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## After a decade: What remains of a kindergarten developmental arts education project?

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### Abstract

*This article focuses on the long-term impacts and effects of developmental work that began as an arts education project in Helsinki in 2000. Ten years later, five kindergarten leaders were interviewed to gather information about the impacts of the project. The aim was to determine the long-term effects of the project and examine in which ways the impact could still be seen in the daily work in kindergartens. We also explored the reasons and prerequisites for the impacts still showing, and tried to discover which obstacles prevent the ongoing impact of the developmental work.*

*The interviews showed that the sustainability of the impacts was connected to the organizational changes and the longevity of the personnel in the kindergarten. The developmental work could be better taken advantage of when the kindergarten leaders felt the tasks developed in the project were important and offered them new ideas in their pedagogical leadership. A long-lasting developmental project was seen as part of the process of updating education, which confirmed the*

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*participants' consciousness about being a teacher and the nature of the educational practices as well as a reflective manner of working. Participating also increased general developmental skills and interest in other developmental themes.*

## Introduction

Developmental projects raise many kinds of mental images. Are they really important for developing work and quality or do they just take resources and attention away from the basic work without producing any additional value? In this article, we explore the long-lasting impacts of an art education project that began in Helsinki in 2000. We tried to determine if the developmental work that began ten years ago is still evident in the everyday activities of participant kindergartens today.

Originally, there were 1,500 children and their parents, 400 educational personnel from the southeast Helsinki district schools and kindergartens, and 20 artists involved with the project. The children were from three to nine years of age. Shared local targets in the project aimed to improve the life management of families with children, while also accelerating communal collaboration among the inhabitants of the area. At the kindergarten level, the focus in the project was on increasing the children's attendance and participation, as well as improving the personnel's professional skills. The content, ideas and elements of the activities were taken from local history and culture and were carried out through artistic working methods. Another important goal was offering high quality arts education in kindergartens and schools. The project was divided into small subprojects, and their developmental themes included circus, dance, architecture, literary art, drama, and visual and environmental art. The achievement was executed as a collaboration between artists and educational professionals from kindergarten and school. Table 1 shows a description of the contents of the sub projects and the collaboration from different points of view.

*Table 1. Collaboration in sub projects and contents of work*

Sub-project	The artists' task	Collaboration between the artists and the teachers	Examples of the content of the work and the output
<b>Dance</b>	One dance pedagogue and students of dance pedagogy	Intensive long-lasting collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dance studies for the personnel in kindergarten and school</li> <li>• Dance moments and thematic work with the children</li> <li>• Dance performances of the children</li> </ul>
<b>Circus</b>	A group of circus professionals	Intensive long-lasting collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circus studies for the personnel</li> <li>• Circus moments and thematic work with the children</li> <li>• Circus performances of the children</li> </ul>
<b>Environment and visual arts</b>	Several different artists	Periodic work with different artists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artistic moments with the children</li> <li>• Children's art</li> </ul>

			exhibitions
<b>Literacy and drama</b>	Several different artists	Artist visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artistic moments and thematic work with the children</li> <li>• A book made by the children</li> </ul>
<b>Architecture</b>	One architect	Intensive long-lasting collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artistic moments and thematic work with the children</li> <li>• Children building huts enriching their play environment</li> </ul>

The sub projects lasted intensively between 1 and 2.5 years each. The artists were hired to work in kindergartens and schools together with the teachers. External funding from the city of Helsinki administration was used for the costs. After the funded project, the schools and kindergartens continued the developmental work on a smaller scale and in collaboration with fewer artists.

During the project evaluation and research, data was collected using the principles of multidimensional evaluation (Ojala & Vartiainen, 2008). The evaluation data consisted of interviews with teachers and artists, the final report of the project, and the follow-up reports of the project. Table 2 shows the contents of the evaluation data.

*Table 2. Research data*

Research Data	Numbers	Date Collected
Interviews with teachers and artists	n=18	2000
Narratives from project reports	n=9	2000
Coordination group meeting memorandums	n=14	2000
Other follow-up materials: reports, economic follow-up reports, photos, video tapes, children's artwork, portfolios		2000-2006
Second interview, kindergarten leaders	n=5	2012

Multidimensional evaluation explores the evaluation target entity in tight connection to its context. It is also very important to give a voice to different interest groups and points of view in dialogue with each other. Multidimensional evaluation is constructivist and comparative. It takes advantage of different data, evaluation materials and methods. The idea is to get as versatile a picture of the evaluation target as possible and to avoid simplification. Pragmatism is also important; evaluation concentrates on the collection of data where the most important points of view can be found using the resources that are available. Advantages of this method are versatility, pragmatism and polyphony. Complete objectivity and value freedom multidimensional evaluation method does not reach but polyphony ensures that the evaluation is not based on values of one group.

