

# Annual Report

Itla Children's Foundation

# 2022





Itla Children's Foundation promotes and supports the wellbeing, equality, position and good future of children, young people and families. We are building a child-friendly Finland by producing and processing information and innovations and organising training to support decision-making and develop services. Itla is an independent bridge-builder between research, practice and decision-making.

# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	4
<b>1 Itla's year 2022</b>	6
1.1 CEO's review of the year for 2022	7
1.2 Purpose and impact of activities	8
1.3 Child policy knowledge	12
1.4 Innovation activities	15
1.5 Leadership capabilities and pilot projects	19
1.6 Equal Start for Everyone – Solutions to Family and Child Poverty	20
1.7 Centralised operations	22
1.8 Grants and donations	24
1.9 Communications and events	26
<b>2 Administration and personnel</b>	28
2.1 Delegation	29
2.2. Board of Trustees	29
2.3 Asset Management Committee	30
2.4 CEO	30
2.5 Personnel	30
2.6 Auditing	31
2.7 Other expert groups	31
2.8 Related party transactions	31
<b>3 Asset management</b>	32
3.1 Market environment	33
3.4 Financial situation	33
<b>4 Outlook for 2023</b>	34
<b>5 2022</b>	36
Visions for the future are painted together	37
Cinderella's story reveals a core of resilience	40
Evidence-based support to help children and young people fleeing the war in Ukraine	44
The Valoisat group sheds light on family and child poverty from the perspective of young people	46
Humane Amsterdam	48
<b>Financial statements</b>	52
Appendix I: Strategy 2023–2026	62

The annual report includes the activity report and financial statements for the period 1 January 2022 – 31 December 2022.



## FOREWORD

**“Itla seeks to increase the child-friendliness of society through information, innovation and education”**

During this period, Finland finally gained a National Child Strategy, which was prepared by Parliament.

The parliamentary term is coming to an end, and now is a good time to look back at the whole term. During this period, Finland finally gained a National Child Strategy, which was prepared by Parliament. It includes long-term objectives and actions that will be promoted across administrative boundaries and government terms. The work of the National Child Strategy Unit began in early 2023, and one of the tasks for its first year of operation is to launch a pilot on child budgeting in the wellbeing services counties.

The implementation of the Programme to Address Child and Family Services (LAPE) began during the previous government term and continued during the current government term, alongside the national health and social services reform. Key focus areas included in the programme have included family centres; early support for children, young people and families in everyday life; low-threshold mental health and substance abuse services for children and young people; and the multidisciplinary development of child welfare.

Itla has been involved in both of these major projects, producing information, increasing the effectiveness of the promotion of child wellbeing and training leaders for the broad field of child and family services. Itla seeks to increase the child-friendliness of society through information, innovation and education.

Several legislative reforms impacting children, young people and families with children have been carried out during this government term: the subjective right to daycare was restored, the compulsory education age was increased to 18, measures against bullying have been intensified, efforts have been made to rectify the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the free pre-school trial for five-year-olds has been expanded.

The family leave reform entered into force in autumn 2022, and its impacts are being followed with interest. According to Kela's calculations, it is financially advantageous to divide parental leave equally in families with children, and families can use calculators to assess the effects of different options on their finances. Society must also change its attitudes, and fathers must be encour-

**Mirka Soinikoski**  
Member of Parliament,  
Chairperson of Itla's  
delegation for 2019–2023



aged to take their share of family leave. This is very important for the interaction between the father and the child, let alone the right of the child to form a functional relationship with both parents from a very young age.

In Finland, we need additional effective measures to ensure that children can enjoy a non-violent childhood. One of the worrying phenomena that came up in the school health survey is the increase in sexual harassment reported by young people. We need various measures to increase the safety of children's growth environment. This is partly supported by the reform of the legislation on sexual offences and the additional resources allocated to anti-violence efforts. Cooperation models must be developed at the interfaces between the wellbeing services counties and municipalities, such as pupil and student welfare and low-threshold mental health services. The special expertise of forensic psychology and psychiatry units for children and adolescents, i.e. Barnahus centres, must be utilised in each welfare services county.

The rapidly worsening family and child poverty situation following the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine requires additional effective measures immediately at the beginning of the next government term. This spring, Itla is involved in providing decision-makers with valuable comparative information on the solutions used by other countries.

The comprehensive reform of the Child Welfare Act has already started, and ensuring the effectiveness of child welfare and the participation of children is particularly important in this process. "Child welfare helps many families, but it also interferes with the privacy of the families. Therefore, the aim of the reform must be to improve the legal protection of citizens – particularly children – and to increase the predictability, transparency and effectiveness of child welfare," emphasises Ombudsman for Children **Elina Pekkarinen**.

I would like to thank everyone personally and on behalf of the delegation for the past four years.

We are always on the side of children <3





1

# **Itla's year 2022**

**Purpose, impact and implementation of  
the Foundation's activities**

## 1.1 CEO'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR FOR 2022

### Global crises are reflected in children

When we look back at 2022, it feels like the rate at which the world is changing has become several times faster. The rate of change has been dizzying – and not only in a positive sense. For example, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has affected children's lives in Ukraine in many ways. It has also affected the daily lives of Finnish children and families with children in various ways, including in the form of a rise in prices as a result of inflation, which is evident in the prices of groceries, and in the form of an increase in energy prices, which is reflected in the electricity bills of families with children.

Today, the factors challenging and strengthening children's wellbeing and mental health are increasingly complex. For example, learning difficulties related to schooling pose a challenge for wellbeing, and the lack of financial resources of families with children are reflected in the children.

Other factors that give children and young people much to think about include global crises, the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and the risk posed to biodiversity. The ongoing decrease in the size of age groups affects services for children, young people and families with children. Overall fertility, which represents birth rates, has been on the decline in Finland for a long time. On the basis of all of the factors mentioned above, children and young people's belief in the future is not a given. This is something that all of us adults must take seriously but in a way that encourages children.

### Itla's strengthening and consolidating position in the field of welfare operators

As a foundation, we have done well in 2022, and for that we owe thanks to our staff, partners and Itla's bodies – our delegation, Board of Trustees and Asset Management Committee. We have received

**"We are always on the side of children."**

much praise for our cooperation projects and activities. It has been particularly gratifying to note the success achieved by our Foundation in the programme calls and appointments of programme directors by the Strategic Research Council (SRC) operating within the Academy of Finland in 2022. This success will give us a unique viewpoint on the operators involved in the wellbeing of children and families with children in the coming years.

Awareness of our Foundation has increased over the past year. This is evident in many things, including an increased demand for the Foundation's expertise both in Finland and internationally regarding issues such as the mental health of children and young people, the regional operating model of welfare operators, family and child poverty and the management of children's wellbeing.

Towards the end of the year, we published the strategy that will guide our activities from 2023 to 2026. It challenges us to change ourselves and take our activities to the next level, which, of course, is not possible without skilled staff and the best partners.

During this next four-year period, we will produce information on the wellbeing of children and families in different life situations, present concrete proposals for solutions to improve the wellbeing of children and communicate about our operations to decision-makers at all administrative levels. Our task is challenging and we will measure our success in many different ways.

We are always on the side of children.

**Petri Virtanen**

*Chief Executive Officer, Professor*

## 1.2 PURPOSE AND IMPACT OF ACTIVITIES

Itla Children’s Foundation promotes and supports the wellbeing, equality, position and good future of children, young people and families. We are building a child-friendly Finland by producing and processing information and innovations and organising training to support decision-making and develop services. Itla is an independent bridge-builder between research, practice and decision-making that operates within Parliament.

Itla’s vision has been to make Finland the best place in the world for children by building a child-friendly society.

In a child-friendly society, the best interests of children are taken into account in decision-making, and the rights of the child are realised for each child. Finland’s National Child Strategy, which was completed at the beginning of 2021, and its implementation programme have promoted awareness of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Itla has played a role in building and promoting the implementation of the Child Strategy. We want to continue building a future in which the consideration of children’s rights, child-centred activities and the genuine participation of children are the mainstream in decision-making and service activities.

Itla’s social impact goals for the strategy period that ended in 2022 were as follows:

1. *The wellbeing and resilience of children, young people and families with children living in Finland will be strengthened and children will have a good future in Finland.*
2. *Progress will be made in making society child-friendly – equality will improve and the rights of the child will be respected more.*
3. *The service system for children and families will meet the need for services of children and families in cooperation with professionals working in everyday growth environments.*

The achievement of the social impact goals has required the professionals and decision-makers involved in children’s wellbeing to succeed in their work. The primary target group of Itla’s activities has been professionals and decision-makers. Influencing the knowledge base, working practices and cross-sectoral cooperation can improve the conditions in which children and young people grow up, decisions concerning them are made and services for them are planned and implemented.

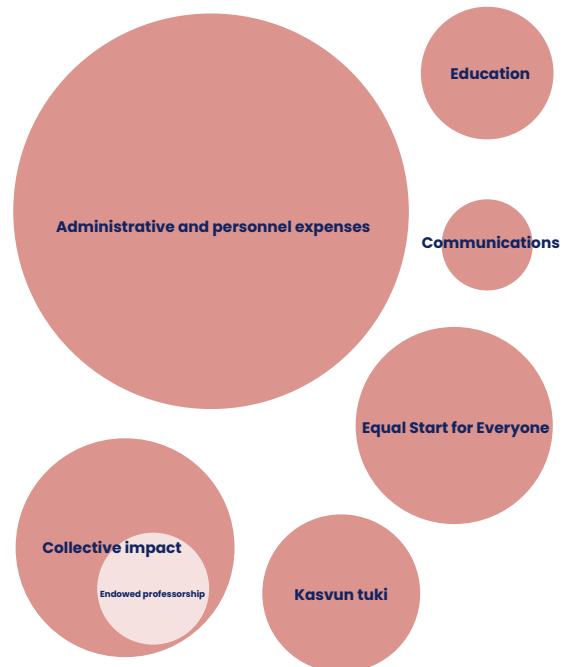
**1** The wellbeing and resilience of children, young people and families with children living in Finland will be strengthened and children will have a good future in Finland.

**2** Progress will be made in making society child-friendly – equality will improve and the rights of the child will be respected more.

**3** The service system for children and families will meet the need for services of children and families in cooperation with professionals working in everyday growth environments.

The annual budget is approximately EUR 2.9 million.

External funding is approx. EUR 400,000



**EXTERNAL FUNDING:**

- Changing Population – Impact of Demographic Change on Early Childhood Education and Pre-primary and Basic Education
- PANDEMICS – Pandemics as a Challenge for Society
- Right to Belong: Tackling Loneliness and Ostracism during Childhood and Youth
- Improving Mental Wellbeing as a Means of Increasing the Participation of Young People



**When the impact goals are met:**

- welfare problems among children and families are prevented in time, leading to the focus in services for children and families shifting from corrective to preventive services
- the skills of professionals are supported based on research
- the inclusion of children, young people and families with children is given room in local communities and activities
- the awareness of the working methods contributing to the wellbeing of children, young people and families with children is increased and the ability to apply effective working methods is improved
- the management of services for children, young people and families with children is people-centred and serves those it is intended for
- the child perspective is strengthened in all sectors of public policy
- awareness of the future challenges and opportunities related to children's wellbeing is increased in society.

**The goal is to strengthen the wellbeing of children, young people and families**

In our strategy for the coming years, Itla's activities will focus on evidence-based welfare data, innovation of services for children and families, development of management competence that promotes children's wellbeing, and communication. Itla's own family and child poverty programme, Equal Start for Everyone – Solutions to Family and Child Poverty, will provide information and solutions to reduce family and child poverty in Finland in the future.

Itla seeks a change based on the combined effect of these activities, as this will help to strengthen the factors that strengthen wellbeing, build more functional services for families with children – and contribute to a better and brighter future for future generations.

**In a child-friendly society, the best interests of children are taken into account in decision-making, and the rights of the child are realised for each child.**

**We produce and process information for the development of services**

At the heart of all Itla activities is research-based knowledge that can be used to strengthen the effectiveness of measures to promote the wellbeing of children and young people.

Itla conducts research both by itself and through cooperation projects with other operators. The Foundation has also contributed three professorships to Finnish universities. They all relate to research themes essential to the wellbeing of children – interventions and their development and implementation, as well as family and child poverty. Based on research, we assess psychosocial methods in order to make the help provided for children, young people and families with children effective.

In the Equal Start for Everyone – Solutions to Family and Child Poverty programme, we examine family and child poverty as a phenomenon and look for new research-based solutions to reduce it.

One of the externally funded research projects that continued in 2022 was a study funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture on the impact of demographic changes on early childhood education and care and pre-primary and basic education. This research project is being implemented between 2021 and 2024 in cooperation with the University of Helsinki and the consulting company MDI, which specialises in regional development.

In 2022, Itla's position in the field of research data on children's wellbeing was further reinforced thanks to research funding from the Strategic Research Council.

### **Management facilitates a child-centred approach**

We promote change by organising both management training and training for the introduction and establishment of evidence-based methods. Management is able to influence decision-making and services so that they are built based on the needs of children, young people and families. We organise long-term management training for decision-makers and managers of welfare services for children to strengthen their management skills, systemic agency and people-centred and child-centred management philosophy.

Supporting management competence contributes to the transition from sector-specific activities to a child-centred approach at local, regional and national levels. In 2022, we successfully completed two long Childhood Builders management courses with managers who work in the management of children's wellbeing.

### **Strengthening cooperation between municipalities and wellbeing services counties to build a child-centred and family-centred service system**

In addition to research data, there is a need for dialogue between the data and its users as well as for practical pilot projects. We strengthen collective impact, extensive resilience-based wellbeing in daily life and learning to learn related to children's wellbeing. The regional Childhood Builders learning network of Itla and the University of Oulu brings different parties together and helps them improve the interoperability of services.

The population base of the regional learning network is over half a million people, of whom approximately 100,000 are children. The activities of the regional learning network are based on the principles of collective impact, which Itla has actively promoted in Finland in recent years. Experiences gained in 2022 have strengthened our belief in the need for a new type of local and regional operating model – one that emphasises open-minded cooperation for the benefit of the service users and open-minded integration of services.

The importance of Itla and many other foundations is particularly evident in their ability to promote cooperation that is not necessarily possible for other operators. Multidisciplinary cooperation is often a prerequisite for success in complex issues.



