

Scientific Statement:



Evaluation of Lions Quest program
(PI Dr. Markus Talvio) by Professor Kirsti Lonka,
Faculty of Educational Sciences,
University of Helsinki, Finland



Even though it is widely known that LQ is an effective program, scientific evidence is important for several reasons.

First, through scientifically valid information, we are better equipped to develop the workshops (content, practices, length, etc.) so that they will promote the desired goals among the participants. Second, information about the benefits that have been scientifically proven motivates Lions members to fund LQ. Third, if the program has been scientifically investigated, it is easier to get financial support from various sources, for example, from the European Union. The main aim should be to see whether LQ provides equal results worldwide, regardless of the context and culture.

Teachers are the key people to implement LQ in their classrooms. Therefore, the intention of the research in question was to clarify the benefits of Lions Quest workshops for teachers. The present evaluation project started in 2013 in Finland, and in 2015, data collection spread to new LQ countries. The goal of the present evaluation project was to investigate the benefits of LQ training for teachers in different parts of the world. The research was carried out in collaboration with University of Helsinki, Finland, according to the agreed timetable.

It is important to understand that the pace of publishing in international peer-refereed journals is somewhat difficult to predict. While acknowledging this, we can be quite positive that the schedule held so well. It is quite clear that publishing in the top journals with the data at hand is challenging. The results of this project, however, have been published in good journals that apply peer-referee practices.

The Pre-Phase of the Project was an introduction to the larger evaluation project on the outcomes of LQ training. To be able to compare workshops in different countries, it was essential first to compare the perceptions of LQ workshop goals held by LQ trainers and country coordinators in different countries. Only if their perceived goals were similar in different countries could we compare the outcomes of the LQ training later on. Overall, the results indicated that the LQ leaders' perceptions were consistent throughout the different countries surveyed. In terms of their perceptions of both the goals of the teachers' workshop and the goals of the LQ program for the pupils, there was little variation. It appeared that the process of LQ implementation was quite successful in maintaining the original goals in the LQ curricula: the perceptions of LQ goals and the official LQ goals were similar internationally. It was thus possible to compare the outcomes of LQ in different countries.

The intention of Phase I was to develop and test a training evaluation model for the International LQ Evaluation Project. The participants of the study were teachers from Finland. There were 155 members of school staff that participated in the LQ training. The comparison group consisted of 65 teachers. In addition, there was a second comparison group comprising 46 teachers and other members of the school staff.

The study was a pre-post quasi-experimental intervention study. Teachers participating in the LQ workshop rated the goals as more important and relevant after receiving training. Furthermore, these participants in the intervention group felt more competent in skills related to the LQ goals than the comparison groups. In addition, it appeared that the evaluation model of the study can be used to measure the outcomes of the LQ teacher training workshop. The research group was quite innovative in trying to find ways to look at such complex issues with a limited budget that only allowed structured and self-reported data. Fortunately, the instruments were based on previous high-quality dissertation work by Dr. Markus Talvio. In his dissertation (2014), he carried out qualitative measures on which the instruments could be built. His thesis was graded with A-level (Eximia) in the Faculty of Behavioral Sciences (called Faculty of Educational Sciences since 2018). In an ongoing dissertation work by Ms. Minna Berg, MA, further qualitative analyses were carried out. As the supervisor of both of these researchers, I can guarantee that their work is of high value. Specific qualitative analyses were carried out based on LQ (Talvio, M. & Lonka, K., 2013. *The European Journal of Social & Behavioural Sciences*, 6, (3), 1057-1065).

This evaluation project could be criticized for not applying a randomized control group. It is quite common, however, to use convenience samples in studies like this: the ecological validity of the study makes it resemble a field study rather than a controlled laboratory experiment. I have seldom seen designs even equally rigorous as the present one. "Comparison group" is used instead of "control group", which is good.

The model developed by the researchers examined the change that occurred during the LQ teacher workshop with respect to participants' value expectancies and the change in their perceived importance and competence regarding Lions Quest goals. It focused on participants' willingness to change and their motivation to develop their communication skills. In addition, participants' knowledge and application of Lions Quest goals during the training was explored. The data were collected before and after the intervention, in other words, the Lions Quest teacher-training workshop. The data from the comparison group was collected at approximately the same time. Hence, all study participants answered both the pre- and post-test evaluation questionnaire.