Four scientific articles have been written based on the material concerning the project presented in this article (Nevanen, Juvonen & Ruismäki, 2012a, 2012b, 2014a, 2014b).

Detailed results of the project are reported in these publications. The earlier articles focused on the development work of the project from different starting points, which were: multi-professional collaboration, development of children's learning skills, school and kindergarten as learning environments, and qualitative evaluation of an arts education project.

In 2012, the permanency and sustainability of the impacts of the project were explored through kindergarten leaders' interviews. This article focuses on these interviews mirroring the information to the results of earlier research using multidimensional evaluation as a method.

### **The sustainability of the impact of the project work as a target of the evaluation**

The impacts of the project include different cultures of knowledge and information, which determine what parts of the impact information is legitimate. The information cultures are based on the dissimilar background and professions of the participant groups. Representatives of different professions have dissimilar value bases in the background of their thinking, which leads to different cultures of knowledge. In different types of information cultures, the impact is reasoned in different ways and the evaluation always includes a value judgment. The impacts can be evaluated through a reasoning style that measures the aims of the project. The benefits come from clarity, substance and simplicity. Quite close to this approach is evaluation in which the reasoning is based on the needs that are behind initiating the project. The focus is on the question: does the project respond to the needs of the client? These questions are often evaluated using multidimensional evaluation principles through which all participants of the project are heard.

The reasoning style that concentrates on observing the actions focuses on determining the acting mechanisms of the accomplished changes and their functions. It is important to explore the project in the context of the operational environment. In addition, the projects can be evaluated using an interactive, diagnostic reasoning style. In those cases, it is a matter of self-evaluation of the developmental work where it is important not only to determine the impacts, but also to let the voices of the participants be heard (Rajavaara, 2006; Hacking, 2002; Vedung, 2004; Dahler-Larsen, 2005).

The conception of impact can be explored from numerous points of view, starting from the purposes or practical solutions. The basic evaluation questions can be condensed in the words of Peter Dahler-Larsen (2005, 2001), "What the impacts which, where, how, when and under which prerequisites?" The intention is to discover on which level the intervention, which has been made, has taken the task in the direction in which it was targeted. The evaluation of impacts is not aimed at the general impacts, but rather at the explanations and analysis of the preconditions that could help to make the intervention work even more effectively. According to Pawson and Tilley (1997), in public sector interventions it is seldom possible to show regular impacts between the intervention and the results because the intervention offers information, activities and opportunities to people with different levels of preparedness, individual aims, values and opinions. This makes the impacts local and tightly context-bound. The impacts are usually not strong, but it is worthwhile to explore what parts of the intervention did have an impact and under

what preconditions. Evaluating the impacts also makes it possible to explore the obstacles to the intervention.

The evaluation of impacts can be used in supporting learning processes in organizations. The evaluation of impacts may be considered as a test of real life, which shows whether the activities implement what they were meant and aimed to do. In impact evaluation, the focus is on both the process and the output. In addition, the side effects of the intervention can also be explored. The evaluation collects information that can be used to create interaction between practical achievement and theoretical knowledge. The evaluation of the impacts should also create dialogue about the relationship between the personnel's professional knowledge of the personnel and the leaders (Dahler-Larsen, 2005, 2001).

The long-lasting impacts of the project work often remain unevaluated, because the data collection and analysis are not planned and the resource allocation is forgotten. Evaluation of the long-lasting impacts would bring valuable information about the impacts of the interventions. It might occur that the most important impacts can only be seen after many years' time, and this is why they are never found (Adey, 2008).

### **Developmental project in the use of professional practices and working society**

A developmental project raises new points of view and ways of thinking about an individual's own profession. The work easily becomes routine and the practices follow the same patterns. Still, project work can also offer opportunities to change the approaches used at work. Developmental project work can also serve to update education for the personnel. Learning in project work is based on experience; it is functional and it can include instruction. Learning takes place in a real context and it is communal. These learning elements help the learner toward significant and impressive professional growth. (Simons, Van der Linden & Duffy, 2000).