### **We are always on the side of children – Itla's strategy for 2023–2026**

In 2022, we prepared a new strategy for the period 2023–2026. The preparation of the strategy started with a preliminary debate by the Board of Trustees in January. During the year, the strategy was formulated on the basis of discussions with focus groups of stakeholders, staff workshops, dialogue between the delegation and the Board of Trustees, and the Board's strategy workshop. The strategy retains the following elements as principles that guide operations: the rights, participation, equality and non-discrimination of the child; bridge-building and production of added value; an information-based and international approach; and openness and transparency. Itla's vision is that we are always on the side of children. We pursue our vision by producing information on the wellbeing of children and families in different life situations, presenting concrete proposals for solutions to improve the wellbeing of children and communicating about our operations to all administrative levels.

Itla's Board of Trustees approved the strategy in October, and it was presented at the 35th anniversary



sary event of Itla on 15 November 2022. The strategy is included as an appendix on page 70.

### Visions for the future – 35th anniversary of Itla

The year 2022 marked the 35th anniversary of Itla. The theme of the anniversary was **Visions for the future – Children and Young People's Finland 2057**. Additionally, 2022 marked five years from Parliament's decision to capitalise Itla. President of the Republic **Sauli Niinistö** was the patron of the anniversary year.

The year culminated in a celebratory seminar held in Helsinki on 15 November, to which Canadian Professor Michael Ungar, a pioneer in resilience research, was invited as the keynote speaker. Itla has promoted development that supports and is based on resilience in Finland through a regional learning network, among other things.

The year was marked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February. Immediately after the invasion, Itla set out to organise training for professionals in a group-based intervention called Teaching Recovery Techniques (TRT). TRT is an intervention intended for children and young people exposed to trauma, as well as their parents. The training

was started in preparation for Ukrainian children arriving in Finland in particular, but the TRT method can also be used with other target groups. Support materials for strengthening the wellbeing and crisis resilience of children and young people were also compiled on a webpage. The rapid tackling of the situation was an indication of Itla's agile and knowledge-based approach.

Openness and transparency are among the principles guiding Itla's activities. We expanded our openness by publishing not only activity and annual reports but also the meeting minutes, action plans and purchase invoice documentation of the delegation on our website. The capital donated to Itla by decision of Parliament in December 2017 guides our operations to be more open than required by the Foundations Act, and providing wide access to documents is one way to make the principles of openness and transparency a reality.

### Good asset management is the basis of operations

The Foundation's assets and their good management are a prerequisite for Itla's operations. Itla's operations are primarily funded with return on investments. At the end of 2022, the market value of Itla's investment assets was EUR 55.5 million. Itla's actual budget in 2022 was EUR 2.8 million. The purpose of Itla's asset management is to secure the activities in accordance with the Foundation's rules now and in the future.





## 1.3 CHILD POLICY KNOWLEDGE

The wellbeing of children, young people and families can be influenced by making use of research data. Under our child policy theme, we produce and analyse information, publish various reviews and support the implementation of evidence-based psychosocial interventions and working methods. We maintain Itlasto, which is a data bank on children and young people's wellbeing, and the Kasvun tuki (lit. support for growth) resource. We also publish the Kasvun tuki journal.

### Implementation competence

Information on and awareness of evidence-based methods and their use were further promoted at all levels of society in 2022.

We implemented the five-credit course 'Effective psychosocial methods and operating models as part of research-based decision-making' as part of the Master's Programme in Social and Health Research and Management at the University of Helsinki during spring 2022.

The implementation guide to support decision-making was completed for publication in early 2023, and the design of online materials was started.

The establishment of psychosocial methods on the basis of evidence and on an equal footing has also been promoted by taking an active position on the channelling of national funding and on the

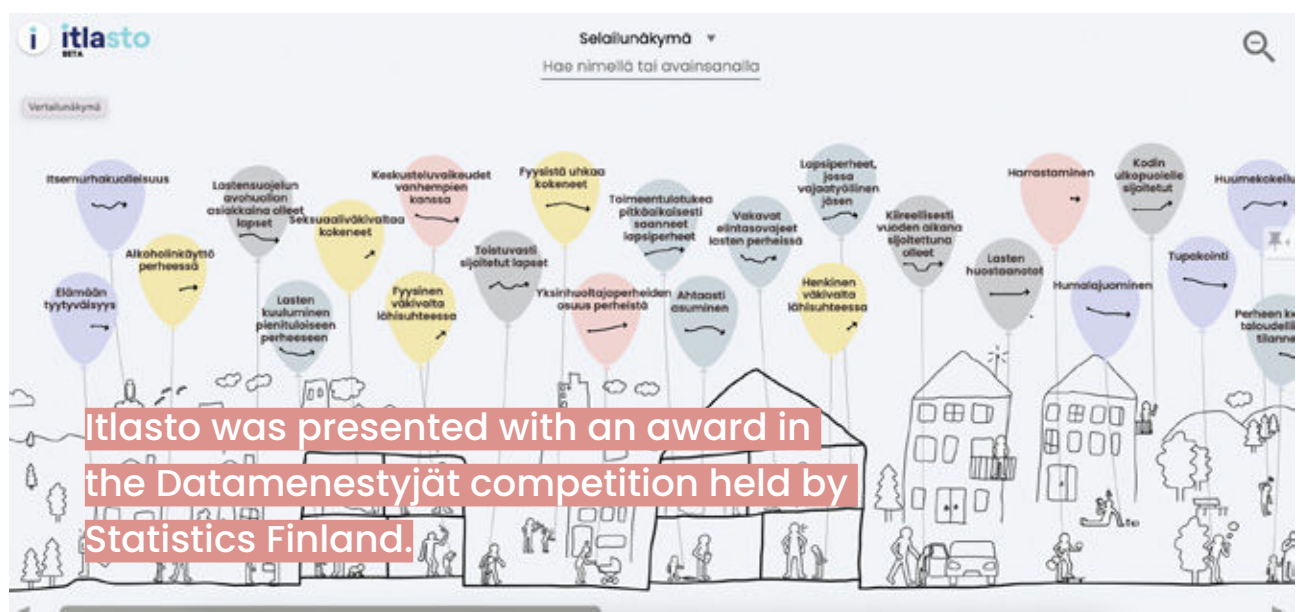
The wellbeing of children, young people and families can be influenced by making use of research data.

implementation of the Decree on the Centralisation of Specialised Medical Care (285/2017). The aim is for there to be a clear division of responsibilities and coordination between the partner areas. A clear definition of the methods based on strong evidence is needed at national level to ensure that methodological support is implemented in the wellbeing services counties in accordance with the decree.

### Itlasto

Itlasto was presented with an award in the Datamenestyjät competition held by Statistics Finland in autumn 2022. Itlasto, which came in shared second place, was commended for its efforts to make the study of information easy and for also seeking to provide new users with access to information through its visual look.

An article was published about Itlasto and its use, benefits and necessity in the Kasvun tuki journal.



### **Kasvun tuki journal**

Two issues of the Kasvun tuki journal were published in 2022. The autumn issue featured the first methodological assessment of a psychosocial method in the form of a systematic review: an assessment of the Let's Talk about Children family intervention. In fact, one of the reasons for the launch of the Kasvun tuki journal in 2021 was to publish systematic reviews. A Publication Forum level classification has been sought for the Kasvun tuki journal.

### **Cooperation with the Research Centre for Child Psychiatry of the University of Turku to develop and study a model for the treatment of children's behavioural problems**

The cooperation has included defining the criteria for a strong home base and building an infrastructure enabling the systematic collection of assessment data. In addition to this, the pyramid model and its implementation have been promoted nationally through publications and webinars, among other things.

The pyramid model developed by the Research Centre for Child Psychiatry provides the service system with a new type of progressive service package based on research evidence. Negotiations have been held with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health on resources and structures in order to facilitate national home base activities for psychosocial methods.

Researchers from Itla and the University of Turku jointly published a scientific article on internet-based support for parenting, intended for families with children with behavioural problems. The article was published in the Pediatrics and Parenting journal during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Strength from Shared Mealtimes project**

The Strength from Shared Mealtimes for Families with Infants project (2021–2022) carried out by Itla, Venner and the Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters supported parents' cooking skills, increased awareness and use of vegetables and promoted eating together.

The aim was to strengthen the parents' self-esteem and the wellbeing of the whole family by gaining new knowledge and skills. Itla was involved in coordinating the project evaluation study. The project resulted in a report on the Strength from Shared Mealtimes for Families with Infants intervention.

## **EXTERNALLY FUNDED PROJECTS**

### **The First 1000 Days in the Nordic Countries**

The final seminar of the First 1000 Days in the Nordic Countries project (Barnets 1000 första dagar i Norden) was held in Reykjavik in summer 2022. At the seminar, Itla representing Finland and representatives from other countries presented the two publications produced as a result of the project as well as the policy recommendations created based on them.

Based on the results of the project, Itla published two scientific peer-reviewed publications, one regarding evidence on the effectiveness of psychosocial interventions aimed at children under the age of 2 and their families in the Nordic countries and the other regarding the functioning of the regulated healthcare system in Finland with regard to services for pregnant people and families with young children. Both articles were published in the Kasvun tuki journal.

Information about the project and its results was also shared in Finland during spring 2022, for example at the 100th anniversary seminar of child health clinics. Towards the end of the year, Itla has been involved in promoting the continuation of the project. The cooperation will continue through a network tasked with promoting the implementation of evidence-based methods in each of the Nordic countries. The aim is to strengthen the knowledge base based on which perinatal mental health is promoted. The cooperation also promotes joint Nordic research in this field.



### Work in the VIP network

In 2022, Itla implemented a theme group called *'Children and young people who react with behaviour'* as part of the work of the Intensive Special Needs Support Network, also known as the VIP Network, which is managed by the Finnish National Agency for Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture. The work by the VIP network, which began in autumn 2021, explored ways to support children and young people's behaviour in many ways by using a method based on the Phenomenon Map process developed by SOFI (Science Advice Initiative of Finland). The theme group held two webinars in Finnish and one in Swedish in cooperation with the Regional State Administrative Agency and Regionförvaltningsverket in autumn 2022.

In 2022, an article was written for the *Psychiatria Fennica* journal on the key elements of the multi-tiered system of support for behavioural problems in early childhood education and care and schools in Finland. A guide called *'Tukea arkeen! Keinoja lasten ja nuorten emotionaalisten, sosiaalisten ja käyttäytymisen taitojen tukemiseksi'* (Support for daily life! Means of supporting the emotional, so-

The work by the VIP network explored ways to support children and young people's behaviour in many ways by using a method based on the Phenomenon Map process developed by SOFI (Science Advice Initiative of Finland).

cial and behavioural skills of children and young people) was published as part of the Finnish National Agency for Education's publication series. The guide provides teachers with research-based information and practical support for working with children and young people who react with their behaviour.

An extension agreement was drawn up for the project with the Finnish National Agency for Education in late 2022. The theme group was chaired by Development Director Petra Kouvonen from Itla.



## 1.4 INNOVATION ACTIVITIES

The purpose of Itla's challenge-driven and information-intensive innovation activities related to services for children and families is to support the reform of public sector services. The objective of Itla's innovation activities is to support the reform of the service systems for children and families from within.

### Regional learning network

The collective impact work of the regional learning network has borne fruit and improved the services for families with children and the integration of services in the participating areas. In 2022, the collective impact work has expanded to new service areas within the member municipalities of the current network. The activities have strengthened the structures of local work management and practical work as well as the areas' own background support teams. The background support teams support the expansion of collective impact work in the areas and allow the work to continue at the interfaces between municipalities and wellbeing services counties in the future.

In spring 2022, an evaluation study was carried out on the results and future prospects of the ac-

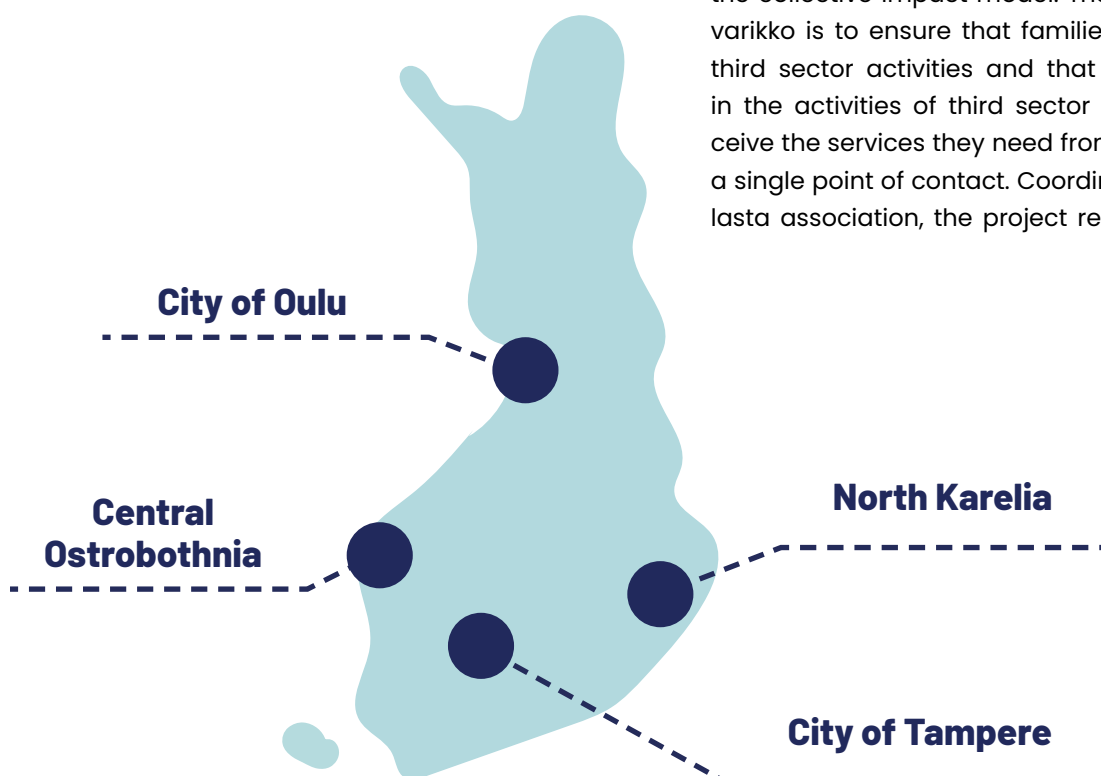
**The objective of the innovation activities is to support the reform of the service systems for children and families from within.**

tivities of the regional learning network in each of the four areas: the City of Oulu, the City of Tampere, Siun Sote in North Karelia and Soite in Central Ostrobothnia. Based on the study, the collective impact work has taken significant steps forward in each of the partner areas, and local operators have a strong will to expand the collective impact work beyond the pilot areas.