In Phase II (2014-2018), the development of teachers' social and emotional learning was investigated by using Lions Quest (LQ) teacher workshops as an intervention. Change in teachers' attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills during the LQ was explored. The data were collected from nine countries including workshops from ten areas. The questionnaire was completed twice, immediately before and again after the workshop. The results from Finland, Italy, Japan, and Lithuania in 2015-2016 from 940 participants showed that the teachers perceived the LQ goals as more important after participating in the LQ teachers' workshop. In addition, they felt more competent in implementing the LQ content in their classrooms. Further, teachers valued the LQ goals higher after the workshop. In the comparison group, no changes were found between the measurements.

In 2016, new countries participated in the Evaluation Project. This called for intensive and rigorous work in cross-translating the methods and trying to maintain cross-cultural reliability. The data were collected from Argentina, Australia, Austria, Germany, and Turkey. In addition, longitudinal data were collected from Japan. This new data have been analyzed and a journal article was submitted for publication in 2018. Preliminary results were presented in conferences. The results indicated increased knowledge as well as more positive attitude towards the goals of the LQ among teachers who participated in the LQ training. The participants also increased their readiness to put their SEL knowledge in practice in their work.

In Phase III of the International LQ Evaluation Project, each participating country will have the possibility of providing a seminar where the results and recommendations will be presented and future actions planned. It is important that the results of the project can be disseminated to all participating countries. I also published a book (Lonka, K., 2018, Phenomenal Learning from Finland. Edita Publishing) in which we described the importance of SEL and disseminated our empirical research worldwide.

At the moment, new data are being collected in Poland. In many countries, there is a need to see how successful the local implementation is. In the future, I would recommend that the duration of the training would be one factor to look at. This is also an empirical question. Based on my own understanding and previous research, teaching the complex social and emotional learning (SEL) takes time, and it is actually quite surprising that relatively inexpensive workshops provide such good results. In the future, I would recommend that the whole program should be developed towards the format of blended/flipped learning, and the participants would have all the information in an electronic format already beforehand. This would make even one-day workshops more effective, as instead of transmitting information, the valuable face-to-face contact time could be dedicated for practical exercises. Previous research indicates that SEL skills cannot be effectively learned from books or lectures, but require experiential methods such as LQ workshops. Our most recent preliminary findings in one country indicate that the readiness to apply the knowledge diminishes over time. It might, therefore, be a good idea to develop, for instance, mobile applications that support rehearsing and remind the user of the skills to be practiced.

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Kirsti Lonka

Professor,
Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland

Extraordinary Professor,
Optentia Research Focus Area, NWU, South Africa



APPENDIX

Research group

Research supervisor:

Kirsti Lonka, Professor, Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland

Research coordinator:

Osmo Harju, Lions Quest, Finland

Post doc researcher:

Markus Talvio, Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland

Doctoral candidate:

Lauri Hietajärvi, Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland

Partners:

Minna Berg, Doctoral student, University of Helsinki, Finland

Jorge Andres Bortolozzi, Lions Quest Advisory Committee, Argentina

Beverly Fisher, Master Trainer, USA

Elina Ketonen, PhD, University of Helsinki, Finland

Toshikazu Kitayama, Trainer, Lions Quest, Japan

Dr. Erkki Komulainen, Docent, University of Helsinki, Finland

Dr. Taru Lintunen, Professor, Department of Sport Sciences, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Dr. Topi Litmanen, Chief Educational Scientist, Claned Oy, Finland

Hideaki Mabuchi, Executive Director, Lions Quest, Japan

Chris Mathas, Trainer, Lions Quest, Cyprus

Dr. Marlies Matischek-Jauk, Researcher, Lions Quest, Austria

Donna Munro, Senior Trainer, Lions Quest Advisory Committee, Australia

Nilgun Erdem Niord, European LQ Coordinator, Turkey

Dr. Hannelore Reicher, Associate Professor, University of Graz, Austria

Dr. Fernando Salazar, Technical Advisor, Lions Quest Advisory Committee, Peru

Ulla Sirviö-Hyttinen, Senior Trainer, Country Coordinator, Lions Quest Finland

Dr. Daiva Suckyte, Senior Trainer, Lions Quest, Lithuania

Heinz-Dieter Ulrich, Senior Trainer, Lions Quest, Germany

Paola Vigliano, Senior Trainer, Italy

Students from the University of Helsinki, Finland

Publications

How Do Austrian Teachers Benefit from Lions-Quest Workshops?