Reflecting on one's own procedures extends when they are observed on an everyday-based model: *reflection in action* work deepens to *reflection on action*, where it is possible to identify new points of view and new professional practices (Schön, 1984). Reflecting helps the worker in both altering the professional practices and increasing his or her acquaintance with and understanding of the accomplishment. It may also empower the working staff (Black & Plowright, 2010). The personnel connect their experiences and understanding of these experiences to their cognitive structures when they reflect on their own work (Higgins, 2011).

The means of reflecting are discourse, speculation, diary writing and portfolio work (Black & Plowright, 2010). Arts can also be used in portfolio work. It may function as a catalyst for developing a reflection practice. Connecting arts and professional practices can expand the personal exploration of professional practices (Cheng, 2010). Arts may be exclusively useful in understanding professional customers' point of view and deepening the interaction between the customers and working staff. Art may also help people to get in touch with silent, subconscious knowledge and make it visible (Cheng, 2010). Furthermore, the learning process can mould the professional identity. The changing process includes cognitive, social and emotional elements. Meanings are found through this complex process. Joining the cognitive and emotional elements gives birth to a strong

learning experience. Often learning and identity building processes ignore emotions like fear and its meaning to learning (Geijssels & Meijers, 2005; Meijers, 2002; van Oers, 2005).

A developmental project can work as an individual's learning environment, but it can be, par excellence, an environment for developing society's communality and group learning. On an individual level, the aim of learning can be to increase a worker's ability capital and working expertise at the same time as increasing the significance of work. On the society level of work, the learning aims to develop the working quality and communality as the working culture improves (Dickerson, Jarvis & Levy, 2013; Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004; Friedman & Phillips, 2004; Duncombe & Armour, 2004; Engeström, 2001).

In learning while working, informal learning is often the most essential way. Learning is social by nature; it involves companionship and learning from each other. The leader must be oriented to development and facilitation, which supports communal learning in working society. In learning while working, the aim is not in learning single skills, but rather in developing the whole personality of the worker and the learning process increases understanding of the work. Furthermore, communal learning increases the understanding between workers (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004; Matusov, von Dyke & Han, 2013; King, 2014).

#### Starting points and the research questions

In this article, effectiveness is explored on both social and individual levels, the near environment culture and the individual level. The goal is to open the structural elements, which support or prevent the impacts of the project. The influences the near society and its activities are also examined; in this special case, it is an entity of working society in one kindergarten with its nearby surroundings and collaboration partners. In addition, we also explore the individual experiences of the project and the significance they provide to the project.

The research questions are:

- 1) How is the ten-year-old developmental project evident in kindergartens today?
- 2) What or who benefits from the developmental project even today?
- 3) What has prevented the long-term benefits of the developmental work from being comprehended?

#### **The research data and the methods of research**

The long-term impacts of the arts education project were investigated by interviewing the leaders of the kindergartens that participated in the project. The invitation to the interview was sent to ten kindergartens. Some of the leaders reported that they did not have any knowledge about the project, or that they had heard about it, but that the developmental work was no longer part of their kindergarten's routines. Finally, five kindergarten leaders were located, who were willing to participate in the interview. In addition to these five, there were telephone discussions and emails sent between researchers and three other kindergarten leaders.

The interview questions covered the notions and associations of the time during the project, the continuation of the project, and the support of it in the developmental work. In addition, issues around the collaboration with the artists, the development of the arts

educational environments, and the use of the arts in developing general learning skills were also mentioned. Finally, the developmental aspects of the work and working society, the significance of the developmental project in the improvement of skills, and the usefulness of the project as an opportunity for teachers to update training, were further issues inquired in the interviews. The semi-structured interviews lasted about one hour, and they were recorded and transcribed. The material was then analysed using content analysis. The content of the interviews was then divided into themes and arranged according to organization, either kindergarten or individual level impacts. The answers were compared to earlier evaluation data from the project.

## The results

### Organization and area level

There had been many organizational changes in the area. Some of the participating kindergarten posts had been closed and some of the kindergarten leaders had moved on to other kindergartens or assignments. In addition, the kindergarten administration had been reorganized and the areal leaders and specialists had changed since the time of the project. The strategic focus had changed over the years and there was no longer any kind of developmental funding left as there had been during the project. The kindergarten leaders remembered the time when the project was carried out as a time when the middle administration gave help and guidance for content development and that made it possible for the individual kindergartens doing developmental work to begin from their own premises. One of the leaders stated: “I think that those days were the best in my working career although I had 42 workers to lead. Then I had a better possibility to concentrate on large content developmental matters that we wanted to work on, and my own boss supported me in it”.