### Studies and pilot projects

Several studies and pilot projects were also carried out during 2022 both as part of the Childhood Builders Fund's activities and within the framework of the research programme supporting the development efforts by the learning network.

A pilot project called Järjestövarikko (2021–2022) developed the cooperation between the City of Oulu and the third sector within the framework of the collective impact model. The aim of Järjestövarikko is to ensure that families have access to third sector activities and that families involved in the activities of third sector organisations receive the services they need from the city through a single point of contact. Coordinated by the Autalasta association, the project received significant



project funding from the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA) to further develop the activities from 2023 onwards.

In Kokkola, a pilot project was carried out to prevent the aggressive behaviour of pupils in basic education. The teaching staff had asked for functional practices and tools for working with pupils who react with their behaviour at school. The pilot project organised training for teachers on the Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management (TCM) method, which is a method based on strong research evidence for preventing children's behavioural problems and behavioural disorders. The Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius conducted a study on this pilot project, and the research article was published in the 1/2022 issue of the *Kasvun tuki* journal.

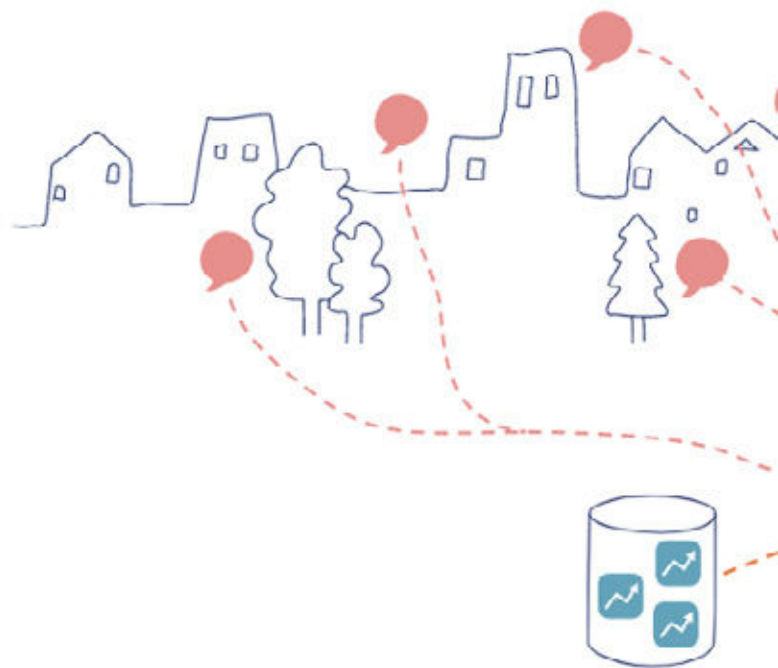
A joint study conducted by Itla and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare on the educational and career paths of children placed outside the home was completed and sent to a scientific journal for review.

### Grants

In 2021, Itla awarded grants for scientific research to Lotta Allemand, Xiaowen Wang and Johanna Timonen. Lotta Allemand's study on the suitability and perceived usefulness of the Let's Talk about Children method in school environments was completed in 2022.

Xiaowen Wang has studied discourse on social media on the topic of birth rates. The study was completed in 2022, and the article was sent for review to a scientific publication.

The portion of Johanna Timonen's dissertation



concerning the link between recreational activities in childhood and youth and psychological wellbeing and mental health in youth and adult life was approved for a scientific publication.

In 2022, grants for scientific research were awarded to two researchers: Pilvi Raitila for her master's thesis in the field of special pedagogy on user experiences of the Let's Talk about Children method, and Sanni Penttilä for her study 'Mental and physical health of children and young people placed outside the home who have a great need for services and their use of social and health services – a North Karelia Collective Impact study (NKCI study)', which is intended for a compilation dissertation.

### Collective impact work deepens and expands

The highlight of 2022 took place in November when Itla and the regional learning network were visited by Professor Michael Ungar, an international leader in resilience thinking. A workshop was held with Professor Ungar, during which he was provided with an explanation of the development of a resilience-based service system in the areas participating in the regional learning network, after which he commented on the work. On the basis of the joint discussion, the local operators in the learning network set objectives and focus areas for collective impact work in the coming years.

**The highlight of 2022 took place in November when Itla and the regional learning network were visited by Professor Michael Ungar, an international leader in resilience thinking.**



With the preparation for the transition to well-being services counties, the work of the regional learning network and collective impact have garnered interest throughout Finland. Over the past year, Itla has been preparing with new partner areas to expand this work. On the basis of the discussions held towards the end of 2022, the plan is to launch collective impact work in two to four new areas.

Continuing and deepening the collective impact work and expanding it to new areas is one of the key content elements of Itla's new strategy for 2023–2026.

### **Näkymä tool**

A digital situational picture tool for anticipating the service needs of families with children has been under development since 2020 as part of the work of Itla's regional learning network. The development of this situational picture tool, called Näkymä (lit. view), combines foresight and development processes of the regional learning network related to knowledge-based management.

At the beginning of 2022, a cooperation agreement was concluded with Hahmota Oy and VXT Research Oy on the development of the knowledge-based management tool from a prototype to a functional tool. The tool's background system has been developed during the year. Artificial in-

telligence has also been added to the background system to identify phenomena by combining regional observations and indicator data.

A separate mobile application has been developed for collecting observations. The application was built in cooperation with the Faculty of Technology at the University of Oulu and the North Finland Centre of Expertise and Support. The Näkymä tool has been developed through a close co-creation process with the Tampere Junior programme of the City of Tampere and operators based in the southern area of Tampere, such as Me-talo (lit. we house). Additionally, the development of the tool's AI-based semantic search has been supported with the help of research classification, and a design article has been written about the development process together with Sanna Ulmanen, a researcher at Tampere University. The article will be completed in early 2023.

### **Foresight**

The application of foresight and foresight information proved challenging during Itla's 2019–2022 strategy period due to the uncertain social situation coloured by the pandemic. Instead, it came to light that there was a need to consider what elements should go into a foresight system focusing on children and families in order for the foresight information to be integrated into regional and national decision-making. Foresight systems should support the search for future-compatible solutions to the anticipated challenges of children, young people and families.

The aim was to build a process based on the 'Finland of the next generations' scenario work and the Government Report on the Future by the Prime Minister's Office, but the publication of the report has been delayed. This is why the process of considering the national foresight system was not carried out. The Government Report on the Future is expected to be published in 2023.

In the future, Itla will seek to develop its foresight and include the future perspective in all of its operational activities. For example, we apply foresight methods in Itla's Equal Start for Everyone programme when seeking solutions to family and child poverty by means of experimentation, co-creation and research. We also support the future capabilities of the young experience leaders in the Valoisat group.



In the regional learning network, we support the perspective of proactive governance by developing knowledge-based management processes with Itla's partner areas. We also promote the iterative development and adoption of the Näkymä situational picture tool in the partner areas.

### Childhood Builders challenge competition

Itla's Childhood Builders challenge competition was a partner in the Hack for Society innovation programme organised by Helsinki Think Company in 2022. This programme involves politicians, researchers and students coming together to solve social problems identified through scientific research. The other partners of the innovation programme were the City of Helsinki, the City of Vantaa and the Deaconess Foundation.

The proposed solution chosen as the most distinguished in the programme was a communication and social media action model for preventing inequality and regional segregation in primary schools.

During this cooperation, Itla and Helsinki Think Company shared valuable information on organising social challenge programmes. Mari Hirvonen, an expert from Itla, participated in the development of the programme and was also a member of the competition jury as Itla's representative.

In the future, the Childhood Builders challenge competition will no longer be held annually. However, the challenge- and mission-driven approach remains at the heart of Itla's innovation activities, and the challenge competition is one of the methods in Itla's toolbox. The competition can be applied when Itla and its partners identify a social challenge to which the challenge competition can provide solutions.

## EXTERNALLY FUNDED PROJECTS

### Proposal on wellbeing indicators for the Child Strategy

As part of the implementation of the National Child Strategy in 2022–2023, Itla was commissioned to prepare a proposal on key indicators representing the wellbeing of children and young people. In particular, the wellbeing services counties that started operating in 2023 could use such indicators to survey the wellbeing of the children and young people living in each county. Itla prepared the report *'Lasten ja nuorten hyvinvoinnin mittaaminen ja indikaattorit: kansainvälisiä ja kansallisia lähtökohtia'*

(Measurement and indicators of the wellbeing of children and young people: international and national starting points), which was submitted to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health for the Child Strategy at the beginning of 2023.

### Report on special care units

Itla has concluded an agreement with the North Ostrobothnia Hospital District Joint Municipal Authority to draw up a report for the North Finland Centre of Expertise and Support on the current status of the young people placed at special care units at reform schools. Itla's subcontractor for this project is Owl Group Oy. The project kicked off at the beginning of 2023.

### Evaluation study of the 'treatment instead of prosecution' model

The North Finland Centre of Expertise and Support has developed its activities using the collective impact framework, and Itla has provided the Centre of Expertise with background support. Commissioned by the Centre of Expertise, Itla carried out a translational evaluation study on the current status of the 'treatment instead of prosecution' model and its areas for development.

The study analysed operators' views of the key results of the operating model and its areas for development and compared them to international literature on the effectiveness of multidisciplinary work.



## 1.5 LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES AND PILOT PROJECTS

Itla invests in the development of decision-making and service activities based on the needs of children, young people and families by organising long-term Childhood Builders leadership training. The training serves as a platform for the child-centred improvement of cooperation between organisations, administrative levels and professions. The training was also one way for the Foundation to prepare for the transition to wellbeing services counties and to set an example of the implementation of the change processes that support the reform.

The COVID-19 pandemic delayed the completion of the first two Childhood Builders leadership training courses. However, both courses were seen through to completion in 2022, and the total number of managers to complete them was 46. These managers work in key positions with regard to children, young people and families in ministries, state agencies, major cities, churches, national organisations and companies that provide social services.

The objective of the long-term management training was to:

- strengthen cross-sectoral systemic understanding in the promotion of the wellbeing of children and families
- improve in the management of people-centred organisations and service activities and apply the lessons learned to practice
- provide the capability to make use of strategic design and strength-based management in a way that promotes the achievement of objectives and cooperation
- reinforce the meaningfulness of work, leadership metaskills and commitment to the co-development of the child-centred approach
- provide theoretical, practical and methodological capabilities to promote wellbeing management in which activities are built based on the needs of children, young people and families.

Based on the feedback received on the training, the objectives were achieved very well. The participants appreciated the guidance and content of the training process and the creation of a favourable atmosphere for learning. Of the participants, 95% felt that they could make significant use of the things taught by the training in their own manage-

ment role. The overall rating given by the participants who took part in all parts of the training was 5.8/6.0.

Both courses included excursions to the Netherlands. The Netherlands offers a number of interesting examples of a mission-driven, family-centred and communal way of implementing services for children and young people. Benchmark cooperation with the Netherlands will continue in the comprehensive reform of the Child Welfare Act.

The participants in the Childhood Builders course also started alumni activities and wanted to summarise the principles of good service and change management together to support the wellbeing of children and young people and to make pertinent societal changes. The summary created as a result, titled 'Lapsuuden rakentajien 7 viestiä hallitusohjelman ja hyvinvointialueiden tekijöille sekä kuntapäätäjille' (7 messages from Childhood Builders to those preparing the Government Programme and wellbeing services counties as well as municipal decision-makers), was published in autumn 2022.

### Child-centred co-creation

In addition to testing working methods in connection with the training courses, Itla also promoted a pilot project portfolio related to child-centred co-creation in 2022. Within this framework, Itla participated in the 'ecosystem school for innovation partners' organised by Työ 2.0 Lab (Work 2.0 Lab), where the co-creation process, which was multi-professional with regard to children and young people, focused on intervention in young people's violent and gang behaviour and effective environmental education. The importance of local nature for the wellbeing of children was also highlighted at the discussion festival organised by the Well Said project of Yle, the Timeout Foundation and the City of Hämeenlinna.

A pilot project was underway in connection with the current discourse on integration. It modelled the application of the competence of the Valteri Centre for Learning and Consulting at a normal local school.



## 1.6 EQUAL START FOR EVERYONE – SOLUTIONS TO FAMILY AND CHILD POVERTY

The aim of the Equal Start for Everyone programme (2021–2023) is to determine the state of family and child poverty in Finland, identify effective methods to reduce it and speed up research and advocacy related to the topic.

### **Scope, causes and consequences of family and child poverty**

In 2022, the programme examined the scope, causes and consequences of family and child poverty. We have compiled the research data on the Lapsiköyhyys datana (Family and child poverty as data, in Finnish only) webpages. The website has been accessed approximately a thousand times since August 2022 and quoted in key policy documents relating to family and child poverty (e.g. interim report by the Social Security Committee) and in election campaigns (Give a Voice to Children campaign).

The programme has conducted research into the factors contributing to families with children turning to social assistance. The study has shown that at least one in ten families with children that have turned to social assistance have done so due to a parent falling severely ill. The study has been published as a preprint and is currently being reviewed by an international scientific journal. The study was conducted in collaboration with the University of Oulu, the University of Helsinki and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare.

In 2022, the programme also examined the link between family and child poverty and child welfare. The preprint of the study showed that the link between family and child poverty and the proportion of children placed outside the home has grown at a municipal level over the past 30 years. The study has sparked discussion among the operators in the sector. The study was conducted in



## In 2022, the programme examined the scope, causes and consequences of family and child poverty.

collaboration with the University of Oulu and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare.

The programme has also studied over-indebtedness in families with children. The study, published in the *Yhteiskuntapolitiikka* journal, showed for the first time how many families with children in Finland are over-indebted. The study was quoted in places such as the editorial of the *Helsingin Sanomat* newspaper, and the Tax Administration launched an ecosystem project related to over-indebtedness among families with children based on the study. The study was conducted in collaboration with researchers from Aalto University and the University of Turku.

We have tackled topical issues through the programme. At the beginning of the year, we examined research evidence on the connection between family background and educational paths in Finland. In the autumn, we were involved in assessing the impact of rising prices on family and child poverty together with researchers from Kela, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare and the University of Turku.