Talvio, M., Matischek-Jauk, M., Hietajärvi, L. & Reicher, H. (2017). *Erziehung und Unterricht*, 9-10, 802-809

Abstract

Promoting group development and fostering social and emotional learning (SEL) are important factors for promoting achievement and well-being at school. Teachers do not always have, however, the interest or the competence necessary for implementing these values or skills in the classroom. Lions-Quest (LQ) is an international SEL program aiming at students' promotion of SEL and the creation of a safe learning environment. In order to implement LQ in classrooms, teachers must participate in an LQ workshop. The present study investigated the change in teachers' task value and their perceived importance and competence in promoting LQ goals during their training. Information was collected from 100 Austrian teachers before and after LQ workshops. Comparison data was collected twice as well from 83 Austrian teachers not attending the LQ workshops. Analysis of covariance was used to analyse the data. The results indicated that teachers of the intervention group perceived the goals of the LQ program as significantly more important and valuable than before the training. In addition, after the workshop, they felt more competent in applying the LQ program in the classroom. Among the comparison group, no statistical differences between the measurement points were found.

The Benefits of Teachers' Workshops on Their Social and Emotional Intelligence in Four Countries.

Talvio, M., Berg, M., Litmanen, T. and Lonka, K. (2016). *Creative Education*, 7, 2803-2819. doi: 10.4236/ce.2016.718260

Abstract

Implementing 21st century skills at school, including social and emotional learning (SEL), has become increasingly important in many countries. The present study investigated in four countries the development of teachers' SEL, through which people develop their social and emotional intelligence, by using internationally widely-used Lions Quest (LQ) teacher workshops as an intervention. Possible changes in teachers' attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills during the LQ were explored. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted using data from the pre-test responses of two countries.

This analysis produced three factors. The created factor structure was further confirmed using pre-test data from another two countries. Repeated measures ANOVA (GLM), giving its ability to perform overall comparisons in one step, and the specified follow-up comparisons were used to examine the gain scores between and within groups, and to statistically control for some characteristics. The results showed that the teachers perceived the importance of the LQ goals as more important after participating in the LQ teachers' workshop. In addition, they felt more competent in implementing the LQ content in their classrooms. Further, teachers valued the LQ higher after the workshop. In the comparison group, however, no changes were found. In conclusion, LQ appears to fulfill the expectations of supporting teachers in implementing LQ content, including 21st skills and SEL, in the classroom.

Full text is available here:

<https://www.scirp.org/Journal/PaperInformation.aspx?PaperID=72768>

Progress in Teachers' Readiness to Promote Positive Youth Development among Students during the Lions Quest Teaching Workshop

Talvio, M., Berg, M., Ketonen, E., Komulainen, E. & Lonka, K. (2015) *Journal of Education and Training Studies*. 3, (6), 1-13.

Abstract

Modern learning psychology places an emphasis on the ability of teachers to promote their students' social and emotional learning (SEL) and living a good life. Research on precisely how teachers promote SEL and well-being among their students, however, remains scarce. This study focused on evaluating the Lions Quest teaching workshop (LQ), which aims to improve the knowledge and skills of teachers in SEL and to promote a healthy and meaningful life among students.

In total, 153 Finnish teachers participated in LQ. We compared these to 61 Finnish teachers who did not participate in the LQ training as well as a second comparison group consisting of 46 Finnish teachers to investigate the possible effects of pre-testing. We collected data from the intervention group before and after the training and from the first comparison group at approximately the same time points. Data from the second comparison group was collected only once. Using the repeated measures general linear model, we analyzed teachers' readiness to promote the LQ goals from two perspectives, namely from participants' experienced importance of those goals and their perceived competence in promoting them. In addition, we evaluated task values among participants.

Teachers participating in LQ rated the goals as more important and relevant after receiving training. Furthermore, participants from the intervention group felt more competent in skills related to the LQ goals than the comparison groups.

This study adds to both the theoretical and practical development of teachers' skills in contemporary contexts.

Full text is available here:

<http://redfame.com/journal/index.php/jets/article/view/869/950>

Exploring the coherence of the goals achieved through a youth development programme.