The areal level target of the project was arts education and the communality of the children and their families as a way of strengthening the management of life together with deepening and diversifying the collaboration between the actors in the area. The administrators (coordination group) estimated in the final report of the project that the targets concerning both the customers and the workers had been adequately reached and that the procedures developed in the project supported local aims and targets. In the final report, the representatives of the administration (coordination group) wrote, “In all the sub projects there was strengthening of the life control and self-esteem seen in workers, children and adults. Our experience challenges us to invest in cultural education and social work”. The communality and prevention of the dropout phenomenon are sustainable themes in early childhood education and teaching administration areas together with collaboration of many administrative municipalities, but communal art or the use of arts supporting these targets can no longer be seen commonly in this field. Regardless of the positive estimations, the area players have not supported these accomplishments. On the organizational level, no support has been given to secure the continuity or sustainability of the developmental work done; the continuity was left as a task for each individual kindergarten, and that has not been continued. The kindergartens still have freedom to develop their own work, beginning with their own customers’ needs and abilities; this means that the areal administration has not prevented the continuity of the developing

work in the separate kindergartens, but neither has it supported recording the ongoing effects.

### **Kindergarten level**

In the kindergartens where the project's impacts still could be seen in some form, the role of the leader was important. She/he had to be able to keep in her/his pedagogical leadership on a high level and even strengthen the objectives and methods used during the project to also inspire the staff in further developing its work. This was described by one leader, "You must try to get the time for developmental work and you must appreciate your staff as they do it. Every now and then I speculate about the significance of the leadership in developmental work and its success; I guess sometimes it is even too large".

The contribution of the leader was also important in familiarizing new workers in the working culture of the kindergarten. The sustainability of the project impacts depended not only upon the leader's activity, but also upon the availability of enough workers to be involved in the project during the intensive era of development. They had a positive experience of the project and its results, which supported the methods that were acquired through the project. One of the leaders considered this: "There are nine early childhood educators in my kindergarten of whom three were involved in the project since the beginning. One of these three is now retiring and she is the only one who has been educating the others in making graphics". If the kindergarten leader had gone to a new kindergarten or post she/he could not move the positive impacts of the project with her/him into the new kindergarten using only the pedagogical leadership because it would have required the involvement of the workers and the personal touch of the project and its methods. If the kindergarten that had been involved in the project had received a new leader, who did not have the experience of the project, the developmental work would have ended because workers' abilities and experience could not alone support the continuance of the projects' impacts in the kindergarten.

What had survived and continued living in the kindergartens, were the artistic abilities gained through collaboration with the artists. Circus, visual arts and dance were still present in the activities of the kindergartens. The staff also familiarized and educated new workers into the approaches and content of arts education. Those workers who had been in the project and learned the ideas organized some education for the others in the kindergarten or transferred it with their own example to the new working partners. One of the leaders said, "Long lasting developmental work is needed, because it leaves a stronger impact". The leaders saw the broad and exact documentation of the project as most important. From the project, there are portfolios, photo albums, instructions and video materials. The documented material can help to educate others, but it can also inspire their actions and reflections. The leaders noted that the staff reviews together the materials and remembers the project activities. This also brings communality to the working group. One staff member who had been involved commented: "The document material is still in use in our kindergarten. We have large photo albums from the project that we use to familiarize new workers with the methods". The staff members that have been involved in the project examine the materials together and become inspired anew. The staff in the kindergartens that participated in the project has many artistic skills and these kindergartens have attracted workers interested in arts education.



In some kindergartens, collaboration with the same artists has continued for years while some have searched for new artists as collaboration partners. The collaboration was described by one teacher: “A connection to the same artist has lasted, and one year ago he contacted us again suggesting a joint dance and photography project, which we gladly joined”. Collaboration with the artists would have been eagerly undertaken, but the lack of funding prevented it. Poor funds for education and operations made it impossible to continue broad and long-lasting collaboration. The kindergartens also utilized such old collaboration partners as the Art Centre of Annankatu, where free art education was available. One of the great insights from the era of the project was that through the art projects, the children were eager to learn in a concentrated way, and different contents of learning could be integrated in arts education. One teacher described this: “We could include in the circus project whatever we wished: math, mother tongue, PE, drama . . . The skill to inspire the children has come from the project working”.

