

The Finnish Trip to The Store Food Education Model Is Now Being Taken to Europe

School pupils are taught everyday food skills and smart consumerism in new, inspiring ways. **The Trip to the Store** food education model, innovated by the S group and the Finfood Finnish Food Information association, is now attracting international attention. The Finnish idea will be introduced to other European countries as part of an EU-funded food education project. The effectiveness of this method is currently being studied through a research project led by the University of Helsinki.



It is unclear to many children where food comes from and what it contains. Promoting a healthy way of living is an important factor in preventing child and adolescent obesity. The WeValueFood project funded by the European Institute of Innovation & Technology's EIT Food reviews effective food education methods around Europe. The Trip to the Store model, developed by the S group and Finfood, was selected for the project from among more than 350 food education methods.

"It's great that this Finnish food education model is receiving international recognition. The Trip to the Store operations are an excellent example of cooperation in teaching children healthy eating and everyday food skills in an inspiring way. In addition to developing the selections of grocery stores and modifying products and recipes, healthy food choices can be promoted through teaching," says **Sampo Päällysaho**, S Group's SVP of Groceries.

"There is a real demand for food education. During the Children's Rights Week, we want to highlight food education as a tool for a more sustainable future. The basic idea of the WeValueFood food education project is that by making children and young people interested in food we can also raise awareness and valuation of food", according to docent of nutrition science and university lecturer **Maijaliisa Erkkola** from the University of Helsinki.

"The Trip to the Store is a practical way of learning more about day-to-day phenomena. It is wonderful that we, as food educators, can now come together and take Finnish food education abroad through this project," says Executive Director **Anni-Mari Syväniemi** from Finfood.

Coronavirus moves the trips to online stores – the effectiveness of the method is now being studied in pilot schools in Finland and Poland

The effectiveness of the Trip to the Store method is now being studied in pilot schools in Finland and Poland, coordinated by the University of Helsinki. This study will review whether applying this food education method increases the interest and **understanding** of 3rd – 5th grade pupils regarding food. **The objective is to also introduce the Trip to the Store model to other European countries.**

Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the trips will be implemented as **online** grocery shopping and via a **remote connection** with the store manager of the nearest S-market store.

"The study is now being conducted both in urban and rural regions. The teachers and the children have sent us enthusiastic feedback concerning the methods," says Maijaliisa Erkkola.



Trip to the Store

- The idea for the food education model was born from S Group's **Food Manifesto**, where one thesis was to promote children's healthy diet.
- During their trips to the store, the children investigate such matters such as where do the products in a grocery store come from, which bread is the richest in fibre and how can they tell what foods come from Finland. The study model has been compiled by S Group and Finfood.
- The learning materials were produced by Finfood, and the trips will be carried out to S-market stores near the school. All co-operatives around Finland participate in the study module. More than 100 trips to stores were made during the school year 2019–2020.
- These trips support the "learning outside the classroom" idea of the curriculum, in which educational institutes are encouraged to cooperate with companies as part of schoolwork and learning. The trips to the store have received a great deal of positive feedback from pupils, teachers, parents and store personnel alike.
- In Spring 2021, the food education model will be extended to upper stage comprehensive schools with Finfood's Ruokavisa quizzes. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the trips will be implemented as online grocery shopping.

Further information:

Sampo Päällysaho, SVP Groceries, S Group, sampo.paallysaho@sok.fi, tel. 010 768 0665

Maijaliisa Erkkola, docent of nutrition science and university lecturer, University of Helsinki Department of Food and Nutrition, maijaliisa.erkkola@helsinki.fi, tel. +358 50 416 0389

Anni-Mari Syväniemi, Executive Director, anni-mari.syvaniemi@ruokatieto.fi, +358 50 511 8909

Trip to the Store study module (in Finnish): <https://www.ruokatieto.fi/retki-kauppaan>

The WeValueFood project reviews effective food education models

WeValueFood is a project funded by EIT Food, comprising 14 universities and organisations around Europe. Finland is represented by the University of Helsinki. The project reviewed effective food education tools and methods applied in Europe, and discovered more than 350 of them. The objective is to develop a platform that holds all the tools collected through this project, allowing the food educators to find an effective tool that suits their own search parameters.

EIT Food is a major European development project of food production that integrates businesses, education and research to find solutions to the global challenges related to food. Its purpose is to develop a sustainable, healthy and reliable food system through new innovations and multifaceted cooperation.

