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| **FINNISH TEACHERS EXHIBITION**  Photographer: Minna Kurjenluoma | |
| **KIMMO  SIURUAINEN**  Teacher in vocational education, Rovaniemi | “My name is Kimmo Siuruainen and I live in Rovaniemi, Lapland. I teach about nature and tourism for those who want to work in the tourism industry. My students are from 16 to 20 years old. They are social, interested in meeting new people, and ready to learn about cultures, nature and new activities.  Life is very different here because we have so much snow. We have huskies and reindeer and use snowmobiles. We have also the Northern Lights, the aurora borealis which is important for tourism here.  I think I have been a teacher for 16 years now.  Sometimes you have to be really tough with the students, for example, if you are talking about safety. We have quite difficult activities. The students have to go swimming in the ice hole with their clothes on. Then they have to climb out and make a fire. So, they are really wet and it can be -25 degrees Celsius.  We are using also dangerous equipment here: for example, axes, knives and snowmobiles, so you can’t play with them. Almost every time we go to the forest or to nature with the tourists we make a fire. You have to use an axe to make firewood. And when you make a fire, you also have to use knives. You have to think before you do things outside in nature.  I think the best part of teaching is the students. I really like to do things with my students, and I think it is nice.” |

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| **DICK KULLBERG**  Teacher in lower secondary, Porvoo | “My name is Dick Kullberg. I am 49 years old, and I live in the city of Porvoo, near the capital of Finland, Helsinki. I am a math teacher and I also teach physics.  My school is a Swedish Speaking school in Finland. Teaching is all in Swedish, but you also learn Finnish in our school because it is the main language in Finland. I think it is pretty special that we are just 300,000 Swedish speakers in Finland and get all the services in that language.  For me, it is very satisfying to see the joy in a student when he or she learns something. And in mathematics that is something that happens in every lesson.  In mathematics when you have a problem you have to spend a pretty long time concentrating and thinking about just that problem. And nowadays children think something always has to be happening. They cannot concentrate for more than two or three minutes at a time. It is not a good thing for mathematics.  In my classes in mathematics and physics, I talk with everyone, every lesson. So, I go to them and talk to them and do something with them. In that way, I hope they feel that they are noticed. Nowadays parents have much more demands on the teacher. That is not a good development, because I am a professional and know what I’m doing.  I am very happy every day. I come with joy to school every day! Always! Wow! This is my life; this is good for me.” |

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| **FINNISH TEACHERS EXHIBITION**  Photographer: Minna Kurjenluoma | |
| **PETRI KAROSKOSKI**  Teacher in adult education, Tampere | “My name is Petri Karoskoski. I live in Tampere, Finland and have lived here my whole life. I am now 62 years old and a senior teacher. I teach at Tampereen Aikuiskoulutuskeskus, TAKK for short. It is a vocational institution for adults, and my place is in the social and healthcare branch.  I’ve been a teacher for over 30 years. I like to work with people, and I must say that teaching makes me feel good. The main reason for that good feeling is that I can use my knowledge and my expertise. I think that I am good at what I do.  I am a mental health nurse in my background and I am also a social psychologist, so I have both a practical and a university background, two different qualifications. I think they make quite a perfect mix to teach.  My students are mainly adults and most have a long history in work life. Very often, they have studied before coming here to us. They are looking for new opportunities and new careers.  I feel that I have responsibility for my work life, my school, my team and my students. But when I’m facing the students, I feel that I’m the king and completely free to share my expertise with my students in whatever ways I have in mind, and that’s my idea of freedom.” |

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| **FINNISH TEACHERS EXHIBITION**  Photographer: Minna Kurjenluoma | |
| **MAIJA SNECK**  **Primary school teacher,  Lahti** | “My name is Maija Sneck and I am almost 47 years old. I live in Lahti, Finland with my family. I teach in a school called Tiirismaa School. It is a relatively big comprehensive school. We have kids from the age of 6 until the age of 16, so from pre-school until class 9.  When I was ten years old, I remember writing somewhere that I wanted to become a teacher. I had that dream throughout comprehensive school and then high school. When I finished high school, I applied to university and got accepted, and that’s it: I’ve been a teacher for 20 years or so.  I get to plan my teaching so that it really benefits each group that I teach. I try to go from one pupil to another to see how they are doing. As we don’t have a lot of testing in Finland, I just have to know my kids and see during every lesson that they are getting there. When the weather allows, we go outside where we can have a math or science lesson. And now that it is winter in Finland, all our P.E. lessons are outside. We go skiing and ice skating…  I think it’s super important that we find the strengths in each and every pupil, in each and every kid. And I mean the strengths could be math or P.E. or Finnish or English or whatnot. But they can also be these character strengths. Maybe you academically aren’t strong in every single subject, but you are super resilient. You are polite. You are friendly.   I feel I should constantly develop. It would be sad if I was still the same teacher I was 20 years ago.” |