The use of surrounding area’s resources as a learning and operational environment has been ongoing and further developed. The nature resorts nearby as well as diverse areas with buildings, that were noticed during the project to be good for hiking and for different activities, were still being used actively. One participant noted, “The project offered knowledge of the surrounding areas and the children and teachers have continued to go there. The groups have their own favourite places where they visit often and carry out different kinds of activities”. In addition, the buildings in the kindergarten as a learning supporting environment were under critical exploration. For example, one of the leaders mentioned discussions concerning the rules of the kindergarten: “We discussed if the prohibition on running inside would be necessary for safety reasons, or does it prevent the children’s meaningful play?”

Although the kindergartens continued to use some of the previously used facilities, the collaboration with the different actors and other kindergartens in the area had not continued actively after the project had ended. Changes in staff, organizational changes, and other constant changes hindered the collaboration continuity. However, the kindergarten leaders did report that the close collaboration between different kindergartens and schools during the era of the project is still seen on a practical level in coordinated planning of common summer activities in the area.

The kindergarten staff continued to work with themes for example circus, which means that each kindergarten chose one common theme for the next 1-2 years. One of the leaders noted: “The project taught us the value of working with a theme, and it has become a permanent way of working. The common theme is chosen for one year and the education and operation money is guided to carry out this theme”.

After choosing the theme, education was offered and outside specialists were invited into the kindergartens. The themes were selected to avoid fragmentation of the activities and to build long lasting play with storylines where the children’s play, learning, and other activities could be involved. The use of a common theme created companionship between the workers and built communality in the kindergartens. In addition, performances, events, exhibitions and functional parent evenings were a part of the culture created through the project work that had become a permanent organizational format in the kindergartens. This offered target orientation, an opportunity for the children to demonstrate their work, and an opportunity for the children’s parents to participate.

The exploratory way of working with the children was another method that began during the project work. This is well described in the next example:

When we go on a nature excursion, we explore things and every child tries to find a wood stick. They are then put together to form the sun. After that, the formation is photographed and the picture is put on the wall for all to see in the kindergarten; then it can be further explored and contemplated.

In each kindergarten the personnel reflected on their own methods and questioned them; the staff had courage to try new solutions. Behind this, the leaders saw a clear connection to the project era's positive learning experiences. They became aware that the personnel had gained more professional skills through the project. One of the leaders stated: "One's own experience and feeling is the most important issue when educating oneself". The experiences of working together and reflecting on the shared experience has become a permanent activity in kindergartens. According to the leaders, the project increased open discussion among the staff of different kindergartens.

The long-lasting project work also increased the workers' developmental skills and positive attitude towards continuing the development of their work. One of the interviewees said: "It was a positive learning experience offering me more professional skills, which encourages me to eagerly join new projects". Those kindergartens that participated in projects had also joined other developmental projects. The leaders said that when the arts educational project began, no one really knew what the participation involved would mean or what to expect: "During the long project we sometimes got tired and did not immediately after it wish to commit to another project that would require so much work and attention. After a while, we started to long for new challenges and eagerness for new projects awoke". One of the leaders described the situation: "The learning was quite difficult every now and then, but later it was shown to be valuable. The challenges are welcome to kindergarten workers in the form of project work, otherwise they get bored". The project work taught them to organize their work better and the developmental work connected to the usual work smoothly, so it was not seen as extra work. The developmental and reflective touch in work became so permanent in some of the kindergartens that they became aware of the wrong kind of routines and were willing to change them.

Not only were teachers more proactive about improving their work methods, they also could see that the arts education project was an excellent way to upgrade training. Getting the training in the kindergarten so that it could immediately be tried with the children was seen as most effective. During the project, the artists offered tutoring to the workers through their own way of working with the children showing new points of view and mirroring the work of the kindergarten staff. Afterwards, the workers missed the multi professional discussions that had taken place during the project. Nowadays the visits of instructors or outside specialists only last for a short while, and it makes it impossible to build a long-lasting confidential collaboration between different professionals. According to the leaders, making art together offered a shared experience as a part of continuing training, which contributed to the communality and openness in the working group.

