implementation and provision of the principles of inclusive education started during the implementation of the project is continued, using the knowledge, skills, insights, and information acquired in the project. The support team is guided in its work by [developed guidelines](#). The communication of the project partners is continued.

All students with special needs, re-migrants, bilingual, etc.: with learning difficulties, behavior problems, language disorders, ADHD, autistic spectrum disorders, as well as other students, if they need assistance, present at a particular stage of their lives, receive the necessary support immediately.

In collaboration with:

- parents/legal representatives of the student
- class teachers
- subject teachers
- school management