### Participatory modelling

We have started participatory modelling of the reasons for long-term use of social assistance. The project will be carried out in collaboration with the University of Canberra. The first phase of the project is participatory mapping, i.e. putting together a map of the factors directly or indirectly related to long-term use of social assistance by young adults.

In the second phase, we will build a model to test the impact of various measures on the use of social assistance. The aim is to find strategically effective measures with which as many background factors of long-term use of social assistance as possible can be affected by making a small change. The project will produce not only scientific publications but also an interactive measure simulation tool. The tool will allow decision-makers to test the

desired and unwanted impacts of potential measures. As part of the project, researcher Juan Castillo-Rho from the University of Canberra visited Finland and gave a public lecture on participatory modelling.

### Itla's child benefit model

Towards the end of 2022, we worked on a proposal for a child benefit reform. As part of the preparations, we organised three discussion sessions with researchers, during which we established a mutual understanding of the problems in the current child benefit scheme. Our preparations have also included writing a preliminary report on the key challenges of the child benefit scheme, which 'Itla's child benefit model' will address.

### Young experience leaders' Valoisat group

In the Equal Start for Everyone programme, we have chosen a genuinely inclusive approach to working together. The Valoisat group, which is made up of young experience leaders, began its activities in the spring. The group participates in influencing, conducting research and steering research. Valoisat organised a panel discussion with young people and members of Parliament for the 35th anniversary event of Itla. During autumn 2022, the Valoisat group planned a communication and influencing campaign together with RARE Media. The campaign was published in early 2023.

The Equal Start for Everyone programme has also been involved in the Children's digiraati project. Researchers from Itla have examined the practices of promoting the participation of children and young people in decision-making by digital means in the form of a literature review.

## 1.7 CENTRALISED OPERATIONS

The Foundation's centralised operations include various projects, administration and other key events of the financial period.

### **Changing Population – Impact of Demographic Change on Early Childhood Education and Pre-primary and Basic Education**

The Changing Population project examines the impacts of demographic change on early childhood education and pre-primary and basic education with a multidisciplinary approach. The topic is examined from the perspectives of strategic planning and decision-making by municipalities, impacts on the service network and the participation of children. The research project is funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture and is part of the Right to Learn development programme. The study is carried out by Itla, the University of Helsinki and the consulting company MDI, which specialises in regional development.

Over the course of 2022, Itla has collected an extensive set of municipal materials, comprising documents, decisions and interviews. MDI carried out an analysis that examines demographic change. A communications plan was also prepared for 2023. The preliminary results and recommendations provided by the study are reported in an interim report published in February 2023. The research project has actively cooperated with the project steering group and the University of Helsinki. The research project will run to the end of 2023.

### **Funding from the Alli Paasikivi Foundation for the TRT training package**

The Alli Paasikivi Foundation granted EUR 10,000 in funding for training in the Teaching Recovery Techniques (TRT) method, coordinated by Itla, and for work related to its implementation. The funding will be used to pay for a translation of the TRT manual intended for people working with unaccompanied minors from English into Finnish. The manual will be published in 2023.

## STRATEGIC RESEARCH PROJECTS

### **Research funding for studying the suitability of brief therapeutic interventions targeted at young people for the basic level**

Itla was granted strategic research funding for studying brief therapeutic interventions as part of the 'Improving mental wellbeing as a means of increasing inclusion of young people (IMAGINE)' consortium. The consortium is led by Professor Jari Lahti from the University of Helsinki. The consortium aims to ensure equal access for young people to effective low-threshold mental health services, a smoother transition to adulthood and the inclusion of young people in society despite mental health problems.

Development Director Petra Kouvonen from Itla leads the consortium's implementation process in cooperation with University Lecturer Riikka Lämsä (University of Helsinki). The consortium is part of the YOUNG programme.

In addition to this, Itla, along with the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, received funding intended for the integration of social and health services. The funding will be used to study interpersonal counselling (IPC-A) in the school context. The project will be carried out under the 'Child policy knowledge' theme.

### **Strategic research funding from the Academy of Finland: Services to Belong**

The study 'Services to Belong: Children as co-creators of integrated service systems combating loneliness and ostracism' is part of the research consortium Right to Belong: Tackling Loneliness and Ostracism during Childhood and Youth, which is led by the University of Turku and which studies ostracism, i.e. social exclusion, and loneliness. The objective of this multidisciplinary consortium is to build a research-based roadmap for deci-

August 2022 also marked the start of the development and renewal of Itla's data protection process.

sion-making on how children and young people's experiences of loneliness and ostracism can be reduced in various environments, such as families, schools, social media and friend groups. The consortium is led by Professor Niina Junntila from the University of Turku. The consortium is part of the YOUNG programme.

The aim of the Services to Belong study is to develop service solutions for young people experiencing loneliness, with strong emphasis on the participation of young people. The study focuses in particular on children and young people's experiences of loneliness and ostracism, the ways in which schools and child welfare institutions identify experiences, and existing service models and practices. Petri Virtanen is responsible for the Service to Belong research package. The study was launched on 1 October 2022.

### **Programme activities of the Strategic Research Council**

The funding for programme directors granted to Senior Researcher Marjo Kurki from Itla for the three-year Pandemics as a Challenge for Society (PANDEMICS) programme started in January 2022. This has intensified cooperation with the Strategic Research Council. In the PANDEMICS programme, cooperation was carried out in particular with the EduRESCUE project and Itla to create a website of support materials for the war crisis in Ukraine, among other things.

In autumn 2022, Kurki was invited to participate in the call for funding for programme directors of the Children and Young People – Healthy, Thriving and Capable Makers of the Future (YOUNG) programme for the years 2023–2025. Kurki was appointed programme director of the YOUNG programme in December 2022, and Itla serves as the background organisation for the funding (decision on 16 January 2023).

### **Situation picture of early support from social services for children and families (LAPSO) project**

Funded by the Government's analysis, assessment and research activities, the objective of this project is to establish an overall picture of the concrete situation of the services provided in accordance with the Social Welfare Act for children and young people aged 0–24, as well as families with children, at regional and national level. The project analyses the current situation of early support from social services for children and families. The project will produce new information on the differences in service needs assessments within the meaning of the Social Welfare Act and the Child Welfare Act and their impact on customer processes.

Itla is responsible for statistical analysis of the impact of the Social Welfare Act (1301/2014), revised in 2015, on services for children, young people and families with children, the use of services and the operating costs at the level of the wellbeing services counties. The project is carried out by the consulting company MDI, Owl Group, Itla, the Central Union for Child Welfare, the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare and Konsultti ja Kirjuri Oy. The project will run from 1 June 2022 to 31 December 2023.

### **PROJECTS TO DEVELOP THE FOUNDATION'S ADMINISTRATION**

The staff remuneration scheme was redeveloped in August 2022. The aim was to create a remuneration scheme in which all staff members have the opportunity to achieve the incentive and which is genuinely based on achieving the objectives from the point of view of performance.

August 2022 also marked the start of the development and renewal of Itla's data protection process. The aim of the process was to create practices and guidelines for the processing of data and the secure storage of documentation. Data protection issues have started to play an increasingly important role due to externally funded research, as the data used in the research also contains special categories of personal data.

Itla also introduced centralised mobile device management in order to increase data security.



With Itla's operations expanding, a development project focusing on payroll management was launched towards the end of the year. Payroll management was transferred from the financial management system to a separate HR and payroll system. This system, which meets the special needs of payroll management, enables the development and automation of payroll and HR processes in the future. The project will continue in 2023.

The need for premises was surveyed throughout 2022. In the autumn, it was decided that, going forward, the Foundation will need very different types of premises compared to the premises in Ruoholahti, which have been in use since spring 2019. It was also noted that premises are needed not only in Helsinki but also in Turku, as a significant proportion of the personnel live in the Turku region.

The selection of premises focused on the functionality, location and costs of the workspaces. It was decided that the best solution was an office hotel, as the facilities can be easily adapted according to changing needs. The Foundation started operating at its Turku office in Citykulma in Turku in November, and in December the Foundation's Helsinki office moved to Siltasaari.

## 1.8 GRANTS AND DONATIONS

### Grants awarded for scientific research

In 2022, Itla awarded grants for scientific research under its innovation theme, totalling EUR 29,000 (see section 1.4 Innovation activities).

Recipients of the grants

- Pilvi Raitila, EUR 5,000 for writing a master's thesis in the field of special pedagogy on user experiences of the Let's Talk About Children method
- Sanni Penttilä, EUR 24,000 for her study 'Mental and physical health of children and young people placed outside the home who have a great need for services and their use of social and health services – a North Karelia Collective Impact study (NKCI study)', which is intended for a compilation dissertation.

### Endowed professorships

Itla has contributed a total of three endowed professorships: professorships in intervention and implementation research to the Universities of Turku and Oulu and, most recently, a professorship to Tampere University as part of the Family and Child Poverty programme.

- University of Oulu (decision in Dec 2019; started in spring 2020; three-year donation and option; part-time 50%). In October 2022, the Board of Trustees approved the use of the two-year additional option for the professorship of practice at 80% of full working hours from 1 May 2023 to 30 April 2025. The professorship is held by Mika Niemelä.
- University of Turku (decision in Dec 2019; started at the beginning of 2021; three-year donation and option; part-time 50%). The professorship is held by Professors Pim Cuijpers and Heleen Riper from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
- Tampere University (decision in Sep 2021; started in spring 2022; three-year donation and option; 100%). The professorship is held by Mia Tammelin.

In 2022, Itla awarded grants  
for scientific research  
under its innovation theme  
totalling EUR 29,000.



## 1.9 COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS

The 35th anniversary of Itla was visible in Itla's communications in many ways. We released two podcast episodes on the theme of the anniversary, the Kasvun tuki journal published a celebratory issue in which pupils from Hämeenkylä School in Vantaa wrote about the school of the future, and pupils from the Art School of Northern Helsinki created art about their hopes for the future. The virtual exhibition by the art school's pupils was also displayed at Central Library Oodi in Helsinki. The anniversary year culminated in a celebratory seminar in Helsinki on 15 November 2022.

Itla's monthly newsletter was updated and a new themed newsletter called Pintaa syvemältä (lit. beneath the surface) was published. The themed newsletter always contains a piece of text that delves deeper into a single topic. The themes featured in the newsletter included Itla's activities and the preparation of its new strategy, resilience, knowledge-based management that draws from observations, i.e. the Näkymä tool, and the need for trauma-related expertise and training related to children and young people, which was highlighted by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

At the end of 2021, Itla was invited to participate in the Children's Rights Communication Network. During Children's Rights Week, the network organises a campaign. In 2022, the campaign theme was children's right to safety. During Children's Rights Week, Itla highlighted in particular support materials available online for strengthening the wellbeing and crisis resilience of children and young people, as well as training in the TRT method.

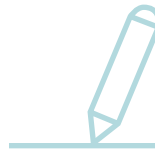
### Family and child poverty was visible in the media

In 2022, Itla was featured in particular in news about family and child poverty and the impact of rising prices on families with children. These topics were discussed in pieces by Yle, MTV Uutiset and regional newspapers, among others.

Publications related to family and child poverty also garnered interest on Itla's social media. Other topics that interested people on Itla's channels included training in the TRT method and support materials for strengthening the wellbeing and crisis resilience of children and young people. Additionally, the blog post 'Tuhkimon tarina paljastaa resilienssin ytimen' (Cinderella's story reveals a



**36**  
news articles



**seven**  
op-ed pieces



**19**  
blog posts



**174 hits**  
in online media



**12 episodes**  
of the Childhood Builders podcast  
two Triangeli discussions



**109,520**  
page views

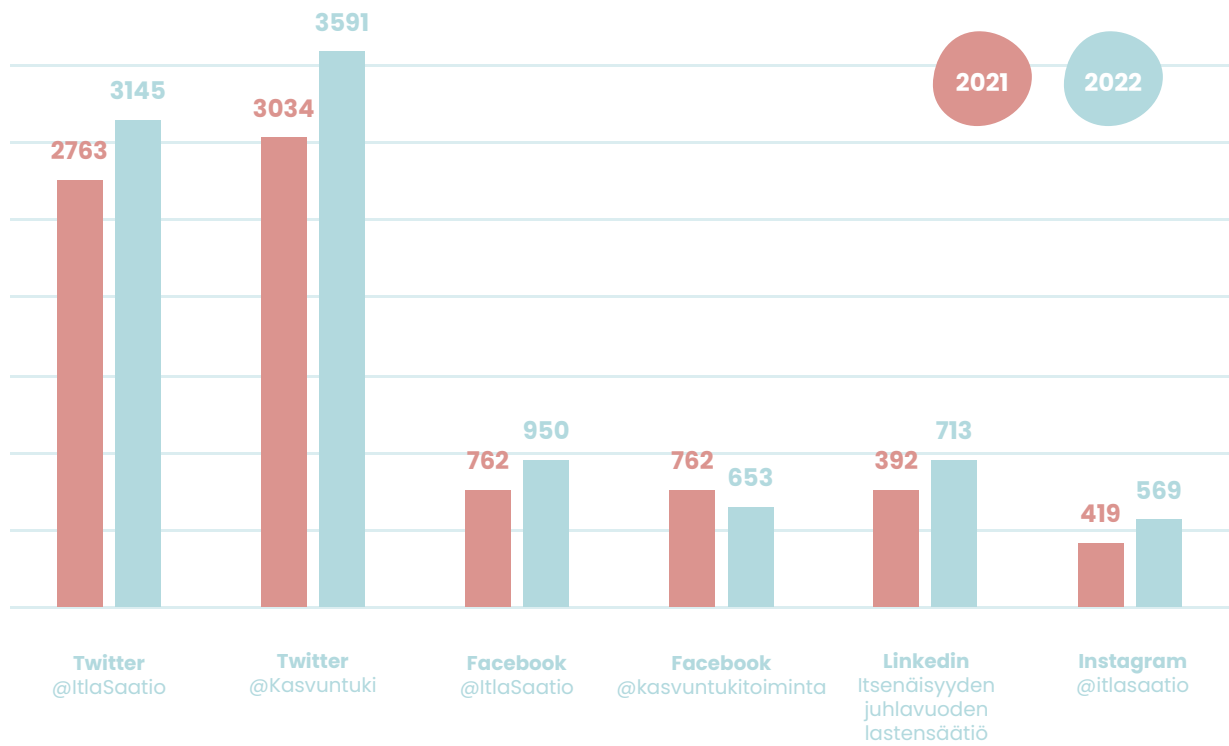


**39,131**  
website users

core of resilience), which was related to Itla's anniversary, was very well received on the social media channels, and the post was among the most visited pages at the end of 2022.