### Individual level

The continuing education of the workers during the project included education from the artists, multi professional collaboration between the teachers and the artists, and collaboration between the kindergarten staff and schoolteachers. In addition, the staff also participated in common meetings preparing the project work. The training included formal education in the form of lessons about arts education as well as workshops for the staff, and project education. Working as a partner with the artists offered an informal way of learning, where learning took place in both directions as two professionals shared their skills, abilities and expertise. The project work also required the work group to participate in a common learning process in which suitable methods were explored through trial and error, which led the work community to reflect on its effectiveness in work. One participant described this: “Good experiences must be lifted up every now and then. The common evaluation of earlier actions forms a basis for new operations”.

According to the kindergarten leaders, the staff gained many abilities and skills in the field of art education. There were different fields of art involved, such as circus, nature art, dance and architecture; earlier some teachers did not have skills in these fields. These skills were strengthened and became a part of normal routines in the working groups and kindergartens. The interest in arts was also amplified through the positive experiences. One teacher described this: “The children were inspired by the circus activities time and time again. This year the schoolchildren prepared three performances that were shown to smaller children’s groups”. More important than learning the skills, the leaders saw the strengthening of reflective working practices, which took place through the project work as well as the beginning of a positive attitude for the developmental work. The workers also learned to give feedback to each other and act more fluently in collaboration. An interviewee said: “The project work increased our collaboration and project skills, as well as our ability to share tasks, delegate matters and be flexible; it taught us to make deals among the workers”. A reflective manner of working guided further open dialogs about the work and improved teachers’ conscientiousness about work customs. According to the leaders, the motivation for developing the work, which was left from the project, also increased the meaningfulness of work and wellbeing at work. An interviewee described it as follows:

During the project, the stress level could increase as we were preparing exhibitions and had a lot of work and difficult situations. However, the wellbeing at work came later. We noticed that the project work had brought us together; we have had common experiences and it has made us an even more solid group of workers.

According to the leaders in every kindergarten, more was learned about using the strengths of the workers and their skills that were shared with the others better than before. Here is one example: “One of the workers said that music just wasn’t her skill area at all. We decided that she could watch and follow the activities with the children. Step by step she began to teach the same musical games to the children”. Instead of envying the skills of others and competing with them, people saw the abilities of different workers as common capital. The leaders of the kindergartens saw that this also helped their work as pedagogical leaders.

Table 3 shows the most important short- and long-term impacts of the developmental project.

<b>Short- and long-term impacts of the developmental project</b>		
	Short-term impacts	Long-term impacts
Areal level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration between kindergartens increased</li> <li>• Collaboration between kindergartens, schools and other areal actors increased</li> <li>• Communalities in parents' group increased</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No long-term areal impacts found</li> </ul>
Kindergarten or school level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts education became a developer of learning skills</li> <li>• The nearby surroundings of kindergartens and schools were taken advantage of as versatile learning environments</li> <li>• Teachers and artists joined their abilities, skills and expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts educational skills and expertise are utilised and transferred to new workers</li> <li>• Taking advantage of nearby surroundings as a versatile learning environment</li> <li>• Thematic work</li> <li>• Project working skills</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to meet new developmental challenges</li> <li>• Shared dialogue about the contents of educational work regularly</li> <li>• Taking advantage of workers' different skills and abilities</li> </ul>
Individual worker's level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational professional's arts education expertise improved</li> <li>• Project work abilities improved</li> <li>• A reflective attitude towards own work increased</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts educational skills</li> <li>• Integration of arts and skills to other subjects and their contents</li> <li>• Collaborative skills, communality</li> <li>• Reflective attitude towards work</li> <li>• Positive attitude for development of work</li> <li>• Interest in updating education and keeping professional skills high</li> <li>• Positive attitude towards developmental work improved meaningfulness of work and wellbeing at work</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

According to the interviews of the leaders, it was possible to form a picture of the mechanisms that either supported or discourage the changes that had taken place during the project (cf. Dahler-Larsen, 2005, 2001). Although we explored the impacts from a local and situational point of view, it also offered information and points of view about the learning mechanisms and side effects in an organization. We explored both the process

and results of the project. The evaluation and generalization of the results must be examined in the context of the actual environment.