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| **MINNA MOUHU**  **Music teacher, Sipoo** | “I am Minna Mouhu and I am a 49-year-old teacher. I live in Laukkoski, in Southern Finland, and I teach in Sipoo in a comprehensive school and in an upper secondary school. I have now been a teacher for 23 years. My students are between the ages of 13 and 19.  My teaching focus is always more practical than theoretical. I find it's more important that you can play or sing than that you know some musical notation.  I have had the opportunity to choose all the musical instruments myself, so I am quite satisfied. I have ukuleles, acoustic guitars, electric guitars; I have electric basses, two drum sets, and then all kinds of rhythmic instruments: djembe drums and conga drums and bongo drums and…  I hope they find some way to enjoy music. It can be singing, it can be playing, it can be listening to music. But I hope they find their own way.  I don’t use any tests. I can ask them to play in small groups something they have learned.  In my opinion, it’s a sign of trust when you are given the freedom to plan your own lessons. Therefore, I can also use all my knowledge and personal skills freely. I want to do my best, always.” |

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| **JOHANNA HEIKKILÄ**  **Principal, Hyvinkää** | “My name is Johanna Heikkilä, and I am a principal at the Hakalatalo School in Hyvinkää. I started in 2006 as a teacher and now I have been a principal for almost five years. The most important part of my job is to make sure that the kids are doing well. If the kids are doing well and the school days are OK for them, then the adults are feeling good too.  Everything shouldn’t always be easy or funny. But the feeling that you want to learn something new is really important. And the feeling that school is meaningful, that you are studying for your own future, is also important.  In our school, we have 60 members of staff. Half of them are school assistants, and about 25 of them are teachers. We have different kinds of classes, mainstream education from grade one to six and special needs education from preschool to ninth grade.  My workday starts early in the morning. I wake up every morning at 6 am. First, I check my work phone to see if there are any messages from the staff telling me that they are going to be absent. There are always a few messages, so I start to get substitute teachers and substitute school assistants for the day. I am glad to say that we have a good system to find substitute staff.  I try to plan my day so that I am available during the school day. Of course, I do my normal tasks, but I try not to plan any meetings when most of kids are at school. I want to be there for the kids and adults if they need me. In the afternoon it is time for work and meetings that require quiet time and concentration.  You don’t have to be scary. You can do more with a smile than an angry face.” |

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| **FINNISH TEACHERS EXHIBITION**  Photographer: Minna Kurjenluoma | |
| **HANNA AHVONEN**  Pre-primary education teacher, Helsinki | “My name is Hanna Ahvonen, I am 36 years old, and I teach a pre-primary education class in Helsinki. It means that the children in my class are from five to six years old and are going to primary education next year. My class includes 17 children and I have a co-teacher, nursery nurse and special needs assistant working with me. Approximately 70 percent of the guardians and children come from an immigrant background.  In Finland we use indoor and outdoor environments for learning, and Finland’s four seasons also give a nice variety for activities. In Helsinki, the local curriculum underlines that we should use the whole city as a learning environment. We have weekly trips to nature, different forests, playgrounds, ice skating or to museums. And we practice how to act in traffic as well.  Every situation or moment offers a chance to learn something. My education gave me the skills to see these moments and use them as learning opportunities.  When the children come to daycare the main thing is to learn Finnish and start to be part of Finnish society and Finnish culture – while respecting their own background.  When they have an idea of what they would like to learn in preschool, we always use it as a base for our teaching. It’s all about motivation. And if the children have the motivation to learn, they will learn more effectively. I really enjoy it when I see them learning and happy.” |

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| **FINNISH TEACHERS EXHIBITION**  Photographer: Minna Kurjenluoma | |
| **ELLA JÄRVINEN**  Language teacher and a special needs teacher, Espoo | “My name is Ella. By education, I am a special needs teacher, and also a Swedish and German teacher. Now I work as an inclusion class teacher with students who need special support. But in my class, there are also students who don’t need special support. It means that I’m teaching them in small groups or together with another teacher and I am staying with them almost every lesson.  When you work with someone who cannot speak Finnish well, you have to start from the beginning. Usually, the subject teachers have to teach everybody the same thing. It is my job to recognize those students who don’t understand everything. I start from the beginning with them by finding the most important words that you have to learn from the lesson and then check that they will understand.  You cannot learn anything if you don’t like learning. Learning should be comfortable and motivating. Only then can you get good results. And one of the main tasks of the teacher is to make learning fun.  I think the colleagues are the best part of this job, without good colleagues you couldn’t do this work. You can have advice and support from them.  When you notice that the students are ready for the world when they leave the school, that’s quite good feedback.” |