The number of followers increased for all social media channels of Itla and Kasvun tuki in 2022. The number of visitors to the website also increased from the previous year.





During the year, Itla's social media channels gained 1,489 new followers.





# 2

## Administration and personnel

Itla comprises the following bodies: delegation, Board of Trustees, Asset Management Committee and CEO. The Foundation also includes the editorial board of the Kasvun tuki journal and an international panel of experts. The Foundation complies with good governance in its operations and is a member of the Association of Finnish Foundations.

## 2.1 DELEGATION

Itla's delegation is tasked with monitoring, supporting and promoting Itla's activities. The delegation's appointment, configuration and term of office are laid down by law (1004/2017). The delegation convened three times in 2022.

## 2.2 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

On the basis of the Foundations Act (2015/487), the Board of Trustees of Itla is responsible for the Foundation's administration and the appropriate organisation of activities. Furthermore, the Board is responsible for the appropriate monitoring of the Foundation's accounting and asset management. In accordance with the Foundation's by-laws, the Board of Trustees prepares matters for consideration by the delegation, apart from selecting the members of the Board. The Board of Trustees also decides on the Foundation's strategy, resource planning and policy outlines. Itla's Board of Trustees convened seven times in 2022.

**Itla's Board of Trustees convened seven times in 2022.**

### MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION IN 2022

#### Members

Mirka Soinikoski (Greens), Chairperson  
 Eeva-Johanna Eloranta (SDP) Vice Chairperson  
 Riitta Mäkinen (SDP)  
 Ari Koponen (FP)  
 Sanna Antikainen (FP)  
 Sinuhe Wallinheimo (NCP)  
 Ville Kaunisto (NCP)  
 Hilikka Kemppe (Centre)  
 Pia Lohikoski (LA)

#### Deputy members

Noora Koponen (Greens)  
 Kimmo Kiljunen (SDP)  
 Johanna Ojala-Niemelä (SDP)  
 Juha Mäenpää (FP)  
 Sheikki Laakso (FP)  
 Terhi Koulumies (NCP)  
 Pekka Aittakumpu (Centre)  
 Pasi Kivisaari (Centre)  
 Mikko Ollikainen (SFP)

### MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES IN 2022

#### Members

Tuomas Kurttila, Chairperson  
 Sanna Vesikansa, Vice Chairperson  
 Maria Kaisa Aula  
 Petri Pohjonen  
 Mirjam Kalland  
 Riitta Särkelä  
 Juho Romakkaniemi

#### Deputy members

Johanna Laisaari  
 Mikko Mäkelä  
 Minna Kelhä  
 Arto Willman  
 Liisa Keltikangas-Järvinen  
 Mikko Mikkola  
 Terhi Päivärinta



## 2.3 ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Asset Management Committee is tasked with supporting the Foundation in responsible investing. The Foundation's asset management must be systematic, secure, profitable, considered and sustained. The Asset Management Committee evaluates the profit development and risks of invested assets, the functionality of our investment strategy and the operations of external asset managers. The Committee provides the Board of Trustees with a report on investment activities at least twice a year and prepares changes to the investment strategy for the Board as necessary.

During the year covered by the report, the Asset Management Committee met five times.

### ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2022

#### Members

Mikko Mikkola, Chairperson

Tuomas Kurttila

Annika Ekman

Sami Yläoutinen

## 2.4<sup>CEO</sup>

Doctor of Social Sciences, Adjunct Professor Petri Virtanen has been Itla's CEO since February 2019. Alongside his role as CEO, Petri Virtanen acts as a part-time professor of administrative sciences at the School of Management at the University of Vaasa.

## 2.5 PERSONNEL

In 2022, Itla gained a total of 13 new employees. In August 2022, Kaisa Lamminen, an expert in general administration and financial planning, was hired as a new permanent employee.

During the reporting year, the following people started working in fixed-term employment relationships:

- Taru Lilja, project researcher, Equal Start for Everyone programme
- Venla Ritola, project coordinator, Innovation theme
- Emma Lindberg, training coordinator, management training
- Lotta Heikkilä, research coordinator, Knowledge theme
- Susanne Ådahl, project researcher, Strength from Shared Mealtimes project
- Sara Tani, research assistant, Knowledge theme
- Lauri Mäkinen, project researcher, Equal Start for Everyone programme.

During the reporting year, the following people started working in fixed-term employment relationships in externally funded projects:

- Anni Kyösti, project researcher, Changing Population research project
- Ninnu Koskenalho, project coordinator, VIP and First 1000 Days project
- Suvi-Sadetta Kaarakainen, project researcher, Changing Population research project
- Riikka Lämsä, deputy director of WP, STN IMAGINE project
- Emma Salusjärvi, project researcher, IPC evaluation project.

Additionally, Itla had two communications interns: Sonja Kalichevitch in early 2022 and Heini Maula in late 2022.

The total number of staff employed by the Foundation at the end of the reporting year was 26.

The title of Itla's Research Professor was awarded to Itla's Director of Development, Adjunct Professor Tiina Ristikari. The title of Research Professor was granted for the first time and is fixed term for the 2022–2024 period.

## 2.6 AUDITING

Oy Tuokko Ltd continued as the Foundation's auditor, and Authorised Public Accountant (KHT) Janne Elo continued as the principal auditor. The audit during the financial period was carried out in November.

## 2.7 OTHER EXPERT GROUPS

### Editorial board of the Kasvun tuki journal

The editorial board of the Kasvun tuki journal is responsible for managing the work of the Kasvun tuki journal. Its task is to develop the content of the journal and the new review system, promote the research-based approach of the journal, ensure the quality of systematic reviews and approve methodological updates.

During the reporting year, the editorial board convened twice.

#### EDITORIAL BOARD OF THE KASVUN TUKI JOURNAL 2022

##### Members

Taina Laajasalo, Chairperson

Kirsi Peltonen

Jorma Komulainen

Mika Niemelä

Riittakerttu Kaltiala

### International panel of experts

The international panel of experts set up in 2020 is tasked with supporting and strengthening the Foundation's position and impact both in Finland and internationally. The panel challenges and provides a global perspective and competence on the Foundation's strategic themes and content by expanding the Foundation's international networks and influence in order to achieve its strategic objectives, among other things. The international panel of experts did not convene during the reporting year.

## 2.8 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The Foundation is not known to have provided grants, financial support, donations or gratuitous subsidies to persons or entities related to the Foundation during the financial period.

The Foundation is aware of the following financial transactions between the Foundation and persons or parties related to it during the financial period:

- The Foundation has paid a total of EUR 156,938.16 (EUR 155,688.96 in 2021) in remuneration to the Board Members and CEO.
- The Foundation has paid a total of EUR 12,871.20 to the auditor.
- The Foundation has paid consultancy fees to Juramentum Oy, a company controlled by Mikko Mikkola, a related party of the Foundation, for a total of EUR 1,388.80.
- The Foundation has received a total of EUR 10,000 in funding for the TRT training package from the Alli Paasikivi Foundation, which is controlled by Maria Kaisa Aula, a related party of the Foundation.

The Foundation is not aware of any other related party transactions during the reporting year.

#### INTERNATIONAL PANEL OF EXPERTS

##### Members

Professor Jens Meyer, INSEAD, Paris, Fontainebleau, specialising in leadership and strategy

Professor John Lavis, McMaster University, Toronto, Ontario, specialising in the effectiveness of wellbeing interventions and evidence-based activities

Group Manager Piret Tõnurist (PhD), OECD OPSI, Paris, specialising in innovation activities and service design in OECD countries.

The last year was an exceptional year in many ways and very difficult for investors.

# 3

## Asset management and finances



The Foundation primarily funds its operations with return from its investment activities. Externally funded projects are also part of the Foundation's actual activities. Since 2018, the Foundation's asset managers have been Aktia (formerly Taaleri) and EVLI Pankki Oyj. The asset managers report on their activities to the Foundation's Asset Management Committee on a quarterly basis.

In the Foundation's investment strategy, the long-term strategic goal for the Foundation's investment assets is an annual real rate of return of 4 per cent. The time frame of the Foundation's investments is long and investments must be systematic and responsible. The investments must be efficiently distributed across different asset classes, geographical areas, sectors, asset managers and investment types. Intelligibility and transparency are important principles in implementing the Foundation's investments.

### 3.1 MARKET ENVIRONMENT

The last year was an exceptional year in many ways and very difficult for investors. In February, the era of 'cheap money' came to an end when Russia invaded Ukraine. At the same time, the worst days of the pandemic were left in the past. Central banks around the world raised interest rates substantially, with the key interest rate being 4.5% in the US and 2.5% in Europe at the end of the year.

The rising market interest rates reflect the volatile financial conditions around the world. European sovereign debt yielded -19.4% during the year, while interest rates saw the largest increase in 60 years. Corporate bonds and high-risk loans with a higher rating in different countries also resulted in considerable losses. On average, high-risk loans yielded a loss of 9.4% in Europe, and the corresponding loss in developing countries was slightly over 10%, while the figures for better loans were -13.6% in Europe and -10% in emerging markets.

The increase in interest rates and increased uncertainty in the economic outlook were also reflected in the stock market. All of the stock markets around the world have clearly declined in the past year. The stock market index MSCI World, which reflects stock market trends, fell by 13% from the beginning of the year. This is the largest decrease since the financial crisis in 2008.

In foreign exchange, the US economy once again felt relatively strong and like a safe haven during the times of crisis. The US dollar rose against the euro by 6.2% last year, mitigating the decrease in share prices from the perspective of euro investors.

### 3.2 FINANCIAL SITUATION

The market value of the Foundation's investment assets was EUR 55,480,134.74 (EUR 64,135,576.91 in 2021) in total on 31 December 2022.

During the reporting year, the Foundation accrued EUR 668,961.89 in dividend income (EUR 563,680.83 in 2021), EUR 94,119.56 in interest income (EUR 63,306.19 in 2021) and EUR 1,251,886.53 in other financial income (EUR 4,519,360.97 in 2021).

At the end of the period, the Foundation's current account balances totalled EUR 3,032,016.08.

The Foundation's Board of Trustees set the operating budget for 2022 at EUR 3,110,000. The operating budget outturn in 2022 was EUR 2,812,367.46 in total (EUR 2,320,144.84 in 2021).

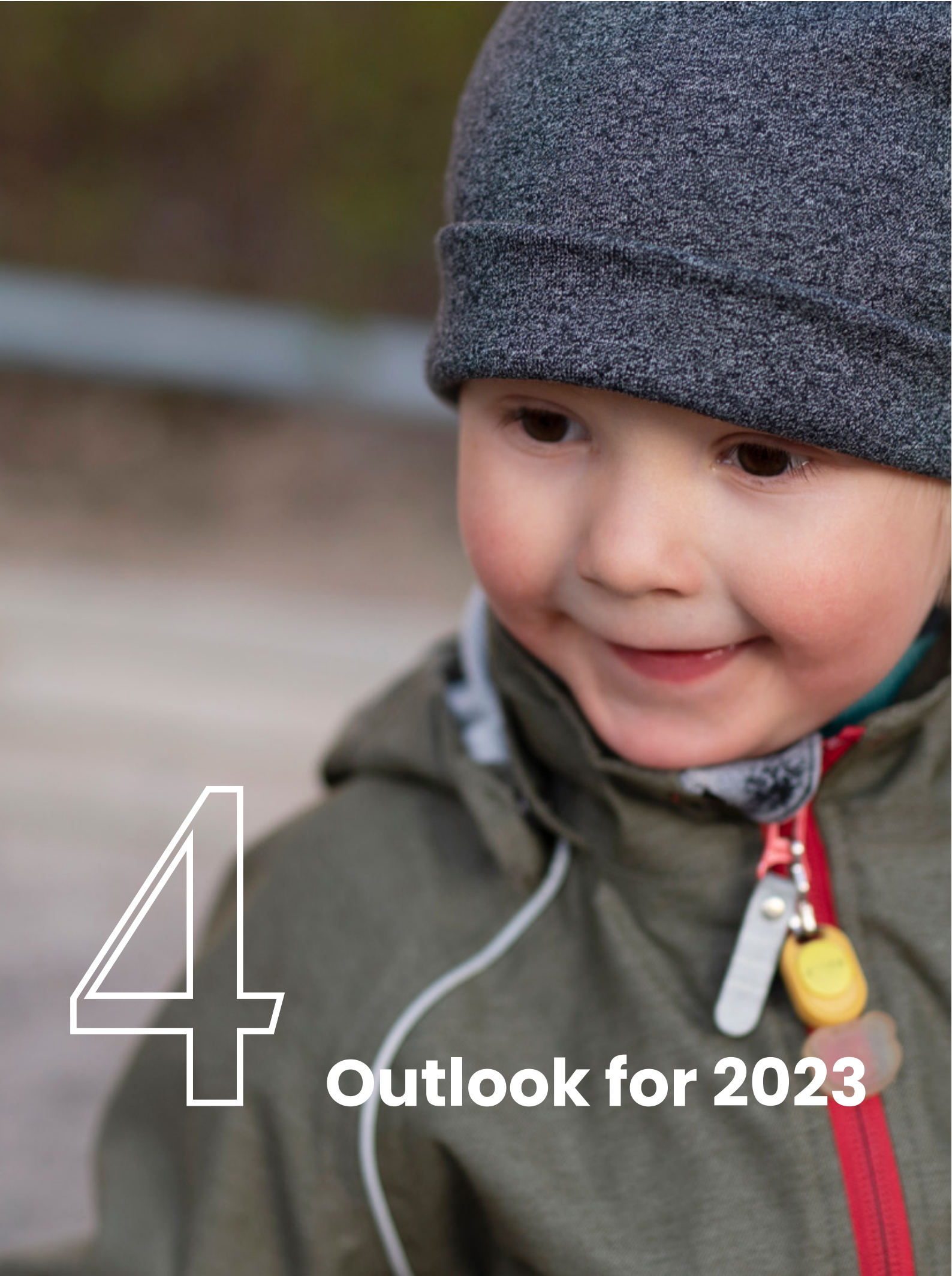
The share accounted for by personnel expenses of operating expenses was EUR 1,619,749.65 in total (EUR 1,078,189.65 in 2021). The Foundation spent EUR 200,544.20 (EUR 135,635.54 in 2021) in total on administrative and other expenses. Administrative expenses include premises expenses, software and IT expenses, auditing expenses, accounting and payroll expenses, office expenses and the costs of small-scale procurements, among other things.

