

## Accelerating Digital Innovation in Schools through Regional Innovation Hubs and a Whole-School Mentoring Model



### About iHub4Schools

iHub4Schools is a 30-month long H2020 program project with a mission to propose mechanisms to **accelerate whole-school digital innovation** in and across schools through the establishment of **Regional Innovation Hubs**. The project supports school leaders and teachers to adapt **technology-enhanced learning practices** and **scale-up innovation** by establishing regional innovation hubs as sites for establishing and multiplying **school-to-school mentoring** structures. iHubs4Schools develops and pilots different support mechanisms to enhance collaboration between digitally advanced and less advanced teachers and schools through a variety of peer learning approaches and engagement structures.

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# School mentoring for digital innovation and the key concepts related to it

*Liisa Ilomäki, Minna Lakkala,  
University of Helsinki*

In iHub4Schools project we have focused on issues about **how to support schools to use digital technology in an innovative way**. From our understanding, the concept of digitally innovative schools is important for policymakers, researchers and practitioners. Despite the lack of clear definition of digitally innovative school, there is a recognized understanding that digitally innovative school refers to the practices where schools have systematically integrated technological possibilities into the different levels of practices from pedagogical practices in classrooms with student or to the collaborative and leadership practices of the members of the organisation (e.g., Agélie Genlott et al., 2019).

In our School mentoring model, developed during the iHub4Schools project, we highlight the key components as central for sustainable adoption of digital innovations in schools to eventually promote students' learning experience: Evidence-informed approach, Leadership and Teachers' digi-pedagogical practices. These key concepts are summarized from the earlier research, e.g., conducted by the project team members (Ilomäki & Lakkala, 2018; Pata et al., 2022).

For more information about the models and methods:  
<https://www.ihub4schools.eu/mentoring-model/>

In the iHub4Schools approach, social practices and co-creation are fostered through mentoring and peer-learning practices, which have endorsed the importance of social practices in innovation adoption (Ley et al., 2021). We follow the approach that schools (and related communities) are **environments for collaborative learning to share, develop and transform educational practices and values** (Ilomäki & Lakkala, 2018).

**Practical guide for school leaders and teachers will be available soon!**

**Handbook of the School mentoring model:** providing general guidance on how to develop engaging pedagogical practices for learners, engagement and supporting mechanisms for multiple stakeholders, feedback and evaluation of the practices.

NEW





# School mentoring model - how does it work in practice?

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the aim of the iHub4School model and related individual practical methods is to **support whole-school development in pedagogically innovative use of digital technology**, BUT do we have any evidence about its effectiveness?

The answer is YES! The iHub4Schools partnership is collaborating with tens of schools in Estonia, Finland, Norway, Georgia and Lithuania. You can hear what do teachers and school leaders think about the iHub4Schools model from their **testimonials**.



**Mzia Nogaideli, Art teacher in Kobuleti Public School N1 in Georgia**

*Being involved in the iHub4Schools project turned out to be an interesting point for my career as an art teacher. Using digital tools enhanced students' involvement, interest and motivation. The whole process was meaningful since students not only developed their digital skills and gained knowledge in the subject but developed team work and critical thinking skills as well.*

**Riina Veidenbaum, Headmaster in Rakvere Freedom School in Estonia**

*More than 70 employees from our school participate in the program, half of whom are advanced users. Main reason to participate in the program was to **increase the confidence of our teachers in using digital technologies with educational technology mentoring and training**. We want experienced colleagues to improve their skills and find new solutions. Also, to increase the courage and motivation of teachers with less skills, furthermore to be inspired about the possibilities of the technology enriched world around us.*



**Markku Antinluoma, Principal of Kevätkumpu School in Finland**

*It has been an important support for our ICT-team and whole school for enhancing the aims of ICT. When trying to enhance projects with the school's own resources it is like working in a vacuum; there is no external input. Now we have support and framing for improvement. Because there is someone looking somewhat outside our activities, it also "obligates" and gives backbone and a direction to our activities, so that we go to the right direction. We can summarise that it has motivated, ensured the quality and given multifaceted expert support.*



**Indra Sudeikienė, Primary school teacher, Klaipėda Gedminai progymnasium, Lithuania**

*When I started using the digital learning environment - ViLLE seven years ago, I was in shock. The students were delighted with their achievements, and I have the opportunity to monitor their progress easily. I have been applying information technology in my lessons for over 20 years. I am happy working in an interesting, meaningful way, to achieve higher results.*



Find more testimonials on our Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/ihub4schools>

# Characteristics of innovative digital schools - presentation of the iHub4Schools research findings

iHub4Schools research conducted in five countries (Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Lithuania, Norway) with teachers, school leaders, and representatives from the school municipality on **what digital innovative practices currently are in place** and **how these schools characterise digital innovative schools** and support mechanisms for digital innovation practices, showed that the schools, and countries have different resources available to support the scaling-up of advanced ICT-based teaching practices. Still, there are similarities, such as leaders' responsibility to scale-up innovative and advanced digital practices. **The support from the school leadership is one of the main support mechanisms to develop an innovative digital school.**



Stakeholders describe **having a strategy, a clear vision, a common understanding of goals and aims, and a collaborative culture as very important parts of scaling up digital processes in the school.** One very important characteristic of an innovative school is **the culture of sharing** and collaboration between the teachers themselves and the leaders. **Teachers in an innovative school are teachers who are flexible, collaborate in planning and teaching, learn together and from each other.** However, teachers do not accept the innovations "by force".

