

21ST INEPS CONGRESS HELD IN HELSINKI, FINLAND MAY 9TH 2009

Over 100 participants from all over Europe and the United States came to Helsinki for the 21st INEPS Congress. There were delegates from Finland, France, Spain, Germany, Portugal, Holland, Sweden, Russia, Bulgaria, Rumania and Greece who spent 6 days exploring and discovering the ways of Productive Learning.



Monday night a private tram drove everyone out to near the site for the opening dinner, but not before walking through a lovely park to arrive at the restaurant.

The opening sessions were held in the auditorium of the Alppila School. Aulikka Kalalahti, the principal welcomed the participants and Dr Ilkka Taipale gave an opening address which set the tone for the conference.



Many of the schools and projects participated in the Open Market where they gave presentations about their Productive Learning Sites. After a break for lunch everyone returned to the auditorium for the first Plenary Session of the membership.

That evening we were hosted to a reception by the Director of Education for Helsinki at the Old Town Hall.

The next day the participants were separated into 10 Groups and sent to various sites throughout the area including, the House of Adventure, School of Peace, Museum of Technology, Heureka Science Center, Finnish Museum of Photography and Theatre, Center for Media Education, Miasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Design Museum, and The "Harakka" Nature School. At all these sites everyone took part in practical exercises illustrating the efficacy of productive learning.

On Wednesday we were divided again and were taken to various schools in Helsinki to view their educational practices. The schools were: Tehtaanpuisto, Leppavaara, Hameenkyla, Alppila and Vesala. It must be noted that the Finnish Schools have been rated as the best in Europe in certain tests. It was emphasized that they enjoy a great deal of autonomy in creating their own methodologies. Therefore it should come as little surprise at the success of *Omaura (My Own Career)* and its championing of productive learning. In many schools they have adopted Jopo, a form of flexible basic education which among other practices features non graded groupings and many elective subjects to choose from.



The groups were then given time to prepare their presentations for the next day. That evening we were treated to a boat trip to the island fortress of Suomenlinna. After guided tours across this fascinating island which had served as a Swedish and Russian fortress and was home to a sizable shipyard and civilian community we had a picnic box dinner in a hall at the end of the island. Despite the cold wind everybody was in a good humor and had a great time. On Friday, the final day of the conference we all reconvened at the Alppila school for the group presentations of their workshops and the final plenary session of the Congress where elections were held.



During the Congress much was accomplished. The new website was discussed and in the next issue of the Newsletter we hope to show a guide to it including how to access it. The site of the next Congress in 2010 was decided on and we're happy to announce that it will be on the Portugese island of Madiera. Also discussed was reforming of the membership fees and possible sites for future Student Congresses.



The following Officers were reelected to the Administrative Council

- Angela Passa President
- Juha Lahtinen Vice President
- Hildburg Freynik ... General Secretary
- Petri Hanninen..... Treasurer
- Heike Borkenhagen
- Merce Marce
- Dennis Huntington



That night the delicious Farewell Dinner was held in the Dubrovnik Restaurant. There we were entertained by a "sound maker" and a young Finnish star, Reino Nordin, who was a product of Omaura. There followed the traditional entertainment by the participants and the presentations to the hosts by the guest countries. And so ended a most successful Congress!