The share accounted for by external funding of the Foundation's actual activities in 2022 was EUR 520,507.88 in total. The share accounted for by the expenses of externally funded projects of the Foundation's operating expenses was EUR 347,367.43 in total.

A total of EUR 17,000 was paid in grants for scientific research.

The deficit for the financial period was EUR -4,836,406.75 (a surplus of EUR 3,074,840.35 in 2021).

**The operating budget outturn in 2022 was EUR 2,812,367.46 in total.**



4

**Outlook for 2023**

The living conditions of children, young people and families with children will undergo a change in the coming years. The Russian invasion of Ukraine and its impacts are reflected in Finland in different ways and, in principle, apply to all children living in Finland. The impacts are evident in many things, including the financial situation of families – which in turn will be reflected in the wellbeing of children in other ways. Scarce financial resources limit the opportunities available for children to engage in recreational activities, among other things. These types of issues challenge the principles of equality and non-discrimination, which are key themes of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The difficult situation that young people find themselves in is another issue altogether; it is reflected in various mental health challenges, dropping out of school and employment problems. There is some truth in what is said about young NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). More than 10 per cent of young people are still not in education, training or employment.

There is great concern that the difficult situation of families with children that have financial difficulties will become even more difficult. According to calculations, one in six children already lives below the poverty line.

In the coming years, children and young people must be regarded as a social resource. The core of social decision-making must include helping children obtain a comprehensive school certificate, investing in high-quality early childhood education and care, helping children with learning difficulties, reforming child welfare, intervening in children's loneliness and stopping the marginalisation of young people. Addressing these challenges is a sign that we want to build a successful Finland that invests in children and young people in the coming years.

**In the coming years, children and young people must be regarded as a social resource.**

It would be great if the increasingly difficult situation of children, young people and families with children could be taken into account in decision-making as a countercyclical issue: when the economic situation becomes more difficult, children are supported.

In April 2023, Finland will hold parliamentary elections. The elections will determine Finland's direction for the next few years. It will be interesting to see how the situation of children, young people and families with children – and improving this situation – will be highlighted in the electoral objectives of the parties.

During Itla's 2023–2026 strategy period, we will produce information on the wellbeing of children, young people and families with children in different life situations, present concrete proposals for solutions to improve the wellbeing of children and communicate about our operations to decision-makers at all administrative levels. Our task is challenging and we will measure our success in many different ways. The strategy challenges us to change ourselves and take our activities to the next level, which, of course, is not possible without skilled staff and the best partners.

We also believe that our Foundation's role in paving the way in the wellbeing of Finnish children, young people and families with children will become more significant in the next few years. We are aware of the high expectations for Itla and this encourages us to do even better. Of course, we cannot succeed in this work alone – we require collaboration with our partners.



PHOTO **Lauri Nykänen**

5

2023







# Visions for the future are painted together

Itla's 35th anniversary was celebrated with the theme **Visions for the future – Children and Young People's Finland 2057**. During the year, we also prepared a new strategy for Itla and published it at the celebratory seminar held on 15 November 2022. The keynote speaker at the seminar was Canadian pioneer in resilience research, Professor **Michael Ungar**.

As part of the anniversary year, pupils from the Art School of Northern Helsinki created art about their own dreams and ideas for the future. Eighth graders from Hämeenkylä School in Vantaa interviewed pupils for the article 'Tulevaisuuden koulu oppilaiden silmin' (School of the future through the eyes of pupils) in the *Kasvun tuki* journal.

Flying cars may have been a part of the imagined future since they first appeared on the streets, but they still do not fly over cities. One pupil from the art school predicted that it would take a really long time, maybe a hundred years. The pupils from Hämeenkylä School also envisioned flying computers and flying, self-drawing pens. In addition to technological inventions, their visions of the future also included things that are important to them today – the people close to them, pets and school.

## Resilience is created in communities

Michael Ungar, the main speaker at the seminar for the anniversary year, has studied the development of resilience among children and young people. His core idea is that resilience is created in communities.

"Perseverance alone is not enough to stay afloat – you also need access to the necessary resources, such as sufficient income, social support or a safe haven," summed up Tiina Huttu in her article on Ungar's speech.

The development of resilience is affected by many factors. According to Ungar, support from

**"It (painting) reflects the team spirit in the class – that everything is well when we are together there, and the main subject is that I would like to bring a pet to school."**

the community and services help people cope with difficult conditions, but only if they help make life better than it was previously.

## Itla is based on research and development

Itla was founded 35 years ago to support research, experimentation and development projects focused on children and child welfare. The first grants were awarded for multidisciplinary and long-term research projects concerning childhood. Itla also invited into its fold researchers representing disciplines that have not traditionally studied childhood – in addition to children and young people as researchers of their own world.

Over the course of its journey, Itla has supported research into the coping of children in everyday life and the networking of childhood research and carried out the programme Children, Young People and Families in 100-year-old Finland, among other things. The Kasvun tuki project included in the centenary programme is now one of the key elements of Itla's activities.

### We are always on the side of children

The celebratory event presented Itla's strategy for 2023–2026, which is guided by the vision: "We are always on the side of children."

Itla's current operations look very different from what they were 35 years ago, but the fundamental elements share many similarities. Research is one of Itla's key principles, even though the Foundation has transitioned from awarding research grants to producing, communicating and making use of research data more extensively.

Parliament decided to capitalise Itla during the 100th anniversary year of Finland's independence in 2017. Over the past five years, Itla has laid down a foundation for long-term activities, which it is now continuing with minor changes.

The principles guiding Itla's operations include the rights, participation, equality and non-discrimination of the child; bridge-building; an information-based and international approach; openness and transparency.

Itla's three key functions include:

- Kasvun tuki: promoting the implementation of psychosocial interventions for children, young people and families with children
- collective impact: facilitating local and regional operations that support the wellbeing of children and families

- renewing management competence that promotes the wellbeing of children.

Additionally, Itla both runs its own programmes, with the current one being Equal Start for Everyone – Solutions to Family and Child Poverty 2021–2023, and carries out externally funded activities, such as research projects.

### Together

Tuomas Kurttila, chairperson of the Board of Trustees, concluded the presentation of the strategy with one word – together. 'Together' is implemented at many levels: between children and young people and between children and adults in everyday life, in cooperation between professionals involved in children's wellbeing, and in producing information for decision-making.

The future is unknown. The teacher of the art school pupils told us that because the matter was difficult to think about, we could approach it by considering which things are fine as they are now and how we can strengthen the positive elements in the future. It was this approach that led the children and young people to feature friendship, schoolwork, pets and the people close to them in their art works.

We can create the future – together.



Also listen to the anniversary episodes of the Childhood Builders podcast (in Finnish): **How has the wellbeing of children developed in the past 35 years?** and **What does the future of children and young people look like?**

[itla.fi/podcast](https://itla.fi/podcast)

The initiative to establish the Itla Children's Foundation came from the Central Union for Child Welfare. In autumn 1986, the 70th Anniversary Committee for Finland's Independence approved the founding of the Foundation as part of the official programme of the anniversary year. As its starting capital, Itla received FIM 100,000 (equivalent to EUR 35,801 in 2022) from the Central Union for Child Welfare and FIM 200,000 (equivalent to EUR 71,602 in 2022) from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

The first grant call was opened in spring 1989 together with the Alli Paasikivi Foundation. Itla sought multidisciplinary and long-term research projects concerning childhood through a research competition. The studies supported between 1989 and 1991 (FIM 800,000, equivalent to EUR 286,410 in 2022) formed the research package 'Children's Growth Conditions in Finland'.

1987 THE MEDICAL BIRTH REGISTER WAS INTRODUCED

1988 1989 1990 1991 FINLAND RATIFIED THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004

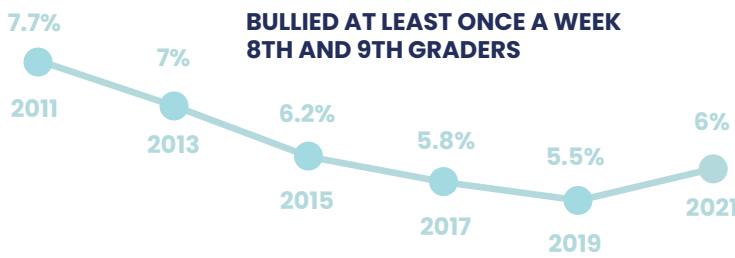


Between 2013 and 2017, Itla decided to direct the funds to the research and advocacy programme *Children, Young People and Families in 100-year-old Finland*. The goal of the programme was to focus on knowledge and develop concrete tools and modelling for decision-makers and those working with children, young people and families.

In 2019, Itla gained its first CEO. A new strategy, logo and visual look were created. The cornerstones of the strategy were knowledge, innovation and management training. Kasvun tuki was consolidated.

Between 2007 and 2009, the aid activities were focused on promoting the networking of childhood research and creating national cooperation structures.

In December 2017, Parliament decided to donate EUR 50 million in capital to Itla and to appoint a delegation comprising members of Parliament to Itla. The Act on the Appointment of the Itla Children's Foundation's Delegation and the Foundation's Capitalisation (1004/2017) was considered at the anniversary session in honour of Finland's 100 years of independence on 5 December 2017. Itla's rules were changed and the name was changed to Itla Children's Foundation.

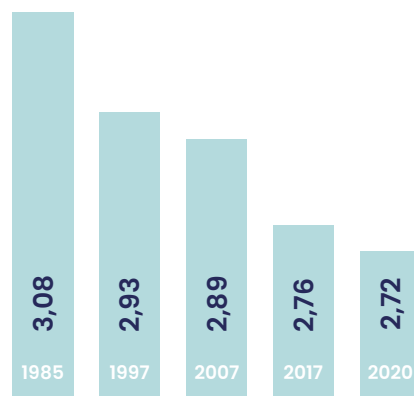


AGENDA 2030 – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

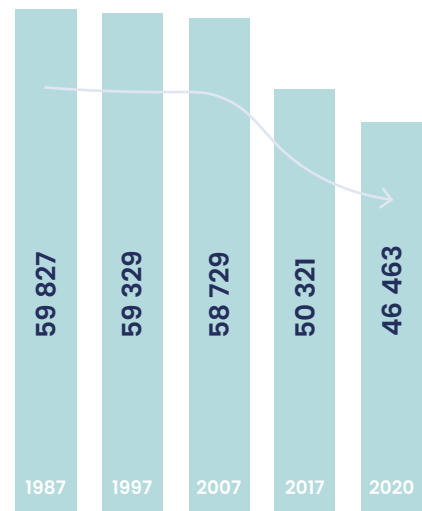
FINLAND 100 YEARS

2005 THE FIRST OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN



**AVERAGE SIZE OF FAMILIES 1987–2020**

According to Statistics Finland, there were 1,467,653 families in Finland at the end of 2020.



**NUMBER OF LIVE BIRTHS 1987–2020**

The number of births has been decreasing since the 1950s. In 2018, the number of children born was below 50,000 for the first time in 150 years.

**Sources:** Itla's Archives// Paavilainen, Marko (2012). Ristiaallokosta lapsen oikeuksiin: lastensuojelun yhteistoiminnan historia. Finnish Literature Society// Statistics Finland

# Cinderella's story reveals a core of resilience

The favourite fairytale of Michael Ungar, keynote speaker at Itla's 35th anniversary event, is Cinderella, though not because of Cinderella herself, but because of the fairy godmother. The importance of the environment in survival stories is easy to see if you have left home at the age of 16, like Ungar did. Now, the research centre that he founded and leads is trying to find out why some disadvantaged people succeed beyond expectations in life.

Itla's 35-year journey was celebrated in Helsinki under grey November skies. Michael Ungar (PhD), the guest of honour at the event, was not bothered by the dreary drizzle of rain. He commented that the weather is similar in his neighbourhood in Nova Scotia, Canada, this time of year. The proximity of the sea is palpable.

Ungar works as a family therapist and professor of social work at Dalhousie University. We invited Ungar as the keynote speaker to Itla's celebratory seminar because his ground-breaking research and ideas related to resilience are at the heart of Itla's collective impact work.

During Ungar's brief visit, we had several opportunities to listen to him. The discussions proceeded from the topic of supporting children with ADHD to public transport and from the City of Oulu's survival story after Nokia's exit from the city to the replacement of the Canadian oil refinery industry with the production of medical cannabis.

When your life's work focuses on resilience, you have to look at things from a broad perspective. This involves both genes and the neural networks built in your childhood as well as relationships, the resources provided by society and the cultural atmosphere.

## **Resilience is built in communities, not in individuals**

In our competitive and individualistic culture, people want to believe in their ability to overcome their circumstances. To prove that it is possible, we bring up 'rags to riches' success stories made possible by the determination and diligence of exceptional individuals, which are loved by the media.

In contrast, the core message shared by Ungar is that resilience is created in communities, not in individuals. He talks about resilience specifically as a response to difficult conditions. In other words, for him resilience does not refer to just any ability to adapt or strengthen your wellbeing, which is a context where the term is sometimes used.

The more desperate the situation, the less it helps to change your own actions or attitudes. Something must also change in the environment. In his speech, Ungar summarises the matter as follows:

*"You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf." (Jon Kabat-Zinn)*

*But...it's easier to learn to surf if you have a surfboard, a coach, and a lifeguard.*

# New Directions in Childhood Resilience

The core message shared by Ungar is that resilience is created in communities, not in individuals.

Michael Ungar, Ph.D.  
Distinguished Research Chair in Child, Family and  
Community Resilience  
School of Social Work, Dalhousie University  
www.resilience-research.org  
© Michael Ungar, PhD



The first part is quoted from mindfulness guru and Professor Emeritus Jon Kabat-Zinn, while the latter sentence is Ungar's own addition.

In challenging conditions, perseverance alone is not enough to stay afloat – you also need access to the necessary resources, such as sufficient income, social support or a safe haven.

It is no wonder that Ungar's favourite story is Cinderella in all its wisdom – even if the wisdom may be unintentional. Despite her favourable qualities, such as beauty, pleasantness and diligence, Cinderella still needed her fairy godmother in order to escape being enslaved by her stepmother and stepsisters. The opportunity had to first be avail-

able, and only then did Cinderella have control over how she wanted to use the opportunity.

Ungar has seen Cinderellas without a fairy godmother run away from home after their 16th birthday and survive on their own to the best of their ability. Not in palaces, but somewhere behind the palaces.