The project work, which took place ten years ago, could in some ways still be seen in half of the kindergartens that had participated. It was not possible to reach those schools and teachers who had participated in the project decade ago, because the school network in the area had changed a lot. The main reasons for the impacts no longer showing were changes in the organization and personnel. This evoked questions about organizational changes affecting developmental work. The administrative changes clearly prevented the effects of developmental work from continuing and the results from becoming part of the basic practices. Another matter concerning local developmental work is the support that local administration offers to take the full advance in use from the project work. The leaders of the offices cannot affect fulfilling the lower level targets except for their own kindergartens. The local coordination of the work done afterwards should be resourced locally.

The continuity and sustainability of the developmental work in the kindergartens required that the leader in the office had to keep up the project's developmental themes and develop them further. The leader had the most important role for continuity of the developmental work. In addition to a leader, there must also be enough personnel participating in the project to support the leader in the work. The leader had to offer the staff a chance to concentrate and use enough working time for the developmental work. The development of work requires the staff to be flexible, and willing and able to observe critically her/his own work (cf. Geijsel & Meijers, 2005; Meijers, 2002)

The factors that promote the sustainability of the impacts of the arts education project as well as the factors preventing them are collected together in Table 4

*Table 4. Combined long-term impacts and promoting and preventing factors*

<b>Factors that affect the project's long-term impacts</b>		
	Promoting factors	Preventing factors
Areal level		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in organization</li> <li>• Changes in personnel</li> <li>• No money invested to sustainability of the developmental work</li> <li>• New focus points on the developmental work</li> </ul>
Kindergarten and school level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A leader committed to developmental work</li> <li>• Good documentation</li> <li>• Workers' collaboration skills and sharing of skills, abilities and expertise</li> <li>• Kindergartens and schools have an opportunity and freedom to define their own agency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in personnel</li> <li>• Lack of documentation or documentation performed with old technology (e.g. VHS video)</li> <li>• Lack of resources for continuing the collaboration with artists</li> </ul>
Individual worker level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The upgrading education which came through the project shows as improved</li> </ul>	The lack of support from the leader of the kindergarten or colleagues to continue the

	<p>skills at work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good experiences from developmental work</li> <li>• Positive attitude towards development and upgrading education</li> </ul>	<p>developmental work</p>
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The sustainability of the developmental works impacts was supported by good documentation that gave the participants an opportunity to return to reflecting on the common experiences. The document materials also help transmitting the methods and work to new staff. However, only the material, without individual experiences would not be enough. At its best, it inspired new workers to review the matters documented and then to learn from other workers through common work. The developmental project acted as an update and continuing training for the personnel. The best impacts were, according to the leaders, in lifting the professional skills of the personnel, which naturally led to better quality of work for the customers. As previous research (cf. Black & Plowright, 2010; Higgins, 2011) has shown, a reflective touch in work together with a positive attitude towards developmental work were more important results than the development of individual skills like the substance or methods of arts education. The project work also strengthened the communality of the working society (compare Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004). The strengthened communality led to more enjoyment at work. The project work requires struggle and people felt that it required more work, but afterwards when they had time to evaluate it, the project work was seen to make work more worthwhile.

At its best, the development of an individual's work had a positive impact where the improved professional skills, positive learning experiences, and the support of the working group inspired kindergarten staff to take on new challenges in the field of developmental work. As the development skills had improved, the projects were not seen as extra work, but it became part of the everyday routines. The positive atmosphere towards development work also attracted workers who were interested in developing their own work continuously. The interviews with the leaders showed that the project work could still be seen in a positive way after ten years in many ways in their kindergartens, in individual worker's professional skills and attitudes, and the communality of the working group. Results of individual and kindergarten level overlap and it is difficult to completely separate these.

According to researchers Geijsel and Meijers, schools should also be communities of professional learning where new practices would be developed joining the skills and expertise of all personnel. This kind of communality has occurred in the working communities in the project, which is under research and was mentioned at the beginning of this article. Geijsel and Meijers agree with this research about the prerequisites for communality: The strong role of the leader and good leadership in the developmental work are required to make the process successful. There must be a strong confidence in the working community that all members of the personnel will reflect on their own work and explore the meanings of the work together with their colleagues. This kind of discussion culture can only be built through a long period (cf. Geijsel & Meijers, 2005; Meijers, 2002).

One of the kindergarten leaders stated in the interview that in her kindergarten there had just been two 15-year- old girls doing their work practicing period, They had participated

in the project when they were in kindergarten. They said that they remembered best the circus performances and practising for them. An interesting research idea would be to interview the children who participated to see what they respected about their experiences in the project, what they remember of it, and what parts of it still affect their goals, interests, or hobbies.

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