The findings show that models supporting schools in developing digital innovative practices, should focus on a **whole-school approach that include both leaders and teachers.** The leaders will have a special responsibility in scaling-up innovative and advanced digital practices in developing strategies, making sure there is time and space for collaboration between leaders and teachers for the possibilities of sharing experiences.

For more information:  
<https://www.ihub4schools.eu/deliverables/>

**Which are important parts of scaling up digital processes in the school?**

- ✓ having a strategy,
- ✓ a clear vision,
- ✓ a common understanding of goals and aims,
- ✓ a collaborative culture.

Source: iHub4Schools research results  
Deliverable "Digital Innovation Practices" D1.2  
more on <https://www.ihub4schools.eu/>



# Upcoming Events - stay tuned!



Join us

## iHub4Schools Final Conference, 25th of April 2023



The iHub4Schools Partnership is happy to announce the final event which will take place on **25th of April 2023**.

Conference of Innovative Education: **Fostering Sustainable Digital Innovation in Schools (EN)**,

“Uueneva hariduse konverents: Tehnoloogiaga võimestatud jätkusuutliku hariduse toetamine” (EE).

### What is the objective?

The Conference will:

- support the discussion about the culture of innovation and experimentation in schools, encouraging teachers to try new pedagogical approaches with digital tools;
- encourage collaboration and communication among teachers, and staff to foster a sense of community and shared ownership of digital innovation in the school.

**How to participate?** The conference will be carried out in the format of a hybrid event:

- **Face-to-face event will be held Tallinn University, Maximum hall A002**
- **Online session** will enable the participation of international. How to participate? You need to [register](#), after the registration you will receive the link.

### For whom?

practitioners (teachers and school principals), researchers, experts in technology-enhanced learning, teacher trainers, members of NGOs, policy makers.

Click to see the **AGENDA**: <https://www.ihub4schools.eu/>, <https://www.facebook.com/ihub4schools>

Join us

## Conference: Developing and Sharing Excellence on digitalisation of teaching and learning, 23rd of May 2023



A synergy EVENT with European Training Foundation DIGI ENE Initiative on 23.05.2023 at 12:00 CEST.

Special session will be dedicated to the iHub4Schools School mentoring model and its application within the school environment in Finland, Lithuania, Georgia, Estonia and Norway. Registration form will be available soon, stay updated: <https://www.facebook.com/ihub4schools>

Scan to register

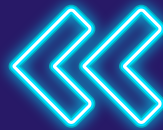


**25th of April 2023**



Tallinn University,  
Maximum hall A002

# Conference of Innovative Education Fostering Sustainable Digital Innovation in Schools



**ACCELERATING DIGITAL INNOVATION IN SCHOOLS  
THROUGH REGIONAL INNOVATION HUBS AND  
A WHOLE-SCHOOL MENTORING MODEL**



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. Grant Agreement:101004676

# iHub4Schools Final Conference program



**Date: 25th of April 2023**



## Conference of Innovative Education: Fostering Sustainable Digital Innovation in Schools



Format: **Hybrid event**

- On-site: Tallinn University, Maximum hall A002
- Online session: for international participants

9:15 - 10:00 Registration and welcome

10:00 - 10:30 **Opening:** iHub4Schools & DigiEfekt teams

10:30 - 11:30 **Opening presentation:** Mentoring Schools to Drive Innovation (Kairit Tammets, TLU)

11:30 - 12:15 **Keynote speech:** AI Goes to School: Implications for Education and Educators (Mutlu Cukurova, University College London)

### Lunch break

### Parallel Sessions I

13:00 - 14:00 **Parallel session I:** Lessons from DigiEfekt project: Students' interaction with E-Books: results of process mining and sequence analysis for supporting students learning

**Parallel session II:** Lessons from iHubs4Schools project: Towards digitally innovative schools in Finland, Georgia, Lithuania. (Led by: Liisa Ilomäki & Minna Lakkala, Helsinki University)

**Parallel session III:** Are schools ready for AI times: Policy recommendations suggested by iHub4Schools: Heli Aru-Chabilan (HarNo), Mutlu Cukurova (UCL), Barbara Wasson (University of Bergen), Denis Gillet (École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne)

### Parallel Sessions II

14:00 - 15:00 **Parallel session I:** Lessons from DigiEfekt: Predictors and implications of digital classroom integration practices

**Parallel session II:** Lessons from iHubs4Schools project: Sustaining Regional Innovation Hubs Examples from Georgia, Lithuania, Finland and Estonia (Led by: Pirgit Sillaots and Kairit Tammets, TLU)

15:15 - 16:00 **Plenary session:** Looking into the future: Heli Aru-Chabilan (HarNo), Mutlu Cukurova (University College London), Doris Kristina Raave (Tartu Ülikool), Kairit Tammets (TLU)

16:00 - 16:15 **Closing session**

16:15 - 19:00 **Refreshments and networking**



**How to register? Fill in the form**

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Graphic design: STePS, Italy  
Pictures: Canva Pro

**iHub4Schools supports the creation of**

## **Regional innovation Hubs**

**fostering the scaling of the  
digital innovation**

Join us! You can be part of this change!



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