### **Services must provide individuals with meaningful support**

For those coming from difficult conditions, services and support from the community are more crucial than talent, motivation or a positive attitude, for example. This has been demonstrated by studies





Ungar and his colleagues have carried out around the world on thousands of young people living in disadvantaged residential areas who have experienced hardships: in Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, China and Colombia.

However, the important thing is not the amount of services and support, but their quality. If the individual does not benefit from the support they receive, the fault does not lie with the individual but with the service. It is not enough for society to lend a helping hand if taking said hand does not offer the person something more than what society is trying to protect the person from.

Motivation depends on the resources available, as people can only become motivated by something that is possible and meaningful in their own life. Therefore, the support must be customised from the young person's perspective in order to find a way to increase resilience in their particular situation.

For example, a young person who has built an identity for themselves that supports their credibility and coping by criminal means will not easily give up this lifestyle unless they find a new way of maintaining their identity and social status.

In his book, *Change Your World* (Sutherland House, 2020), Ungar gives an example of a 15-year-old girl who gained empowerment from stealing cars and who changed Ungar's career as a researcher. Attempts by well-intentioned therapists and social workers to help the girl felt completely meaningless to her. Support with her emotional life or schooling did not offer her anything that could compete with the feeling of power she gained from a successful theft. The identity of a skilled car thief was the best thing that she had managed to build for her own safety from the resources she had at her disposal.

There was no use in trying to fit the socially awkward and bossy girl who had fallen far behind others in her education into the role of a popular model student. However, in order to avoid a future behind bars, she needed a way to feel appreciated that was accepted by society.

Working at the food court of a shopping centre provided a solution. The girl was able to earn money, use her leadership skills and practise dealing with customer service situations, which served as a substitute for the ability to cope and the feeling of power that she gained from criminal activity. Another meaningful thing was that she was able to impress her friends by treating them to large fries for the price of small fries.

### **What links the success of Oulu and the continuity of exercise?**

Emphasising the importance of the environment and communities feels stimulating in our culture, which believes in self-help and therapy and which, in place of a plaster, provides the wounded with opportunities to strengthen their motivation and self-regulation skills or find a new attitude.

Ungar does not claim that personal characteristics are irrelevant. However, almost without exception, the life paths of heroes who come from difficult conditions include unlikely coincidences or help from outside, such as meetings with the right people in the right places.

Living in a Nordic welfare society, we are closer to the ideals presented by Ungar's resilience research than people living in his home country of Canada are, for example. In Finland, all children and young people have access to support, at least in principle, and socio-economic inequality is relatively low.

Perceived injustice and social distrust affect the type of support that the individual wants to receive.

Those most in need of help are often the most difficult to help by conventional means. Ungar brings up trivial factors such as public transport several times. It is crucially related to the accessibility of services.

The importance of social support structures is evident not only in the case of disadvantaged people but also in contexts that are more familiar for middle-class people. For example, it is evident in the reason why Oulu recovered so well from Nokia's collapse. The cooperation network between the City of Oulu, the University of Oulu and companies was exceptionally robust, which provided skilled professionals with the framework and resources they needed to set up startups. In Canada, the irrigation systems on cannabis farms are demonstrations of the skills of oil refinery engineers.

And if your goal is for the gym membership you acquire next January to help you keep going to the gym for the whole year this time around, you should also get a membership for a friend. Social support helps with commitment much more efficiently than an internal motivational speech.

Often, the easiest way to influence the inside of your mind is through your surroundings.

# Evidence-based support to help children and young people fleeing the war in Ukraine

In 2022, Itla helped more than 60 professionals become TRT method instructors.

Itla organised training in the Teaching Recovery Techniques (TRT) method for instructors from 12 to 14 December 2022. It was the second TRT training course paid for by Itla this year. More than 30 professionals working with children and young people participated in the three-day online training. The trainer was psychologist and psychotherapist Soili Poijula, the person who brought the method to Finland. The TRT training is based on Itla's work to support children and young people arriving from Ukraine as refugees. When Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine, Itla set up an expert network to coordinate the national dissemination of the TRT method.

The TRT method, which is based on trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy, was developed in 1998. Developed in collaboration between Norwegian and British researchers, the objective of the method is to support the recovery of children and young people exposed to war trauma by teaching them how to relieve the symptoms of trauma. The group-based TRT method consists of five meetings with children or young people and two meetings with their parents. The TRT method can be used by professionals with various types of educational backgrounds who work with children and young people. The method has been shown to reduce the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, depressive symptoms and traumatic

You can find the support materials for strengthening the wellbeing and crisis resilience of children and young people at the following address: [itla.fi/tukimateriaalia](https://itla.fi/tukimateriaalia)

sadness. It was deemed to have strong documented effects in the Kasvun tuki resource in 2020. The TRT method has been used in Ukraine since 2014, when the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine began.

In 2022, Itla helped more than 60 professionals become TRT method instructors. The main partners in the implementation of the method are the Youth Shelters of the Finnish Red Cross and the Oulu Reception Centre. The participants in both training courses also included professionals from other organisations, from a total of eight regions. The first TRT group started at the Oulu Reception Centre in August.

Based on the experiences gained so far, long-term development of the new operating practices is required, particularly with regard to the launch of the groups in cooperation with various operators. This work is important because the number of Ukrainian refugees is expected to increase: in 2022, more than 47,000 Ukrainians applied for temporary protection or asylum, and the Ministry of the Interior estimates that another 30,000–40,000 Ukrainian refugees may enter Finland in 2023.





# The Valoisat group sheds light on family and child poverty from the perspective of young people

In spring 2022, a group of young experience leaders was established as part of Itla's Equal Start for Everyone – Solutions to Family and Child Poverty programme. The young experience leaders will be able to influence the Family and Child Poverty programme and its communications and steer the research programme as co-researchers.



In March 2022, a group of enthusiastic young people met for the first time. At the meeting, the young people got to know each other and agreed on common working principles for the group. The young people chose to name their group 'Valoisat' (lit. the bright ones). According to them, the name reflects solutions, positivity, influencing and shedding light on family and child poverty as a phenomenon.

The Valoisat group is part of Itla's Equal Start for Everyone – Solutions to Family and Child Poverty programme, which aims to analyse family and child poverty as a phenomenon and identify effective measures to reduce poverty and prevent its negative effects on the wellbeing and future of children and young people.

The young people in the Valoisat group look at family and child poverty from their own perspectives and actively participate in the Equal Start for Everyone programme. They reflect on their own experiences at the level of everyday life and guide the definition of the programme's research questions and the programme's progress. They also have an opportunity to act as co-researchers in the programme and create advocacy communications.

### **Communications, influencing and research**

The group comprises 15 young people who have diverse experience and expertise in communications and advocacy in organisations and associations. Some of the members of the group also have personal experience of child welfare or poverty.

"Talking about my experiences of poverty or deprivation as a child sometimes even seems difficult to me, which is why it is even more important to talk about it and be part of the Valoisat group. I think that it reflects how important this issue is. Through these kinds of activities, I can also develop and challenge myself and my own thinking and learn new things." – Member of Valoisat.

In 2022, the activities of the Valoisat group have gotten off to a fast start. In the summer, the young

## **The young people in the Valoisat group look at family and child poverty from their own perspectives and actively participate in the Equal Start for Everyone programme.**

people gathered together to discuss social influencing and learn more about the research topics studied by the programme. The meeting also included brainstorming the communications related to the programme, and in autumn 2022 the group planned an influencing campaign related to family and child poverty together with RARE Media. In November, the group organised a panel discussion for the 35th anniversary event of Itla, where three members of the Valoisat group and Members of Parliament Sofia Virta and Ari Koponen discussed ways to build a brighter future for children and young people.

*"The best part for me is the fact that we have such different types of people in this group. It's also wonderful that everyone can be who they are and join the group with the experience and skills that they have."*

*Member of Valoisat*

The Valoisat group will kick off 2023 with a social media influencing campaign together with RARE Media. The aim of the campaign is to use messages from young people about family and child poverty to influence decision-makers and stimulate discussion about poverty and experiences of poverty. During the spring, the Valoisat group will work on messages related to the parliamentary elections, and Itla and the young people will carry out co-research training, which will include planning a joint research project for autumn 2023. Based on the results of the research project, the aim is to crowdsource the search for solutions to family and child poverty from the perspective of children and young people.



# Humane Amsterdam

The participants in the first two Childhood Builders leadership training courses visited Amsterdam to learn more about the services for children, young people and families provided there. The participants visited the Amsterdam region's youth protection services and 'Stay safe' activities, among other things.

The Netherlands and Amsterdam were selected for Itla's management training because the Netherlands as a society is the 'sixth Nordic country', offering interesting benchmark examples of genuinely community-driven and diversity-sensitive operating models.

## Every child safe forever

Youth protection in the Amsterdam area underwent a comprehensive change a little less than ten years ago.

The mission of the new family-centred approach is 'every child safe forever'.

A transition from one operating culture to another does not happen overnight. What served as the driving force for change in Amsterdam was the observation that, despite major investments, youth protection measures were not achieving lasting changes. A large proportion of the children, young people and families kept coming back to ask for more help.

**Sigrid van de Poel**, director of youth protection in the Amsterdam region, and Counsellor **Willemijn Helmich** said that the revolving door phenomenon was identified as the problem. A child consults a service, which then refers the child to another service, and so on, until the child has gone through every service but has still not received the help they need. So the child comes back. And goes through the services again. It also takes time to find out what each service provider should be doing. The Finnish visitors were not strangers to this phenomenon.

The aim of the reform was to stop the revolving door and find permanent solutions to families' sit-

uations. However, the actual change started from a return to the purpose of the activities. All of the activities were focused to ensure that each child is safe and to help the whole family in the event of problems.

The problems encountered in youth protection are complex by nature. According to Sigrid, the complexity must be highlighted actively during the change to prevent everyone from falling back on the old and familiar methods in their search for solutions. Change requires people to adopt a new way of thinking and learn together.

The new principles of youth protection adopted in Amsterdam were a family-oriented approach, the right of the child to security in a transparent manner, simplicity and learning together.

How, then, do we know that each child is safe? In a family-oriented approach, the workers reach out to the families instead of the other way around. The assessment of the situation often starts with drawing a family map together with the family. Multi-faceted family relationships are common, which is why it is important to include each family member in the family map, so that the entire family and all of the children can be provided with access to assistance.

## Stay safe integrated working model

Work with families increasingly often follows the stay safe integrated working model.

In this model, each family has a designated social worker, and the work is carried out in teams with workers representing other services. The designated worker is the first point of contact who is in charge of the family and also maintains contact

with the family when there is a need to involve other experts and as the family situation develops. The worker in the model can also act as the 'coach' of an existing multidisciplinary team.

As a result, there is no longer any need to refer the family from one service to another; instead, the designated family worker will launch the measures needed by the family both by themselves and together with the network.

Especially in demanding situations, many home visits are often needed at first, even three times a week, in order to get the family's daily life back on track. The implementation takes time, persistence and analysis of the situation over a longer period of time. "We do what we have to, as long as it's necessary," says Strategic Advisor Janneke van Eijk.

Previously, it was possible for a single worker to be responsible for approximately 15 families. In the new model, they are only responsible for a few families at a time. In autumn 2022, the programme covered a total of 100 families. The measure of success was that the help provided helps the families cope better than before, and they do not come back again and again with the same problems.

### **Tangible change**

Achieving the change also required changes in facilitating the workers' good work. Instead of a risk-based approach, the focus was placed on trust and interaction in work supervision. In place of a fragmented working method, the parties set out to build an effective cooperation network with the police and the judicial system, for example.

What played a major role in the success was

## **The mission of the new family-centred approach is 'every child safe forever'.**

the choice of tools that support mobile work taken to where the families are and the redesign of the youth protection office. The premises are designed to support interactivity throughout the organisation. Each team has a home base that they visit approximately once a week. Together, the team tackles family situations and makes decisions on the further measures required by the families under the team's responsibility.

The ultimate purpose of work – safe and healthy childhood and youth – is constantly discussed at the office through the strategic objectives that guide the work and the results of the art projects carried out with clients. The workplace cafeteria is part of the effective activities. It is run by clients of youth protection and their family members who otherwise find it difficult to obtain the first work experience required to gain access to working life.

### **What about cost efficiency?**

"With regard to the Stay safe integrated working model, it's still too early to tell whether the operations are cost-effective, but they probably are," remarks **Janneke van Eijk**.

"Sometimes the same customers have been using the services for 10–15 years without any improvement in their situation. This has costs millions, and yet the children are still not safe," he adds.

In the Stay safe model, the initial investment is greater, but it is still more economical in the long run if it prevents the need to take the child into care and potential later problems, for example. The challenge in monitoring cost-effectiveness is that long-term savings are reflected in a different place to where the costs are incurred. The benefits become visible in police and healthcare services, for example, in place of social welfare.

For the time being, the Stay safe integrated working model is a project that is currently being expanded to national level. COVID-19 and the shortage of skilled professionals in the social services sector have slowed down the expansion of the model, but the efforts continue through things such as 24-hour meetings where 'the entire system' from ministries to those working at the customer interface is brought together to consider what works and what should be invested in.

#### Key elements in cultural change

To create new solutions, we need to do things differently. The new way of working that drives the change does not always have to be something revolutionary; instead it may be a fundamental difference in the way of thinking. In the case of the Stay safe integrated working model, the fundamental difference has been that, in accordance with the principle of 'Every child safe forever', the family is not referred onward until the matter is under control. Even if it takes time and resources.

It was necessary to change the way of thinking so that the common goal of all operators is the best interests of the family. When clients return to services over and over again, it shows us that the problems have not been resolved. The switch to the new working method can be justified by clarifying the consequences of the old model, for example.

The work is demanding, which is why professionals must have the opportunity to do their jobs well – they are offered support and it is ensured that they have enough time to do their work. Both the client and the worker need time. It is difficult for a busy and stressed worker to properly focus on the client's case. When the worker has time to focus on the family, the connection between the worker and the family is more intensive, and trust is also built over time. There is time to talk and listen.

In addition to youth protection in Amsterdam, the course participants learned more about:

- the activities of the child & parent teams at family centres offering prevention and support for parenting
- the cooperation model between the municipalities in the Zaanstad region in the development of the wellbeing of children, young people and families
- the activities of the Athena Institute of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in the promotion of practical innovation processes that promote social justice
- Garage 2020 activities, where a model for mentoring by a trusted person has been developed to connect with young people who are a cause for concern for some reason or another, as well as for school operating models that reduce the probability of young people experiencing financial difficulties
- the care service company Buurtzorg, known as a pioneer in self-management, and its operating philosophy, which emphasises a truly client-oriented approach and learning together as the operating method used by the organisation.

