

**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, Romania and Greece who spent 6 days exploring and discovering the ways of Productive Learning.



Monday night a group from Greece everyone out to meet the site for the opening dinner but not before visiting through a lovely park to arrive at the restaurant.



The opening sessions were held in the auditorium of the Alppila School. Aulis Kallio, the principal welcomed the participants and Dr. Jukka Toivola 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 treated 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, Helsingin Science Center, Finnish Museum of Photography and Theatre, Center for Media Education, Museum of Contemporary Art, Design Museum, and The "Helsinki" 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: Tahvanperä, Leppenvuori, Hämeneke, Alppila and Heikkilä. 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 Oursara (My Own Group) and its championing of productive learning. In many schools they have adapted 21st Century of flexible basic education which among other practices featured new grade groupings and more 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 a guided tour across this fascinating island which had served as a Swedish and Russian fortress and was home to a stable shipyard and civilian community we had a great dinner in a hall at the end of the island. Despite the cold and emphasis was on 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 Portuguese island of Madeira. Also discussed was reforming of the membership fee and possible sites for future Student Congresses.



The following Officers were elected to the Administrative Council:  
 Angela Patis ..... President  
 Juhani Lahtinen ..... Vice President  
 Hilary Frank ..... General Secretary  
 Petri Hämäläinen ..... Treasurer  
 Jukka Berntzen  
 Marco Marz  
 Dennis Hartington

That night the delicious Farewell Dinner was held in the Dubrovnik restaurant. There we were entertained by a "Bouris Bouris" and a young Finnish star, Raisa Nordie, who was a product of Oursara. 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!