Talvio, M., Berg, M., Komulainen, E. & Lonka, K. (2016). *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 217, 469-476

Abstract

High goal coherence of a course has a positive effect on the participant's competence development. However, studies on the goal coherence of the youth development programmes are scarce. The participants were 153 teachers who attended to the LQ teachers' workshop. They filled in the questionnaire before and after the training. In addition, 61 teachers who comprised the comparison group answered also to the questionnaire twice but they did not participate in the LQ. The LQ questionnaire consisted of two elements, namely, how participants experienced the importance of the goals and their perceived competence in promoting the LQ goals. Four pairs of variables describing the participants' perceived importance of a course goal and the participants' perceived competence towards implementing it were produced in exploratory factor analysis.

The coherence values for variable pairs using distance values were calculated by subtracting the perceived importance from the perceived competence for each goal. The coherence increased at the second measurement point among both the intervention and comparison groups. The LQ intervention resulted in a significantly increased coherence in the 'safe environment' and 'promoting SEL' variable pairs among training participants compared with the comparison group. Participating in the LQ training did not, however, increase the coherence significantly with regards to the 'help others' or 'healthy life' variable pairs compared with the comparison group. This piece of research highlights an interesting means of investigating the effectiveness of teacher training.

Full text is available here:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042816000422>

International variation in perceiving goals of a youth development programme (Lions Quest)

Talvio, M. & Lonka, K. (2013). *The European Journal of Social & Behavioural Sciences*, 6, (3), 1057-1065.

Abstract

We investigated the perceptions of the implementers' goals of an international social and emotional learning (SEL) program, Lions Quest (LQ). Data were collected from 22 trainers and country directors representing 15 countries who had implemented LQ in their country. The answers were content analyzed and categorized and then compared qualitatively with the original goals of the LQ program. The perceived goals of the LQ implementers were quite similar to the original goals. However, drug and alcohol prevention or service to others was mentioned by only a few participants although they were the original goals of LQ.

Full text is available here:

http://www.futureacademy.org.uk/files/menu_items/other/ejsbs82.pdf

Activities

Talvio, Berg, Hietajärvi, & Lonka (2017). **The gains of teachers' interaction skills training? An international comparison.** Paper presented at the 17th Biennial EARLI Conference on "Education in the crossroads of economy and politics - Role of research in the advancement of public good" in Tampere, Finland 29 Aug → 2 Sep 2017

Talvio, Hietajärvi, & Matischek-Jauk (2017). **The benefits of teachers' Lions Quest workshops on their social and emotional learning. Austrian Sample.** Paper presented at 6th Conference of the European Network of Social and Emotional Competence in Stockholm, Sweden 7 → 9 June 2017

Berg, M., Talvio, & Lonka, K. (2016). **Do teachers' knowledge and applied knowledge develop during their training on social and emotional learning?** Paper presented at II International congress on Students' engagement in school; Perspective on psychology and education in Lisbon, Portugal 11 Jul → 13 Jul 2016.

Talvio, M., Berg, M., & Lonka K. (2016). **Promoting teachers to enhance their pupils' social and emotional learning. International intervention study.** Paper presented at II International congress on Students' engagement in school; Perspective on psychology and education in Lisbon, Portugal 11 Jul → 13 Jul 2016

Berg, M., Talvio, M., & Lonka, K. (2015). **A qualitative study on the change of teachers' knowledge and applied knowledge during Lions Quest programme.** Paper presented at the Education and Transition - Contributions from Educational Research (ECER) conference in Budapest, Hungary 7 Oct 2015 → 11 Oct 2015

Talvio, M., Berg, M., Komulainen, E., & Lonka K. **Exploring the coherence of the goals achieved through a youth development programme.** Presented at the International Conference on Education and Educational Psychology (ICEEPSY) in Istanbul, Turkey 13 Oct 2015 → 17 Oct 2015

Talvio, M. & Lonka, K. **How do the teachers benefit from the Lions Quest workshop?** Presented at the 5th Social Emotional Learning and Culture Conference of the European Network for Social and Emotional Competence (ENSEC) Lisbon, Portugal 30 Jun 2015 → 4 Jul 2015

Talvio, M. & Lonka, K. **International variation in perceiving goals of a youth development programme (Lions Quest).** Presented at International Conference on Education and Educational Psychology (ICEEPSY) Kyrenia, Cyprus 22 Oct 2014 → 25 Oct 2014