Additionally, Professor **Caspar van den Berg** from Leiden University prepared the visitors for the visits by telling them about the history of the Netherlands, the pluralistic administrative and social model and the complex challenges in political decision-making.







# Financial statements for the financial period 01 Dec 2022 – 31 Dec 2022

The balance sheet is provided separately.

The financial statements must be retained at least until 31 December 2032.  
(Accounting Act, chapter 2, section 10(1))

The accounting records for the financial period must be retained at least  
until 31 December 2028. (Accounting Act, chapter 2, section 10(2))

**The financial statements were drawn up by:**

Suomen Säätiötilipalvelu Oy  
Authorised accounting firm  
Annankatu 31–33 C 45  
00100 Helsinki

# Balance sheet

	<b>31 Dec 2022</b>	<b>31 Dec 2021</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Non-current assets		
Tangible assets		
Machinery and equipment	9,551.86	16,155.82
Investments		
Other shares and participations	51,149,290.12	53,174,500.63
Total non-current assets	51,158,841.98	53,190,656.45
Current assets		
Receivables		
Non-current		
Other receivables	13,777.69	11,502.00
Current		
Accounts receivable	385,697.93	105,564.67
Other receivables	16,795.30	6,224.66
Accrued income	193,630.00	577,963.19
Total current receivables	596,123.23	689,752.52
Total receivables	609,900.92	701,254.52
Cash and cash equivalents	3,454,131.25	6,008,472.61
Total current assets	4,064,032.17	6,709,727.13
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>55,222,874.15</b>	<b>59,900,383.58</b>
<b>EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>		
Equity		
Basic capital	50,456.38	50,456.38
Fund donated by the Finnish Government	49,999,949.00	49,999,949.00
Profit (loss) from previous financial periods	9,360,345.81	6,285,505.46
Profit/loss for the financial period	-4,836,406.75	3,074,840.35
Total equity	54,574,344.44	59,410,751.19
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Advances received	155,983.20	121,180.72
Accounts payable	226,794.87	219,368.53
Other liabilities	61,587.99	38,808.26
Accruals and deferred income	204,163.65	110,274.88
Total liabilities	648,529.71	489,632.39
<b>TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>	<b>55,222,874.15</b>	<b>59,900,383.58</b>



# Income statement

	31 Dec 2022	31 Dec 2021
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
<b>Child policy knowledge</b>		
Income	128,345.47	26,375.77
Personnel expenses	-456,508.97	-302,097.91
Other expenses	-209,465.84	-227,598.68
<b>Child policy knowledge in total</b>	<b>-537,629.34</b>	<b>-503,320.82</b>
<b>Child policy management skills</b>		
Personnel expenses	-210,381.90	-164,616.61
Other expenses	-119,705.68	-50,954.97
<b>Child policy management skills in total</b>	<b>-330,087.58</b>	<b>-215,571.58</b>
<b>Child policy innovation activities</b>		
Income	45,250.00	56,663.00
Personnel expenses	-236,616.48	-217,247.65
Other expenses	-471,293.25	-511,916.87
<b>Child policy innovation activities in total</b>	<b>-662,659.73</b>	<b>-672,501.52</b>
<b>Child Poverty programme</b>		
Personnel expenses	-97,665.41	-15,595.52
Other expenses	-191,132.26	-28,960.24
<b>Child Poverty programme in total</b>	<b>-288,797.67</b>	<b>-44,555.76</b>
<b>Communications and advocacy</b>		
Income	0.00	4,105.39
Other expenses	-76,242.82	-61,991.11
<b>Communications and advocacy in total</b>	<b>-76,242.82</b>	<b>-57,885.72</b>
<b>Grants and subsidies</b>	<b>-160,000.00</b>	<b>-170,000.00</b>
<b>Centralised operations</b>		
Income	206,155.21	96,518.61
Personnel expenses	-595,890.41	-363,656.75
Other expenses	-367,215.12	-389,171.30
<b>Centralised operations in total</b>	<b>-756,950.32</b>	<b>-656,309.44</b>
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES IN TOTAL</b>	<b>-2,812,367.46</b>	<b>-2,320,144.84</b>

	<b>31 Dec 2022</b>	<b>31 Dec 2021</b>
<b>INVESTMENT AND FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
Sales profit from securities	1,187,501.89	4,407,953.56
Dividend income	668,961.89	563,680.83
Interest income	94,119.56	69,306.19
Profit shares	0.00	33,688.03
Other investment income	64,384.64	77,719.38
Reversal of depreciation, amortisation and impairment	68,165.33	543,616.23
<b>Total income</b>	<b>2,083,133.31</b>	<b>5,695,964.22</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Losses on sales of securities	-1,154,462.27	-79,229.13
Interest expenses	-12,854.19	-27,316.82
Asset management	-47,041.30	-43,895.55
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	-2,891,356.25	-150,537.53
Tax withheld at source	-1,458.59	0.00
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>-4,107,172.60</b>	<b>-300,979.03</b>
<b>INVESTMENT AND FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES IN TOTAL</b>	<b>-2,024,039.29</b>	<b>5,394,985.19</b>
<b>PROFIT/LOSS FOR THE FINANCIAL PERIOD</b>	<b>-4,836,406.75</b>	<b>3,074,840.35</b>
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR THE FINANCIAL PERIOD</b>	<b>-4,836,406.75</b>	<b>3,074,840.35</b>

## Notes to the financial statements

The financial statements were drawn up in accordance with the Government Decree on the Information Presented in the Financial Statements of a Small Undertaking and Micro-undertaking and in compliance with the legal provisions on small corporations. (Government Decree 1753/2015)

### Valuation principles

In the accounts, the investment securities are valued at the acquisition cost or at the lower closing rate.

<b>Notes to the income statement</b>	<b>31 Dec 2022</b>	<b>31 Dec 2021</b>
Total income	2,462,883.99	5,879,626.99
Total expenses	-7,299,290.74	-2,804,786.64
Surplus (deficit) for the financial period	-4,836,406.75	3,074,840.35

### Notes about the personnel and members of Itla's bodies

During the financial period, the Foundation employed 23 employees (2021: 17 employees) on average.

#### Personnel expenses

Wages and salaries	1,328,911.85	903,385.25
Indirect personnel expenses	290,837.80	174,804.40
Total	1,619,749.65	1,078,189.65

#### Remuneration paid to the members of Itla's bodies

Members of the Board of Trustees	10,700.00	12,950.00
Members of the delegation	1,850.00	7,300.00
Members of the Asset Management Committee	6,500.00	2,650.00
Members of the Youth Committee	3,440.00	0.00
Members of the Kasvun tuki editorial board	0.00	1,500.00
Total	22,490.00	24,400.00

Auditing company	12,871.20	13,309.00
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### Account pursuant to section 4 of Itla's rules and calculation on the financing of normal operating expenses during the financial year 2022

The Itla Children's Foundation ('Itla') received a donation of shares in Neste Oy, worth EUR 49,999,949.00 (fair value at the time of the transfer), on the basis of a formal decision made by Parliament on 5 December 2017. The shares were transferred to Itla's book-entry account on 4 January 2018. The donation has been funded and is presented in equity on a separate row titled 'Fund donated by the Finnish Government'.

Pursuant to section 4(2) of the Foundation's rules, the income from the assets transferred to Itla and other income previously accrued from the Foundation's assets may be used to finance the normal operations of the Foundation on an annual basis in accordance with the operating budget and action plan approved by the Board of Trustees.

Pursuant to section 4(3) of the Foundation's rules, if the Foundation's equity is below the market value at the time of the transfer of the assets transferred to Itla (4 January 2018), the Foundation's investment assets must be increased with the assets left unused after normal operating expenses. The normal operating expenses of the Foundation for the financial period are deemed to include all expenses incurred from the actual activities, fundraising and investment activities carried out to implement the Foundation's purpose as well as any unrealised depreciation on investment assets, recorded in the accounts on an accrual basis. The Foundation's revenue for the financial period is deemed to include all income from actual activities, fundraising and investment activities, as well as any value returns of investment assets recorded in the accounts on an accrual basis. A calculation on compliance with section 4 of the Foundation's rules is presented below.

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
Operating surplus, opening balance	9,608,217.62	6,926,455.97
Realised income for the period	2,394,718.66	5,336,010.76
Realised operating expenses for the period	-4,407,934.49	-2,654,249.11
Operating surplus/deficit for the period (realised)	<b>-2,013,215.83</b>	<b>2,681,761.65</b>
Cumulative operating surplus/deficit (realised)	7,595,001.79	9,608,217.62
Change in value of investment assets recorded in the accounts for the period	-2,823,190.92	393,078.70
Cumulative operating surplus/deficit	<b>4,523,939.06</b>	<b>9,360,345.81</b>
<b>Reconciliation with equity</b>	<b>31 Dec 2022</b>	<b>31 Dec 2021</b>
Basic capital	50,456.38	50,456.38
Operating surplus at the time of donation	131,536.84	131,536.84
Operating surplus (after donation)	4,392,402.22	9,228,808.97
Donation 4 Jan 2018	49,999,949.00	49,999,949.00
Total equity of the Foundation	54,574,344.44	59,410,751.19

The activities of the Foundation have been financed with realised income and the cumulative realised operating surplus is EUR 7,595,001.79. Taking into account the unrealised depreciation on investment assets recorded in the accounts, the cumulative operating surplus is EUR 4,523,939.06. There has been no need to fund the Foundation's activities with capital from donations.

<b>Grants awarded by the Foundation for upcoming periods</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Date</b>
Sanni Penttilä	24,000.00	2023
Fatemeh Mohammadi	4,200.00	2023

<b>The Foundation's future financial contributions / subsidies for future periods</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Date</b>
University of Turku, endowed professorship	80,000.00	2023
University of Oulu, endowed professorship	30,000.00	2023
University of Oulu, endowed professorship (two-year additional option)	128,000.00	2023–2024
Tampere University, endowed professorship	405,680.86	2023–2025
Senate Properties / financing agreement, Työ 2.0 LAB	11,160.00	2023
THL / cooperation agreement, birth cohort studies	10,000.00	2023
Canberra University / Child poverty and social assistance pathways (CHERISH)	15,000.00	2023
LSE Enterprise Ltd / Policy Review	14,875.00	2023
Owal Group, report on special care units and survey on wellbeing services counties	28,000.00	2023
Pauhu Oy / service contract, translation services	8,184.00	2023
City of Oulu / cooperation agreement, regional learning network	15,000.00	2023
Bitta Söderblom / service agreement, regional learning network	34,372.80	2023
Siun sote / framework agreement, regional learning network	140,000.00	2023–2026
Soite / framework agreement, regional learning network	140,000.00	2023–2026
City of Tampere / framework agreement, regional learning network	140,000.00	2023–2026
City of Oulu / framework agreement, regional learning network	140,000.00	2023–2026
Hahmota / service agreement, situation room	58,032.00	2023
	<b>1,426,504.66</b>	

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024–2027</b>
Rental liabilities, rental agreements valid until further notice	37,534.08	34,406.24

<b>Notes about guarantees and contingent liabilities</b>	<b>2022</b>
Rental deposit, terminated agreement – refund 2023	11,502.00
Rental deposit, agreement for an indefinite period	2,275.69

# Signature of the financial statements and activity report

Helsinki \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ 2023  
Board of Trustees of Itla Children's Foundation

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Tuomas Kurttila

Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

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Sanna Vesikansa

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Maria Kaisa Aula

---

Petri Pohjonen

---

Mirjam Kalland

---

Riitta Särkelä

---

Juho Romakkaniemi

Signature of the CEO

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acting Tiina Ristikari



## Auditor's note

A report on the audit has been submitted today.

Helsinki \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ 2023

Oy Tuokko Ltd auditing company

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Authorised Public Accountant  
(KHT) Janne Elo

## List of accounts and documentation

Journal	Online archive
General ledger	Online archive
Financial statements	In electronic format
Balance sheet breakdowns	In electronic format

### Document types and retention method

Sales invoices	Online archive
Purchase invoices	Online archive
Travel and expense claims, memorandums	Online archive
Salaries and wages	Online archive
Bank statements, proof of payment	Online archive
VAT calculations	Online archive
Periodic tax returns	Online archive

### Note documents

No	Name of file	Description of note
1	Henkilöstökulut ja toimielinten jäsenten palkkiot.pdf ja .xlsx	Personnel expenses and remuneration to members of Itla's bodies
2	Henkilöstön määrä tilikaudella keskimäärin.pdf	Average number of employees in the financial period
3	Arvopaperit, EVLI.pdf	Securities, EVLI
4	Arvopaperit, Aktia.pdf	Securities, Aktia
5	Laskelma säätiön sääntöjen 4§n noudattamisesta.pdf	Calculation of compliance with section 4 of the Foundation's rules
6	Laskelma säätiön sääntöjen 4§n noudattamisesta – laskentaperuste.xlsx	Basis for the calculation of compliance with section 4 of the Foundation's rules
7	Leasing- ja vuokravastuut.pdf	Leasing and rental liabilities

APPENDIX 1:

# Strategy 2023–2026

**MISSION**

**Itla Children’s Foundation** promotes and supports the wellbeing, equality, position and good future of children, young people and families living in Finland.

Itla also promotes and supports parenting and the growth conditions and education of children.

## Principles guiding activities

- The rights, participation, equality and non-discrimination of the child
- Bridge-building and production of added value
- Information-based and international approach
- Openness and transparency

## VISION 2026

# We are always on the side of children.

We produce information on the wellbeing of children and families in different life situations.

We propose concrete solutions for improving the wellbeing of children.

We communicate about our operations to decision-makers at all administrative levels.

## Areas of operations

- Promoting the implementation of psychosocial interventions for children, young people and families with children
- Facilitating local and regional operations that support the wellbeing of children and families
- Renewing management competence that promotes the wellbeing of children
- Family and Child Poverty programme 2022–2024
- Organisational and research communication about themes related to children’s wellbeing

## Factors facilitating operations

- Multi-skilled staff
- Promotion of children’s wellbeing with top experts
- Cooperation with key child policy actors
- Agility
- International approach
- Successful communications
- Taking care of the invested capital and supplementary funding





**#lapsuudenrakentajat**

**itla** Children's  
Foundation